



Digitizing the UNT Texas Fashion Collection

Student professional development through documenting a world-class collection



Annette Becker, Director, Texas Fashion Collection

annette.becker@unt.edu | 940.565.2732



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Create publication-quality images of 7,500 garments by internationally known designers, all of which are part of the UNT Texas Fashion Collection’s permanent holdings
- Provide extended professional development opportunities to students interested in studio photography and museum documentation
- Increase accessibility to unique artifacts for UNT students and faculty, as other important internal and external UNT stakeholders
- Facilitate preservation of documented artifacts, ensuring their longevity while increasing their accessibility and impact

PROJECT PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Garments worn by Audrey Hepburn and Ladybird Johnson, created by famous designers like Coco Chanel and Christian Dior, and constructed of hand-embroidered textiles are included in the UNT Texas Fashion Collection’s (TFC) nearly 20,000 artifacts. The TFC’s reputation inspires museums from around the world to borrow artifacts, and recent programming efforts have embedded the TFC in classrooms across campus. However, access to the Collection’s online holdings are just a fraction of the collection.

To date, 2,600 garments and accessories are available online. This project would significantly enhance that number, adding an additional 7,500 items in the collection using best practices in documentation. By purchasing mannequins, the collection would be able to appropriately display items enabling high quality photography.

This work will make the collection far more accessible to the general public, students, museum professionals, and faculty, allowing us to share this UNT treasure.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Itemized Estimates

Fund Use	Estimated Cost
20 mannequins	\$30,000
Four part-time student assistants, 50 wks, 20 hrs/wk, \$10/hr plus fringe	\$40,346
Eight rolls of seamless backdrop paper	\$2,475
Additional camera lens	\$750
Seamless backdrop stands	\$225
Tripod	\$140
Total Estimated Cost	\$73,936



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PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

- Photography of 7,500 artifacts, with priority placed on works most frequently requested by UNT students and faculty, colleagues at cultural institutions, and the public. These photographs will be used for internal and external publications, classroom teaching, conference publications, and exhibition promotion. Importantly, they will also ensure the physical artifacts (especially for more fragile and precious pieces) will be handled as little as possible, facilitating their physical safety and longevity. Together, these efforts enhance UNT's reputation as a hub for arts research and a leader in the growing field of fashion history.
- UNT students will engage in robust professional development, with hands-on engagement with the digitization process and opportunities to develop a portfolio of images to share in future job interviews. As few students are aware of this type of work as a career possibility and even fewer can secure internships in the field, these unique positions will provide unprecedented and critical opportunities for them to learn, grow, and thrive.
- TFC digitization will reach a critical mass, where the majority of unique artifacts will be documented and available for scholarly and general use.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

- The UNT College of Visual Arts & Design has committed to providing at least one graduate student per academic semester, ensuring continued support of this digitization project.
- The UNT Libraries supports server space for storing the digital photography files and for hosting the images for public access.
- Through support from Bruzzy Westheimer in honor of Gloria Westheimer, the TFC recently updated its internal database, ensuring photography files and metadata for artifacts will be safely stored and readily available for upload to the UNT Digital Library.
- The TFC has already secured a new full-frame camera and basic professional lighting equipment, demonstrating an established commitment to this endeavor.
- UNT College of Visual Arts and Design Photography faculty encourage students to explore careers like the ones modeled through the created positions, ensuring intellectual support for the hired students.
- This project's support of purchasing equipment ensures future collection photography will meet best practices modeled by comparable institutions. These also ensure that the artifacts are appealing in photographs, making them ideal for publication.