



McCORD MUSEUM

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Reveal or Conceal? A provocative look at fashion and modesty



With each decade of the past century, fashionable clothing has revealed more of the female body. Could there be more to this exposure than meets the eye? From February 22, 2008 to January 18, 2009, the McCord Museum presents an exhibition exploring changing ideas of modesty and eroticism in fashionable women's clothing over the past century and a half.

How are boundaries of modesty negotiated in fashion? A full hoop skirt which obscured the outlines of a woman's lower body, yet swayed to reveal her well-turned ankles, a thong undergarment peeking out over the waistband of low jeans, and a bathing suit recommended by the *Ligue catholique féminine* (Catholic Women's League) to make beaches more modest all provide insight into notions of acceptable display of women's bodies.

The relationship between women's bodies and clothing is illustrated with the McCord Museum's outstanding Costume and Textiles collection. Over two hundred garments and accessories are displayed on invisible hollow mannequins, which showcase the artifact while evoking the absent body. Large-scale photographs and archival documents complete a thought-provoking exhibition which exposes the contradictions of revealing and concealing.

Reveal or Conceal? shows just how much ideas about women's bodies have changed, and how much they've stayed the same.

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For more information, pictures, or to schedule an interview with the curator, please contact:

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