



THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

White House Historical Association Partners With New York University to Sponsor First-Ever Digital Exhibition Internship Exploring White House Fashion History Through Art

NYU Costume Studies Graduate Student Will Digitally Unveil Stories Behind First Ladies' Clothing, Examining the Cross Section Between History, Fashion, and Social Justice

January 11, 2022 (Washington D.C.) -- [The White House Historical Association](#), a private non-profit organization founded by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in 1961, has announced a new academic partnership with the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University. The Association will sponsor a semester-long internship that will support the work of NYU Costume Studies graduate student Maegan Jenkins - the Association's inaugural Digital Exhibition intern. Jenkins will collaborate with the Association's David M. Rubenstein National Center for White House History and its Digital Library team to create a new digital exhibit on a topic related to fashion and White House history.

The internship project aligns with the Association's focus for 2022 on "White House Tastemakers and Trendsetters," which encompasses a closer look at the cuisine, fashion, social traditions, and individuals who lived, visited, or worked in the White House and inspired or influenced American culture.

Jenkins' digital exhibit, Glamour and Innovation: The Women Behind the Seams of Fashion at the White House, will highlight the storied careers of eight independent and lesser-known female designers, seamstresses, and couturiers who created designs for several first ladies.

"I am very excited to be contributing to this innovative digital exhibition being done by the White House Historical Association. In my own work, I'm fascinated by the stories of the people who work behind the scenes, who often go unnoticed and unappreciated, but who are an essential part of the success of the prominent figures that hold our attention throughout history. I'm looking forward to highlighting the inventive work of these women designers, seamstresses, and dressmakers who created cutting-edge fashions for the First Ladies of the White House."

"We are thrilled to partner with New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development to support the incredible work of Maegen Jenkins," said Stewart McLaurin, President of the White House Historical Association. "Maegan's digital exhibit provides another opportunity to share the legacy of the White House with fellow Americans, and through a unique artistic lens."

"The partnership between the White House Historical Association and NYU Steinhardt's Costume Studies program exemplifies how institutions can leverage their unique strengths to create innovative artistic projects and bring new insights to the public. Fashion is a vital and highly influential cultural product, and this is particularly evident in the history of dress among the White House's most prominent figures, which has helped shape our understanding of America's power, legacy, and evolving attitudes for centuries. We're excited that Maegan is applying her considerable talents to shining a light on the underrepresented figures that made this history possible," said Nancy Deihl, Chair of the Department of Art and Art Professions at NYU Steinhardt.

Through a mix of archival photography, portraits, and press clippings, Jenkins' exhibit will cover over a hundred years in fashion history, beginning with Elizabeth Keckley, Mary Lincoln's dressmaker who was born enslaved, through to Mary Matise, who designed Rosalynn Carter's 1977 inaugural gown. High resolution images will also support the digital exhibit, allowing virtual visitors to engage closely with the dresses and examine their intricate detail and craftsmanship.

Formally trained in fine art with an emphasis on fiber and textiles, Jenkins is currently an MA/MS candidate in the Costume Studies and Library and Information Sciences dual degree program at NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. She is also a graduate fellow at the Gardiner Foundation, contributing to the digitization of their museum archives and metadata.

Jenkins' internship will run from January 18 to May 9, 2022.

For more information on the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.

About The White House Historical Association

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy envisioned a restored White House that conveyed a sense of history through its decorative and fine arts. In 1961, the White House Historical Association was established to support her vision to preserve and share the Executive Mansion's legacy for generations to come. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association's mission is to assist in the preservation of the state and public rooms, fund acquisitions for the White House permanent collection, and educate the public on the history of the White House. Since its founding, the White House Historical Association has contributed more than \$50 million in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.

About NYU Costume Studies

Since 1979, NYU Steinhardt's MA Program in Costume Studies has focused on the history of dress and textiles in its broadest aesthetic and cultural context. It was the first curriculum in the U.S. to educate specialists in this field. With a core of courses on the history of fashion and textiles, the program trains students in the research and analysis of the fascinating phenomenon of dress.

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