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Cleveland Museum of Natural History Media Contact: Samantha Guenther,
sguenther@cmnh.org

Kent State University Media Contact: Jen Crabtree, jcrabt13@kent.edu

Kent State University Museum Director: Sarah Spinner, Ph.D., J.D., sspinner@kent.edu

Cleveland Museum of Natural History and Kent State Present ‘Fashion & Feather,’ a Cross-Disciplinary Exhibition

(KENT, OH) — The Kent State University Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the Kent State School of Fashion announce “Fashion & Feather,” a cross-disciplinary exhibition exploring the beauty, complexity and cultural significance of feathers.

Opening on Earth Day at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the exhibition will be on view April 22 through Oct. 16, bringing together historic fashion, ornithological specimens, cultural objects and contemporary student designs to examine the complex relationship between people and the natural world.

Organized by species – including peacocks, ostriches, kingfishers and roosters – the exhibition is presented in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s new Visitor Hall, a free community gathering space designed to welcome all audiences. There, ornithological taxidermy mounts and cultural objects from its research collections are paired with feather-adorned garments and accessories from the Kent State University Museum’s world-renowned historic fashion collection. Together, these objects highlight both the form and function of feathers in the natural world and the ways humans have adapted them for ornamentation and design.

The museum exhibition is curated by Sara Hume, Ph.D., curator and professor at the Kent State University Museum, in partnership with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s exhibition team, including Meghan Strong, Ph.D., director of collections, and Lindsay Miller, exhibit project manager. The project grew out of “For the Birds,” an exhibition presented at the Kent State



University Museum in 2018; this new exhibition partnership reflects the museum's expanded focus on community engagement and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

"The variety of ways that people have used feathers for their own adornment provides a fascinating counterpoint against the ways feathers serve the birds," Hume said. "By placing fashion objects alongside ornithological and cultural collections, 'Fashion & Feather' allows us to see the beauty as well as the amazing functionality of feathers."

"This partnership exemplifies the Kent State University Museum's mission to break down disciplinary boundaries and serve as a platform for creativity, learning and connection across the campus and across the region," said Sarah Spinner, Ph.D., J.D., director of the Kent State University Museum.

"Feathers show us that nature is the original designer," said Sonia Winner, President & CEO of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. "By activating our extraordinary collections in new ways, 'Fashion & Feather' invites audiences to see biodiversity from a fresh perspective and recognize how deeply human creativity is connected to the natural world."

Extending the exhibition into the classroom, "Fashion & Feather" connects both museum collections to hands-on, interdisciplinary design practice. Drawing inspiration from historic fashion and natural history objects, students in Kent State's School of Fashion developed original biomimicry-inspired designs using non-animal fabrics and materials. The student works were created in the junior design studio led by Assistant Professor Daniel Fladung, alongside Lecturer Jackie Hughes, Senior Lecturer Archana Mehta and Professor Linda Ohrn-McDaniel. These works were then selected through a critique process conducted by staff from the Kent State University Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, as well as the Portage Park District's Education Program Coordinator, Holly Stoneberg. The designs will be on view in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Corning Gallery.

"We are thrilled for our students to have the opportunity to work directly with museum collections while thinking critically about design, conservation and sustainability," said Mourad Krifa, Margaret Clark Morgan Director of the Kent State School of Fashion.

"Designing in conversation with both fashion and natural history collections pushes students to think differently about materials, construction and responsibility," Fladung said. "The students



produced ambitious, creative work without using any bird feathers, engaging seriously with questions of sustainability and real-world impact.”

“Fashion & Feather” will be on view at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History from April 22 through Oct. 16. The exhibition is partly located in the Museum’s [Visitor Hall](#), which is always free to the public. To access the rest of the exhibition in Corning Gallery, purchase a [general admission ticket](#). A student fashion show related to the exhibition will follow in fall 2026; that date will be announced later.

“Fashion & Feather” has received generous exhibition sponsorship from Supporting Sponsor Cathy Lincoln and Partner Sponsors Regina and Gregg Eisenberg, Dr. Michael and Mrs. Catherine Keith, Dr. Linda L. McDonald, and Judith McMillan, and operating support from the Ohio Arts Council.

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Members of the media can access additional information, bios, and downloadable photo and video assets [in the press kit](#).

About the Cleveland Museum of Natural History

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History illuminates the world around us and inspires visitors to engage with the natural forces that shape their lives. Since its founding in 1920, the Museum has pioneered scientific research to advance knowledge across diverse fields of study and used its outstanding collections, which encompass millions of artifacts and specimens, to deepen the public’s understanding of the dynamic connections between humans and nature. Through its Natural Areas Program, the Museum stewards more than 12,500 acres of protected ecosystems across northern Ohio. A community gathering place, educational center, and research institution, the Museum is a vital resource that serves Cleveland and the nation. For more information, visit [CMNH.org](#).

About the Kent State University Museum

The Kent State University Museum houses one of the world’s most important collections of fashion, textiles and decorative arts, spanning the mid-1700s to the present. With more than 30,000 objects and seven gallery spaces, the museum serves the university community and the



broader public through exhibitions, research and object-based learning. To learn more, visit www.kent.edu/museum.

About Kent State University's School of Fashion

Established in 1983 as Kent State University's Shannon Rodgers and Jerry Silverman School of Fashion Design and Merchandising, the school is a research-led teaching institution that fosters industry excellence and is grounded in real-world industry experience. Through its programs and initiatives, it is developing the next generation of fashion thinkers to build a sustainable and fruitful industry that supports creative employment for years to come.

Kent State is in the top 25 fashion programs in the world and No. 6 in the United States. Additionally, the graduate program for fashion is No. 5 in the United States. Kent State's School of Fashion boasts three undergraduate degrees in fashion design and merchandising, and a variety of programs for all students to grow creatively. Located in Kent, Ohio, the school offers several education-away programs, including New York City; Florence, Italy; Paris, France; and Hong Kong, China. From the school's location in the Garment District, students studying in New York have a unique opportunity to work with industry leaders, explore the marketplace and gain experience with internships.

For more information about Kent State's School of Fashion, visit www.kent.edu/fashion.