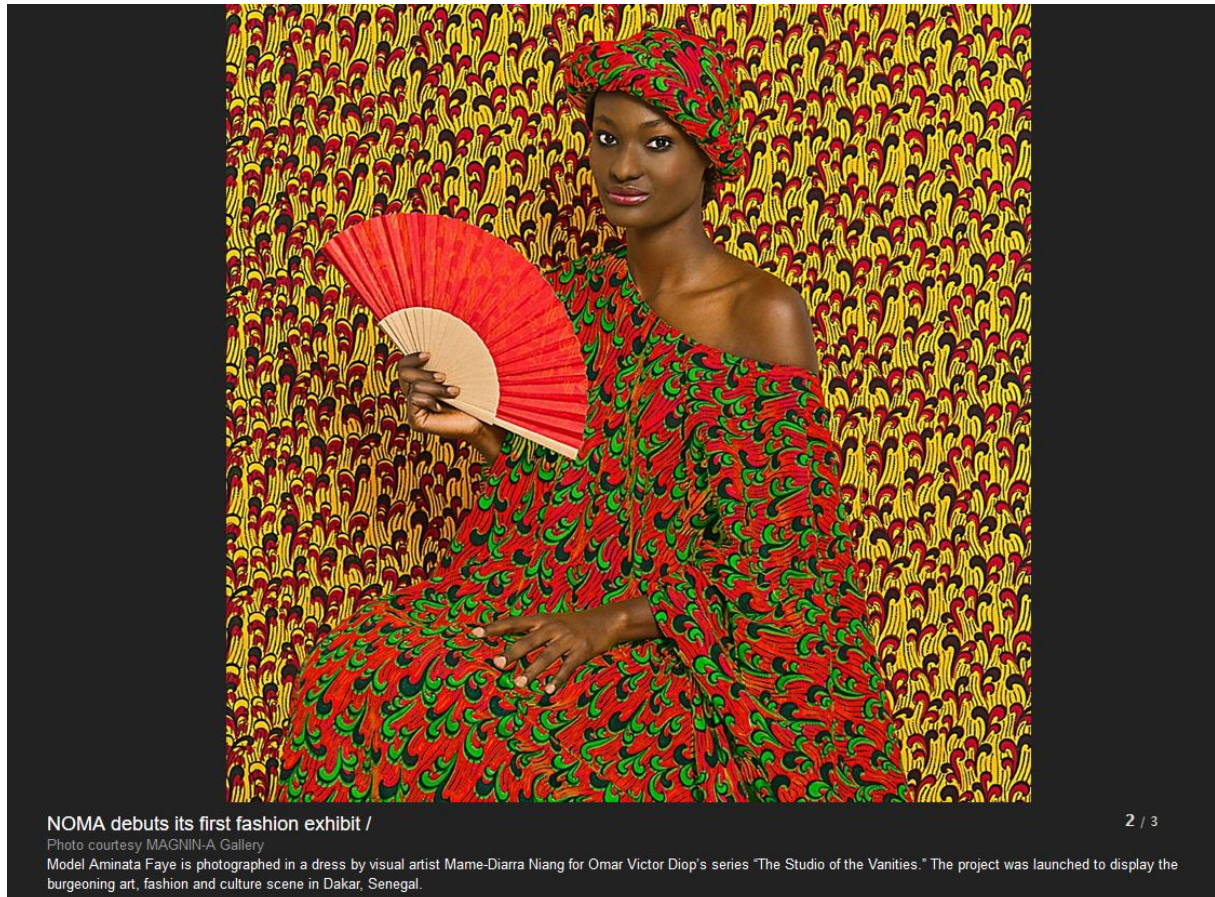


NOMA debuts its first fashion exhibit Feb. 21

Where art meets fashion (meets art)

By Katherine M. Johnson



This Winter, the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) will host its first couture exhibit, titled *A Queen Within: Adorned Archetypes*.

"We were really excited about the opportunity to showcase couture in a way that emphasizes that fashion is art," says Margaux Krane, communications and marketing manager at NOMA.

Each "room" of the exhibit will house multimedia experiences of each of seven female archetypes: The Mother Earth, Sage, Magician, Enchantress, Explorer, Heroine and Thespian. Exhibit items will include gowns, capes and other apparel, photography and artworks that represent both the strengths and weaknesses of each archetype. Some of the works are easily recognizable, some are experimental and some are mind-boggling, including 3-D printed dresses by Iris van Herpen and swim and athletic wear designed via software that inputs custom measurements by Chromat.



"It's going to be an immersive world created through couture, accessories and dramatic lighting, emphasized by the organization of the installation itself," Krane says.

The current major exhibit at NOMA is *East of the Mississippi: Nineteenth-Century American Landscape Photography*. It closes Jan. 2, at which point the *A Queen Within* team will begin renovating the space to accommodate the equipment necessary for the new exhibit.

"It will look like a completely different room," Krane says. "They customize everything, down the colors on the walls. These spaces will feel completely different than they do now. I'm excited to see it — I am envisioning it, but when you actually see it, it's never what you think."

A Queen Within is not a traveling exhibit; the organizers (an international team of curators, collectors and designers) chose New Orleans specifically to display the collection. The exhibit is making its way to the Crescent City through collaboration with art consulting groups Barrett Barerra Projects and MUSEEA, and is sponsored in part by local art patrons Ashley Longshore and Millie Davis Kohn.

"I don't know how many other American cities or museums will get this exhibit," Krane says. "It's a big deal that we will have such a large collection of (Alexander) McQueen items. He's such an important designer, and to see that without having to travel is a gift."

McQueen's work married the edgy and the feminine, and iconic pieces such as brass knuckle-handled handbags and silk scarves emblazoned with skulls became must-haves for everyday consumers and celebrities alike. His couture styles often combined materials like vinyl, tartan and feathers — sometimes in the same garment. Each of his works probably could represent all seven of the archetypes on display in this exhibit.

A Queen Within: Adorned Archetypes opens Feb. 21 and runs through May 28.

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