

PRESENTATION/PROGRAM

Bonnie Cashin—Designs, Inspirations, and Signature Styles using Handwoven Fabrics

Susan J. Torntore, PhD

Bonnie Cashin (1915-2000), one of the 20th century's most innovative and influential American fashion designers, created practical and comfortable clothing for modern women. Inspired by ethnic garments such as kimono, her silhouette was based on the rectangle and the square. Color and texture featured prominently in dyed leather, jersey knits, and hand-loomed fabrics of plaids, tweeds, and couture tweeds. Cashin's design and fabric sourcing/manufacturing processes will be presented using show sketches, runway samples, and finished garments, featuring two of her signature styles—ponchos and her T-shaped Noh coat with its many variations. Finally, a selection of Cashin's signature handwoven fabrics will be highlighted to discuss structure. We will also talk about the 2021 ANWG Noh Coat Challenge and a study group for anyone interested in working through the design process together.

NOTES

My talk will run 45 mins to one hour, with numerous images, and questions. I will require a projector and laptop, and will bring my PowerPoint presentation on a thumb drive. I will also be prepared to do the presentation on Zoom as a PowerPoint, with live and interactive audience components.

BIO for Susan J. Torntore (please feel free to shorten as needed)

Susan Torntore is a weaver and knitter, educator, textile curator, lecturer, and author, specializing in textile history and the cultural perspectives of textiles and clothing. As a long-time museum curator and exhibition designer, she loves researching, telling, and teaching the stories of anything textile. After leaving academia 5 years ago, she has returned to weaving, dyeing, teaching, and writing in Bellingham WA, and is a member of the Skagit Valley, Whatcom, and Whidbey Island guilds. Susan worked with (and fell in love with) Cashin's designs as curator of the Textile and Clothing Museum at Iowa State University (2002-2007). This project resulted in a collaborative fashion exhibition with the Historic Textile and Clothing Collections at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She recently began a research project on the sourcing and production of Cashin's handwoven fabrics, including weaving samples to understand the design and structure of the complex "couture tweeds" used in many of Cashin's styles.

Contact Info

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PHOTOS

I love this top photo! I think we can use these photos without permission as an educational venue; as the online newsletter is password protected. These can be sent as separate jpg files if you want to use them. I have some other press photos of models in garments. Let me know if you want others or a different one.

Caption and credit

Bonnie Cashin, in 1961, wearing one of her creations: a black-and-white tweed cape with leather trim typical of her designs. Bill Aller/The New York Times



Caption and credit

Couture tweed suit and jersey funnel neck ensemble, Bonnie Cashin, 1964.

