



SCAD  
MUSEUM OF ART

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Curriculum Guide

# OSCAR DE LA RENTA

Feb. 5 - May 3, 2015

Front Cover:

Oscar de la Renta

Silk evening gown

Resort 2013, ready-to-wear

Worn by Beyoncé, Vogue cover, March 2013.

Loan: Oscar de la Renta Archive, New York City. Courtesy of the artist.

# SCAD: The University for Creative Careers

The Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution conferring bachelor's and master's degrees at distinctive locations to prepare talented students for professional careers. SCAD offers degrees in more than 40 majors, as well as minors in more than 60 disciplines. With over 29,000 alumni worldwide, SCAD demonstrates an exceptional education and unparalleled career preparation.

At locations in Savannah and Atlanta, Georgia; in Hong Kong; in Lacoste, France; and online through SCAD eLearning, the diverse student body consists of nearly 12,000 students from across the United States and more than 100 countries. SCAD's innovative curriculum is enhanced by advanced, professional-level technology, equipment and learning resources. The university, students, faculty and alumni have garnered acclaim from respected organizations and publications worldwide, including Time, Vogue Magazine and U.S. News & World Report.

SCAD is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097; telephone number 404.679.4500) to award bachelor's and master's degrees. The university confers Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Architecture, Master of Arts, Master of Fine Arts and Master of Urban Design degrees, as well as undergraduate and graduate certificates. The professional M.Arch. degree is accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board.

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Oscar de la Renta  
Custom duchesse satin cocktail dress, 2005  
Worn for the Lovely Perfume campaign.  
Loan: Sarah Jessica Parker, New York City



# SCAD Museum of Art

The SCAD Museum of Art (SCADMOA) showcases work by acclaimed artists, providing opportunities for students from all majors to learn from art world luminaries and expand their artistic points of view.

Mounting more than 20 exhibitions each year, the museum has presented such renowned artists as Jane Alexander, Uta Barth, Lynda Benglis, Alfredo Jaar, Sigalit Landau, Liza Lou, Angel Otero, Yinka Shonibare, Kehinde Wiley and Fred Wilson. André Leon Talley, SCAD trustee and Vogue contributing editor, regularly curates couture exhibitions such as “Little Black Dress” alongside ever-changing, site-specific installations by such artists as Kendall Buster, Ingrid Calame, Odili Donald Odita and Jack Whitten. The museum’s permanent collection includes the Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art, the Modern and Contemporary Art Collection, the Earle W. Newton Collection of British and American Art, the 19th- and 20th-century Photography Collection, and the SCAD Costume Collection.

The museum building itself is a work of art, demonstrating the university’s ongoing commitment to historic preservation and adaptive reuse. Constructed in 1853, the original walls feature handmade Savannah gray bricks, forming the oldest surviving antebellum railroad depot in the country. In 2011, this National Historic Landmark was transformed into an award-winning, modern museum building by architect Christian Sottile, a SCAD alumnus and dean of the SCAD School of Building Arts.

SCAD students are the heart of this teaching museum; they attend academic classes and career workshops, lecture series, film screenings, gallery talks and annual events within its storied walls. SCAD students also serve as museum docents, welcoming visitors, interpreting the exhibitions and interacting with illustrious museum guests. As a center for cultural dialogue, the SCADMOA engages students through dynamic, interdisciplinary educational experiences.

## **Museum awards**

Since opening its doors in October 2011, the renovated museum has been celebrated for its inspired architecture and design, world-class exhibitions and visionary community outreach and education programs that enrich art enthusiasts, educators and students of all ages.

SCAD is proud to be recognized by the following:

- AIA Institute Honor Award for Architecture
- AIA South Atlantic Region, Design Award
- American Concrete Institute-Georgia chapter, First Place in Restoration Category
- American Institute of Architects-Savannah chapter, Honor Award (top honor awarded)
- Congress for the New Urbanism, Charter Award
- Historic Savannah Foundation, Preservation Award
- International Interior Design Association (IIDA)-Georgia chapter, Best of the Best Forum Design Award and Best of the Best Forum Award (education category)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Preservation Award
- Southeastern Museums Conference Exhibition Competition, Certificate of Commendation for the outstanding exhibit “Pose/Re-pose: Figurative Works Then and Now”
- Southeastern Museums Conference Publication Competition, Gold Award for the SCAD Museum of Art Curriculum Guide





# Oscar de la Renta

“I design clothes for women to wear. I am not interested in shock tactics. I just want to make beautiful clothes.”

Oscar de la Renta's story begins on July 22, 1932 in the Dominican Republic, where he grew up in a household of women, surrounded by his six older sisters, mother and grandmother. Oscar's mother, Maria Antonia, was an ardent supporter of her son's artistic talents and encouraged him to pursue his desire to study painting in Spain. At the age of 18, he moved to Madrid to attend the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando.

As a student, Oscar immersed himself in the culture of Spain and, to make extra money, took up fashion sketching. His talent and appreciation for fashion soon found him working for one of the greatest couturiers of all time, Cristobal Balenciaga. With his sights set on Paris, Oscar requested a transfer to the designer's Parisian salon, but was denied. He decided to make the move on his own.

Once in Paris, Oscar found employment at Lanvin with Spanish designer Antonio Castillio, whose impeccably made garments adorned the city's high society ladies. After two years under Castillio's tutelage, Oscar decided to leave Europe altogether. In 1963, he arrived in New York where the fashion industry was heavily influenced by Parisian design, and where Oscar quickly was hired by

Elizabeth Arden. By 1965, Oscar had his own label and, in 1967, his collection "The Road of Spices" earned him his first Coty Award, the prestigious recognition conferred upon designers for their significant contribution to fashion.

In many ways, this was only the beginning of Oscar's ascent as a designer. His remarkable legacy transcends even the fashion empire he built through the relationships he made. Many of the dresses included in this exhibition were loaned by Oscar's friends and loyal clientele, with several of the dresses staged to reflect photographs taken of the garments as worn by their owners on special occasions.

Beyond his work as Chairman of Oscar de la Renta, LLC, he was a tireless patron of the arts. Oscar served on the Boards of Trustees for Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, New Yorkers for Children, and the Americas Society. He was also a dual citizen of the United States and the Dominican Republic, where he served as Ambassador at Large.

This exhibition is a celebration of Oscar de la Renta and his work, curated by Oscar's long-time colleague, protégé, and friend, Andre Leon Talley for the SCAD Museum of Art.

Oscar de la Renta, Custom beaded silk evening gown, 2010  
Worn to the 2010 "American Woman: Fashioning a National Identity" Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Gala.  
Loan: Oprah Winfrey, Santa Barbara, California



# Curriculum Guide

“Oscar de la Renta: His Legendary World of Style” offers an unparalleled view of the legacy of one of the most influential designers of the 20th and 21st centuries. This curated collection of his garments invites audiences to explore both the breadth of his work and the iconic status his pieces attained.

This curriculum guide provides standards-based exercises for high school students, extending learning opportunities from the museum to the classroom. It is intended to help educators create engaging classroom experiences that enhance students’ understanding of works found at the SCADMOA.

The following learning exercises have been devised to capture Oscar de la Renta’s approach to fashion and the essence of his designs, with emphasis on the influence of surrounding cultures and attention to the wearer’s sense of individuality.

These exercises can be adapted as needed to meet individual learning styles and levels. Following the exercises are note pages for students to record their experience.

Oscar de la Renta  
Silk faille evening gown  
Worn to the 2014 “Charles James: Beyond Fashion”  
Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Gala.  
Loan: Lauren Santo Domingo, New York City

# Exercise 1: American First Ladies

“I think that, regardless of your political inclination, if the First Lady of your country asks you to do something, you don’t say no.”

**Oscar de la Renta’s fashion transcended party lines.** He built his career on the philosophy that all women want to be beautiful, and he brought out the singular beauty and character of each woman he designed for. As American first ladies took on a more pronounced role in the public eye in the 20th century, de la Renta set out to help define them as icons with his unmistakable style. Creating a cultural icon requires a keen sense of the characteristics that define a specific moment in history. De la Renta’s fashions embodied American tastes and attitudes through the decades, while his designs for first ladies were meant to reflect their distinct personalities, values, and roles.

The timeline to the right shows all of the first ladies who wore Oscar de la Renta designs during their time in the White House. Choose one or two of the First Ladies and, in the space provided below, list one or two important events that defined the culture of that time. Can you describe how the dresses in the exhibition might reflect the culture of the time that they were created and worn?

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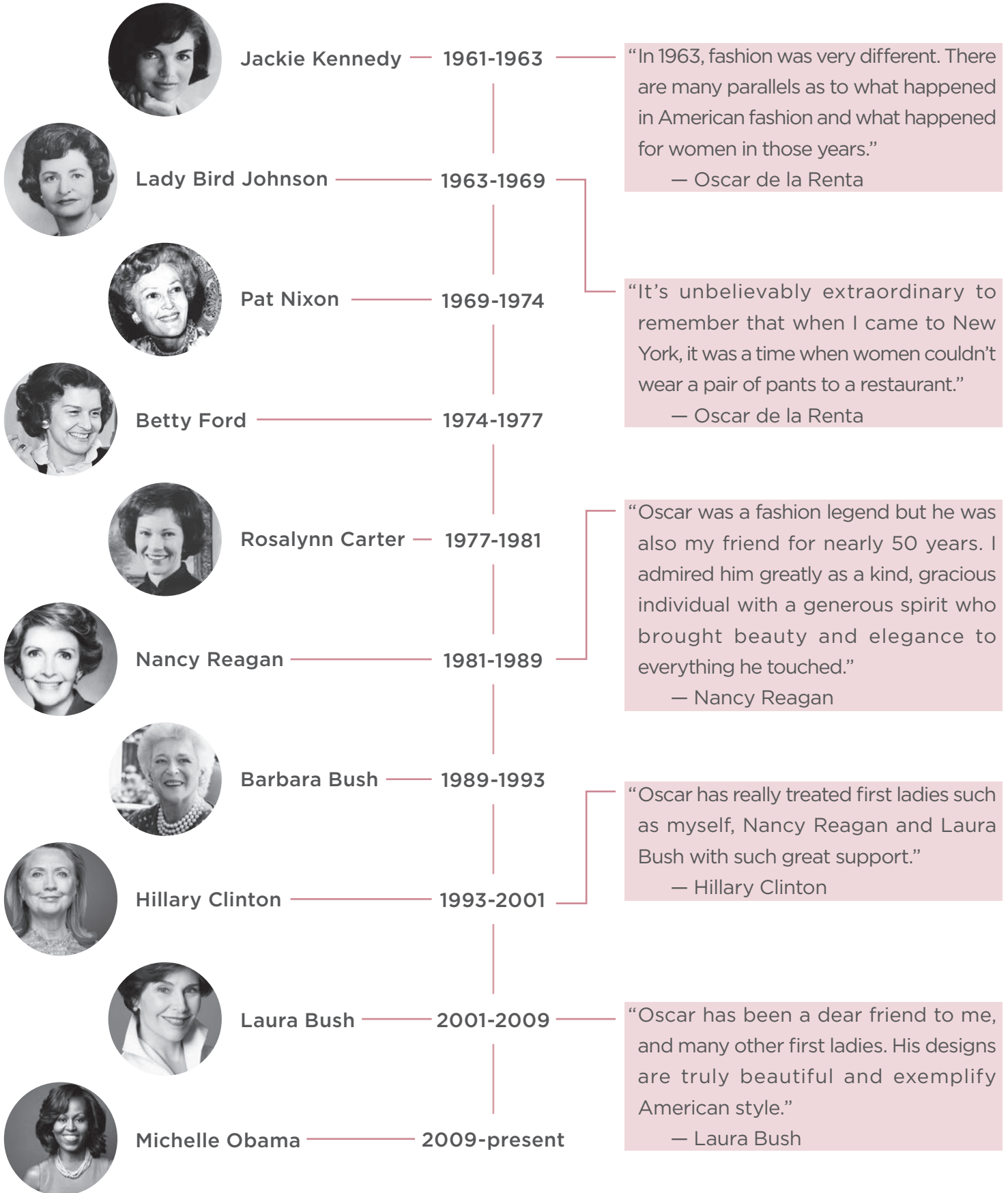
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# Exercise 2: Spanish Influences

While Oscar de la Renta is recognized as an iconic American designer, his fashion often reflected the influences of other cultures. De la Renta was born in the Dominican Republic, but traveled to Spain at the age of 18 to study formally at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. He recognized the enduring influence of Spanish culture on his work:

“I fell madly for Spain, its people, its landscape and life in Madrid. The sights, sounds, and drama of Spanish culture — bullfights, flamenco, and the most festive celebrations such as the traditional ferias of Seville and fallas of Valencia, were burned forever in my imagination, defining my own aesthetic.”

Independently research the culture of Spain. What are some of the most vivid cultural figures or features that you find? Do you see any evidence of Spanish influence in the dresses shown in the exhibition?

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Create a sketch of your own original design based on Spanish influences. You can create any item of clothing or an accessory.



Write three to four sentences describing how your design is iconic of Spanish culture.

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## Exercise 3: Individual Culture

“Fashion is about dressing according to what’s fashionable. Style is more about being yourself.”

Imagine that you wanted to create your own clothing line that would capture the essence of your own culture, time in history, and a personality—either yourself, a friend, a celebrity, or a political figure. Think about the events, images, and activities that define our society. Think about the characteristics that make your chosen person one-of-a-kind. Use the lines below to list at least three ideas in each column that could be incorporated into your design.

**American culture in 2015**

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**Specific person**

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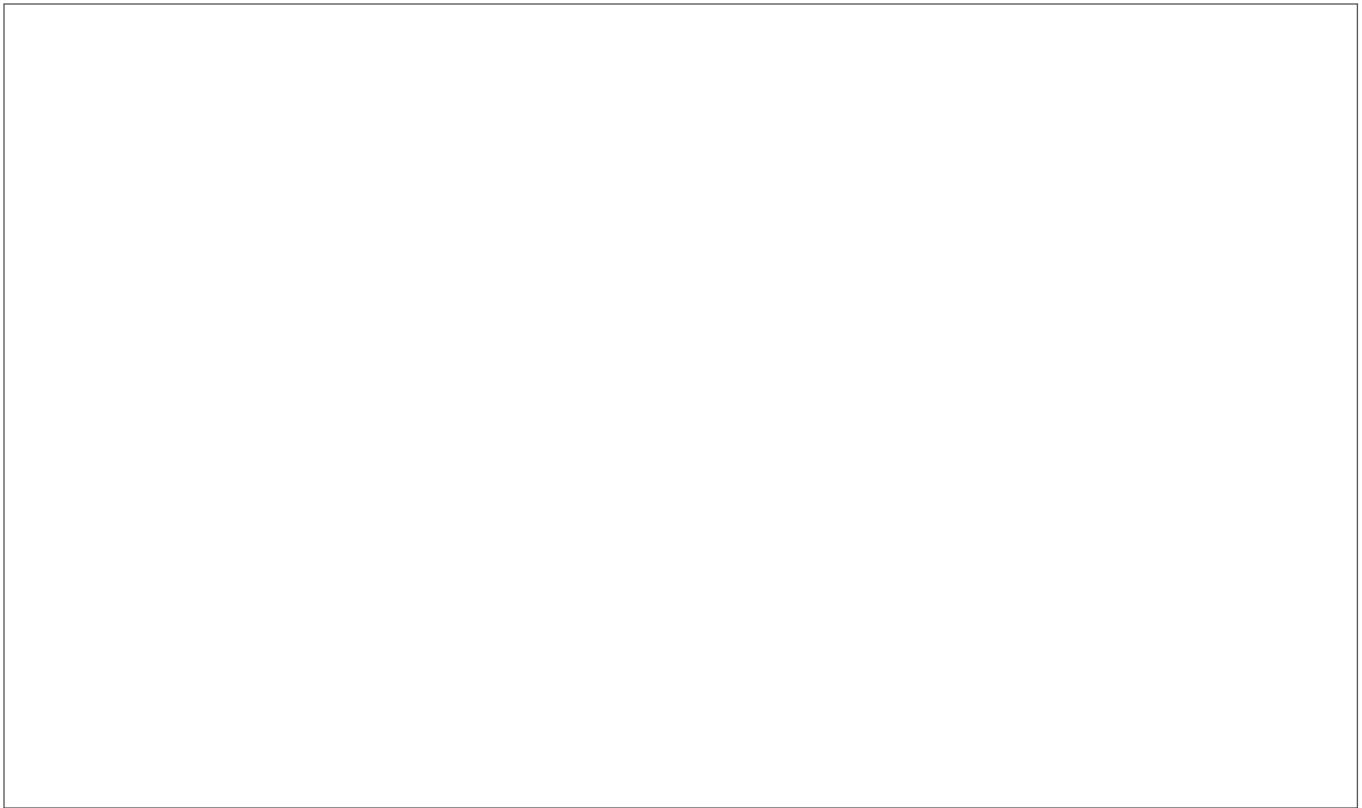
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Now, create a sketch of one item that would be included in your clothing line. It can be any article of clothing or accessory.



Write a brief description of your design, including the colors and fabrics that would be used. Explain how your design reflects your own cultural understanding.

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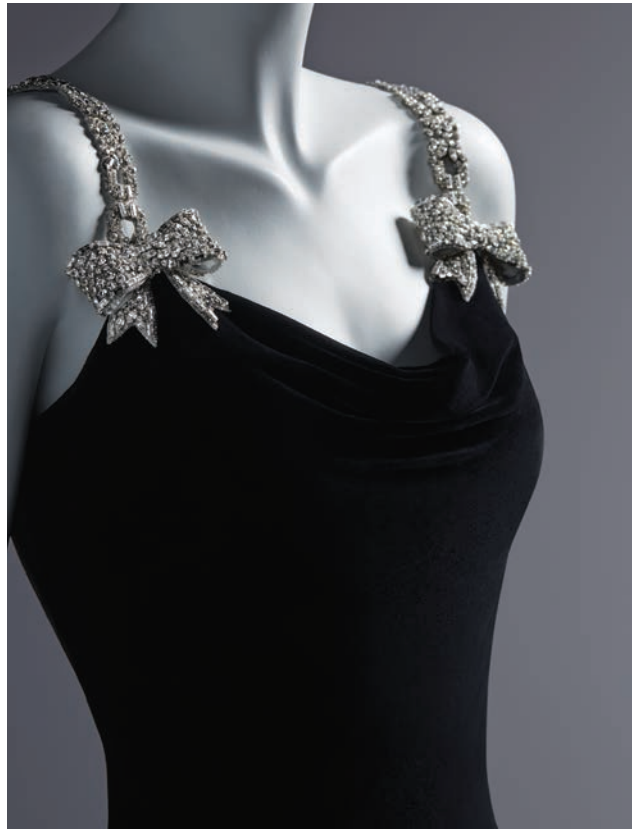
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Left:  
Oscar de la Renta, Embroidered and sequined evening gown  
Spring 2010, ready-to-wear  
Worn to the 2010 SAG Awards.  
Loan: Nicole Kidman, Nashville, Tennessee

Right:  
Oscar de la Renta, Embroidered and sequined evening gown  
Spring 2010, ready-to-wear  
Worn to the 2010 "American Woman: Fashioning a National Identity"  
Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Gala  
Loan: Diana Taylor, New York City



Notes:

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Top Left:  
Oscar de la Renta  
Silk embroidered evening gown,  
duplicate worn by Chelsea Clinton to Carnegie Hall in 2013.  
Loan: Anonymous

Top Right:  
Oscar de la Renta for Balmain Haute Couture  
Silk velvet evening gown with diamante straps  
Fall 2000  
Loan: Anonymous

Bottom Left:  
Oscar de la Renta  
Cashmere and satin day dress, 1965-66  
SCAD Museum of Art, gift of Cornelia Guest in honor of her mother  
C.Z. Gues

Bottom Right:  
Oscar de la Renta  
Embroidered cashmere coat and dress  
Worn by First Lady Laura Bush to the 2005 Presidential  
Inauguration.  
Loan: George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum,  
Dallas, Texas

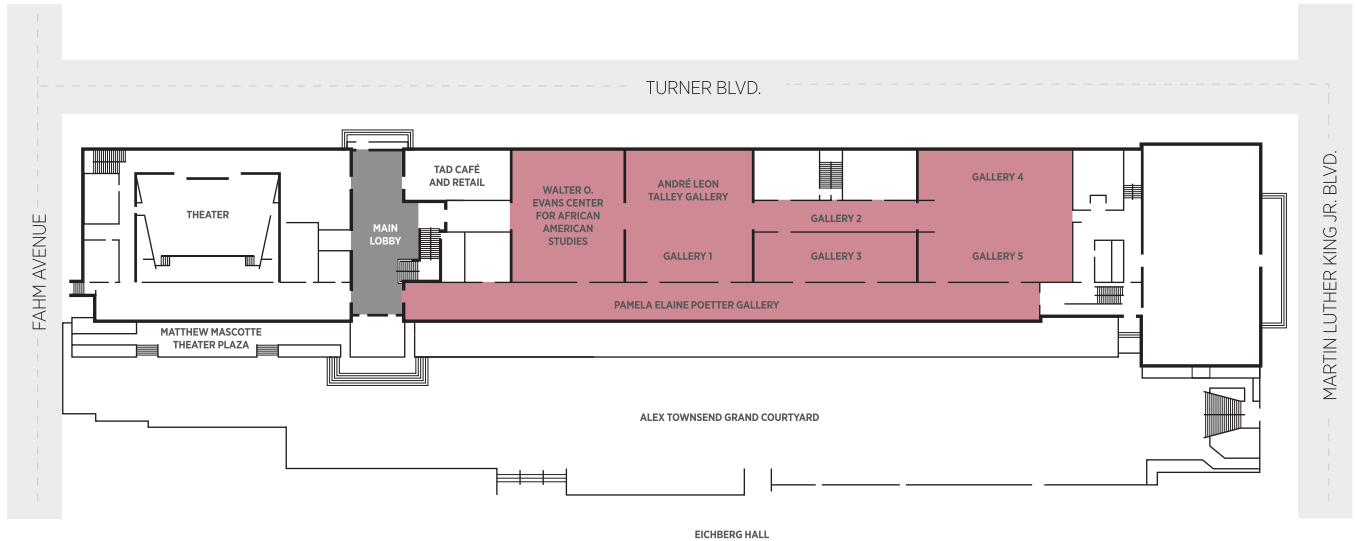




# Museum Maps

## Main Level

Galleries
  Main Lobby







601 Turner Blvd.  
Savannah, Georgia  
912.525.7191  
[scadmoa.org](http://scadmoa.org)