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SCAD PRESENTS

RUTH E. CARTER

AFROFUTURISM IN COSTUME DESIGN

The Academy Award-winning costume designer presents more than 60 costumes showcasing her legendary career.

Photo by Awol Erizku for *The New Yorker*

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA — The Savannah College of Art and Design's SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film is proud to present the monumental exhibition *Ruth E. Carter: Afrofuturism in Costume Design*, Dec. 17, 2020–Sept. 12, 2021. The award-winning museum will showcase more than 60 costumes by Carter, as well as sketches and ephemera illustrating the designer's in-depth historical research and creative process for each project. Carter is an expert storyteller who harnesses the power of visual communication to share vital narratives exploring culture, race, and politics. Creating costumes for generation-defining films like *Black Panther*, *Selma*, and *Do the Right Thing*, she brings vibrancy, nuance, color, and texture to each of her culture-shifting characters. *Afrofuturism in Costume Design* features unforgettable designs from nearly four decades of her career within an Afrofuturistic installation incorporating original artwork by SCAD alum Brandon Sadler (B.F.A., illustration, 2009), whose work was prominently featured in *Black Panther*. Inspired by African masks and Nigerian textiles, Sadler's work for the exhibition connects Carter's celebrated costume designs across various time periods and themes within the overarching concept of Afrofuturism.

Carter's designs enable actors to fully immerse themselves in the roles of their lifetimes, transforming Oprah Winfrey into voting rights activist Annie Lee Cooper, Denzel Washington into Malcolm X, and Chadwick Boseman into T'Challa, the King of Wakanda. In addition to Carter's costumes for Winfrey, Washington, and Boseman, the exhibition also features garments worn by luminaries such as Angela Bassett, Eddie Murphy, Lupita Nyong'o, Rosie Perez, and Forest Whitaker, demonstrating the varied work Carter brings to the screen.

"When I was working on the many Spike Lee films, I got the nickname 'Ruthless' by fellow crew members who would say, 'Hey Ruthless!' I knew it was because I worked so hard behind the scenes, designing the many looks, gathering materials, and getting hundreds of actors in costume, connecting actor to character through fashion. I'm grateful for this opportunity to collaborate with SCAD FASH in bringing my collection together to share my career experience with everyone," said Carter. "The exhibition was created in that spirit of love of self and it serves to empower anyone with an inner creative with a passion to nurture their own voice, like I did, and are determined to

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share their story through their art. I want to inspire a new generation, who are already expressing the need to project a profound personal connection of diversity in storytelling and to do it authentically in a way that connects with their creative self. I want to encourage them to trust their voice and embody their Afrofuture no matter who they are or where they come from.”

The exhibition examines Carter’s oeuvre through the lens of fashion history. SCAD students from top-ranked degree programs, including production design, fashion, film and television, performing arts, and dramatic writing, will have the opportunity to explore these iconic designs and interact with Carter during the exhibition run through installation assistance, master classes, virtual workshops, and in-depth tours.

“Ruth E. Carter, the first Black woman to win an Academy Award for Best Costume Design, has amplified the storytelling magic of films for more than 30 years. She generously shares her creative insights and incomparable work with SCAD students through exclusive master classes.

Ruth’s power, grace, humor, and brilliance animate each of her costumes from *School Daze* to *Selma*, *The Butler* to *Black Panther*,” said SCAD President and Founder Paula Wallace.

In 2019, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded Carter the Academy Award for Best Costume Design for the film *Black Panther*. Carter has also been honored with two Academy Award nominations for her outstanding work in the period ensemble films *Amistad*, directed by Steven Spielberg, and *Malcolm X*, directed by Spike Lee. The designer also earned an Emmy Award nomination in 2016 for the remake of the miniseries *Roots*.

Ruth E. Carter: Afrofuturism in Costume Design is curated by Rafael Gomes, director of fashion exhibitions, and Christina Frank, assistant director of fashion exhibitions, in collaboration with guest curator Julia Long.

For more information on the exhibition and SCAD FASH, visit scadfash.org.



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SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film

SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film celebrates fashion as a universal language, garments as important conduits of identity, and film as an immersive and memorable medium of popular culture. Situated within SCAD Atlanta, the museum presents dynamic exhibitions, captivating films, and enticing events that mine the rich and storied legacies of fashion history to inspire contemporary designers and future innovations. Supported by the university’s strong global presence and connections to renowned contemporary fashion designers, filmmakers, and creative professionals around the world, SCAD FASH is an integral part of the SCAD educational experience.

Like the award-winning SCAD Museum of Art, SCAD FASH serves as a creative resource for students of all ages and a wellspring of inspiration for visitors. Through programming that engages the university’s broad array of academic disciplines, SCAD FASH offers diverse exhibitions, films, installations, performances, and events to enliven and inspire the greater community year-round. Each program is designed to engage and appeal to visitors with varied backgrounds and interests, from textiles and jewelry to photography and film. Past exhibitions have featured the work of designers Azzedine Alaïa, Pierre Cardin, Carolina Herrera, Mary Katrantzou, Guo Pei, and Oscar de la Renta. Photographic exhibitions have featured the work of Jonathan Becker, Bill Cunningham, and Omar Victor Diop. Exhibitions are accompanied by curated film series that complement programming. Past films include *Pierre Cardin: Le Futur*, *The First Monday in May*, *Funny Face*, *The Leopard*, and *Ovation for Oscar*, among others.

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The Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited university, offering more than 100 academic degree programs in more than 40 majors across its locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia; Lacoste, France; and online via SCAD eLearning and SCADnow.

SCAD enrolls approximately 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 100 countries. The innovative SCAD curriculum engages professional-level technology and other advanced learning resources, and affords students opportunities for internships, professional certifications, and real-world assignments with corporate partners through SCADpro, the university’s renowned research lab and prototype generator. In 2019, the prestigious Red Dot Design Rankings placed SCAD as the No. 1 university in the U.S. and in the top two universities in the Americas and Europe for the third consecutive year. Career preparation is woven into every fiber of the university, resulting in a superior alumni employment rate. In a study of Spring 2019 SCAD graduates, 99% were employed, pursuing further education, or both within 10 months of graduation. SCAD provides students and alumni with ongoing career support through personal coaching, alumni programs, a professional presentation studio, and more. For more information, visit scad.edu.

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