

# Exploring fashion at your Abilene Public Library

Deborah Tarsiewicz, Special to the Reporter-News 9 p.m. CST December 4, 2016



*(Photo: david franklin)*

Fashion can be different things to different people. For some, it is the creations walking the runways during invitation-only fashion shows. For others it may simply be whatever people choose to wear. In truth, the term "fashion" can be used many different ways and applied interchangeably with other terms such as costume. No matter how you use the term, if you use it at all, fashion has undeniably been intertwined with human history for almost as long as humans have inhabited the earth. If you have an interest in clothes or fashion, your Abilene Public Library has interesting titles on this fascinating topic.

A great place to start is the book "20,000 Years of Fashion" by François Boucher. Translated from the original French, many in the field of fashion and costume consider it a foremost resource on the topic of fashion. Within its pages, you will find a thorough examination of how people chose to dress themselves with nearly every epoch covered in detail, from the simplest shifts to elaborate royal gowns.

"The Dictionary of Fashion History" by Valerie Cumming, as the name suggests, is a dictionary of fashion related terms. If you have ever needed to know the definition for garment related terms as 'Alice Band' or 'Trolley Lace', this is the book for you. It would also come in handy for those who read historical fiction and come across such words as 'reticule' and never knew what the author was talking about.

Perhaps everyone's favorite, and certainly most recognizable, authority on modern fashion is Tim Gunn, who has taught, consulted and mentored in the field. His book "Tim Gunn's Fashion Bible" is a fastidiously researched book on Western fashion from hats to high heels. With his trademark candidness and charm, Gunn explains how garments of old, like crinolines, evolved into the clothing people wear today.

Haute Couture or "High Fashion" refers to garments that are painstakingly crafted by a group of highly specialized individuals completely by hand. These garments walk the runway in such places as New York and Paris, and some straddle the line between art and fashion. Myra Walker's "Balenciaga and His Legacy: Haute Couture from the Texas Fashion Collection" celebrates the work of Cristóbal Balenciaga who was deemed a master of fashion and highly revered by other designers. It also features work from the exhibition organized by the Meadows Museum at Southern Methodist University in association with the Texas Fashion Collection at the University of North Texas.

"Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty" by Andrew Bolton was published to coincide with an exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art organized by The Costume Institute. It presents a well-rounded view into the mind of an innovator, from his days as a student through his elaborately conceived and extravagantly staged runway shows.

Whether your particular interest is fashion's colorful history or modern designers pushing the envelope of what is considered wearable, your Abilene Public Library has many titles to choose from. Stop by today and find out what you didn't know about the clothes you wear each day.

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