

MEDIA RELEASE

Revolutionary Exhibition at the ROM Showcases Making Fashion Truly Accessible

Fashion Follows Form: Designs for Sitting features Izzy Camilleri's adaptive clothing
Journalists Jeanne Beker and Barbara Turnbull are Honorary Chairs of exhibition
Opens June 21 in the ROM's Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume



(Toronto, Ontario – May 21, 2014) - *Fashion Follows Form: Designs for Sitting* is a new exhibition opening at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) on **June 21, 2014** featuring fashions from internationally acclaimed, Toronto-based designer Izzy Camilleri's IZ Adaptive collection. The exhibition showcases Camilleri's innovative, fashionable, functional – and affordable—designs that are among the first in the world created exclusively to meet the needs of women and men who use wheelchairs. Displayed alongside Camilleri's designs are 18th and 19th century fashions from the ROM's renowned collection, also created for a seated, L-shaped body.



Dr. Alexandra Palmer, the Nora E. Vaughan Fashion Costume Senior Curator in the ROM's World Cultures department, was motivated to collaborate with Camilleri after discovering the designer's shop in Toronto's west end. "Izzy has been called 'Canada's most PC (Perfectly Cut) fashion designer' for good reason. She has broken new ground by designing and creating pieces for maximum comfort, ease, and style for those who have traditionally had difficulty finding clothing that fits," said Dr. Palmer. "We hope this exhibition inspires visitors to think about the role fashion plays in our daily lives as well as the historical relationship between fashion and function."

Leather Jacket
IZ Adaptive
by Izzy Camilleri
© Adrienne Mountain

The exhibition's Honorary Chairs are fashion media icon Jeanne Beker and journalist Barbara Turnbull who was Izzy Camilleri's first seated client. Ms. Turnbull became quadriplegic in her teens after being shot during a robbery while working as a convenience store cashier. She had asked the designer to make her a shearling cape and the challenges encountered while creating the garment motivated Camilleri to launch IZ Adaptive in 2009. Most fashion designers create clothing for a standing frame body, not accounting for the clothing and mobility issues of a person who uses a wheelchair. The IZ Adaptive collection is designed to be easily put on and comfortable for wearing all day in a seated position.

"I'm honoured to work with the ROM to demonstrate that fashion and style can be accessible to everyone. I hope this exhibition generates greater awareness of the obstacles facing physically challenged people and invites conversation around the issues of inclusion, dignity, sense of empowerment, and embracing possibilities," said Izzy Camilleri.

Included in the exhibition is a Camillieri-designed leather jacket, trench coat, wedding dress, and tuxedo—all of which defy traditional design and pattern-making conventions. These pieces are juxtaposed with historical fashions from the ROM's collection including a dolman designed to accommodate a large bustle, an 18th and 19th century side-saddle riding habit, and male 18th century breeches and modern early 19th century trousers. *Fashion Follows Form* also features Camilleri's iconic designs including the silver fox coat worn by Meryl Streep in *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006).

Fashion Follows Form is on display from June 21, 2014 until January 25, 2015 in the Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume. It shares the gallery space with *Cairo Under Wraps: Early Islamic Textiles* which features over 50 early Islamic textiles dating from the 8th to 14th centuries, including textiles collected by C.T. Currelly, the Museum's founding director.

The ROM's [Accessibility Strategy](#) is widely recognized for its leadership role in removing barriers to participation for visitors with disabilities. The Museum was awarded the *2012 Excellence Canada Accessibility Award* and the *2012 Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons Corporate Award*.

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Exhibition Honorary Chairs

Jeanne Beker Barbara Turnbull

About the ROM

Opened in 1914, Canada's largest museum of natural history and world cultures has six million objects in its collections and galleries showcasing art, archaeology and natural science. The ROM is the largest field research institution in the country, and a world leader in research areas from biodiversity, palaeontology, and earth sciences to archaeology, ethnology and visual culture - originating new information towards a global understanding of historical and modern change in culture and environment. For 24-hour information in English and French, please call 416.586.8000 or visit the ROM's web site at www.rom.on.ca. Tickets are available online at www.rom.on.ca. For specific questions or concerns pertaining to the **ROM's Accessibility**, call 416.586.8000 prior to visiting. For those who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, Bell Relay Service can be reached by dialing 711 or 1.800.855.0511.

ROM Textiles & Fashions

ROM Centres of Discovery are a way to experience the Museum's encyclopaedic collections. The eight Centres offer visitors opportunities to explore the ROM's collections of nature and culture; belong to a community that matters to them; and the chance to participate in learning and discovery – both online and at the Museum. Newly launched, ROM Textiles & Fashions explores global textiles and fashions that interweave cultures and societies. Offering training and educational opportunities, this Centre is also a hub for new ideas, lectures, workshops, exhibitions, and publications. Visitors are invited to discover the rich heritage of the Museum's incredible collection of 50,000 objects from around the globe.

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