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Wardrobe of Heiress and Fashion Plate Doris Duke on Exhibit in April

Doris Duke's Newport mansion Rough Point will celebrate fashion and the shopping experience this spring with its 2009 exhibition "Shop Like an Heiress: Buying Fashion in the 20th Century." Visitors will see highlights from Doris Duke's remarkable 9,000 piece clothing collection including custom made couture by designers such as Dior, Givenchy, Halston and Pucci. Displayed in two galleries at Rough Point, the exhibit explores how she shopped for her wardrobe in search of the stylish, chic clothes that established her as one of the best dressed in society. The exhibition opens on April 9, 2009 at Rough Point in Newport, Rhode Island.

Shop Like an Heiress follows Doris Duke from the couture houses of Paris to America's top department stores, illustrating the exclusive shopping experience available to a woman of her class. Doris Duke, like other wealthy American and European women, routinely ordered custom garments from Parisian couturiers including pieces on display by Christian Dior, Jacques Fath and Madame Grès. Her closet reveals an international roster of designers such as Italian designers Emilio Pucci and Irene Galitzine; and the American couturier Halston. She also supplemented her wardrobe with high-end ready-to-wear clothing purchased from department stores such as I. Magnin, Saks Fifth Avenue, Lord & Taylor, Marshall Fields, and Bergdorf Goodman. Photographs of Doris Duke wearing several of the outfits on exhibit will also be included in the display.

Among the exhibit highlights are two remarkable jackets. The first is a 1955 stole by Givenchy designed from silk organza and velvet to look like a red rose, complete with glass beads to represent dew drops. A more modern pink sequined jacket was custom-made made by Halston in 1981 from silk, glass bugle beads, and sequins. The jacket was purchased in the appointment-only salon above Halston's Madison Avenue and 68th Street boutique in New York.

Another distinctive item on exhibit is a circa 1950 cream silk jacket by French designer Cristobal Balenciaga. The tailoring and attention to detail on the jacket is impeccable with each sequin sewn on by hand, all free-stitched hand embroidery, and decorated with hand rolled straw flowers. Balenciaga was one of Doris Duke's favorite designers. She once said that his designs gave her "noble posture." Balenciaga's elite clientele were vetted through the head vendeuse or shop assistant. Clients garments were meticulously handcrafted and fitted several times by Balenciaga himself. Also on exhibit is a handwritten letter in French, with accompanying fabric swatches, from Balenciaga's vendeuse to Doris Duke offering fabric choices for her clothing.

An exciting complement to the exhibit is a display of work by young artists entitled ***Community Couture***. This collaborative project with the Newport Public Schools, underwritten by the Newport Public Education Foundation, features artwork by students from 4th grade, 8th grade and high school. The art was created following visits to Rough Point where students explored art, clothing design, fashion and identity. The season will begin with a special collection of art projects made from recycled clothing created by youth in the after school program at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. Artwork on display will rotate throughout the season.

Shop Like an Heiress will be on exhibit in two galleries at Rough Point from April 9 – November 7 and is included with the house tour. From April 9 – May 9, tours are offered Thursday-Saturday from 10:00-2:00. From May 12 – November 7, tours are offered Tuesday-Saturday from 9:45-3:45. Tickets cost \$25. Children under 12 are admitted free. Advance reservations can be made online at www.newportrestoration.org. Visitors can also purchase tickets at the door. For group tour information, contact Barbara Schlubach at (401) 849-7300 x10 or Barbara@newportrestoration.org.

Rough Point was willed to the Newport Restoration Foundation by Doris Duke upon her death in 1993, complete with all of its contents. It was her express wish that it be opened to the public as a house museum. Founded by Miss Duke in 1968, the Newport Restoration Foundation, a non-profit institution, was formed with the express purpose of preserving, interpreting, and maintaining landscape and objects reflecting Aquidneck Island's 18th and 19th century architectural culture. The foundation continues to be actively engaged in educational efforts, scholarly research and historical preservation.

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