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'Beautiful things get a second chance' at Vintage Clothing Show

Vintage fashion collector Ian Drummond, like the other exhibitors, is really excited about the Toronto Vintage Clothing Show this weekend.



NICK KOZAK FOR THE TORONTO STAR.

An assortment of shoes in Ian Drummond's collection. Drummond is one of the exhibitors at this weekend's Toronto Vintage Clothing Show.

By: Karen von Hahn Fashion Columnist, Published on Wed Sep 25 2013

A nondescript warehouse space south of the QEW is probably the last place one might imagine as a font of creative inspiration.

But that's where Ian Drummond, vintage fashion collector nonpareil and an insider resource for designers and stylists on films such as *The Aviator*, *Capote* and *Chicago*, stashes his life's work.

Since opening his first vintage shop in the Beach back in 1984, Drummond has amassed a truly formidable collection of 20th-century fashion — some 100,000 pieces in all — meticulously hung and ordered by style and era in his 7,500-square-foot warehouse.

I had the opportunity to peruse his warehouse the other day as Drummond prepped for this Saturday's [Toronto Vintage Clothing Show](#).

Zippering through racks the length of a football field as if he were on an invisible skateboard, Drummond is tall as a long drink of water and neatly attired.

"Feel the quality on this," he says, stroking the oddity of an ocelot dickey.

His Holy Grail is a pair of immaculate, silk velvet Fortuny jackets. "My retirement fund," he says.

In Drummond's opinion, the nostalgia business isn't what it used to be.

"Back when I started, people would come in wanting everything Victorian — from the right jewelry to

the right hat and gloves, the perfect shoes — like a period piece. This new generation isn't afraid to smash it up. Go swing dancing in a '40s jacket with a '70s tie — and then they have tattoos.”

Drummond, who sells on eBay and [Etsy](#), credits the shift to both the daring (or some might say stasis) of contemporary fashion designers, who continue to mine past eras for inspiration and mix them like DJs, and the rise of the Internet creating more awareness.

“It's a bit of a double-edged sword because now there's a lot more on the market, a lot more available,” says Drummond. “At the same time, this has raised prices as everyone now understands what good vintage can fetch.”

What remains unchanged is that vintage, unlike even high-end designer fashion, is always guaranteed to be one-of-a-kind.

“The No. 1 calling card for vintage is still uniqueness,” says Drummond.

Show organizer Catherine Knoll, who saw an unprecedented turnout recently at her show in Ottawa, where “they take their vintage very seriously,” intends to fuel this appetite for individual self-expression through social marketing, utilizing Facebook and Twitter to get the word out to a new generation of vintage enthusiasts.

This weekend's show will be the Toronto debut for Knoll, as well as many out-of-town exhibitors such as Judy Grummisch of [Prime Time](#), who shows extensively in the United States, and designer vintage collector Robert Poirier of Montreal.

“Manhattan, Chicago, San Francisco and L.A. all have great vintage shows. Toronto is a creative city,” Drummond says. “It's time we had a premier show of our own.”

He intends to pull a lot of what's hot for fall — fur, burlesque lingerie looks, skins like lizard and alligator — for the show.

After all his years in the biz, Drummond still enjoys the shows.

“It's always great people-watching,” says Drummond, who was recently inspired by the crowd at a [Steampunk](#) show. “There's a lot of creativity out there. I'm amazed at people's ingenuity. Besides, all this repurposing and re-creating gives a lot of beautiful things a second chance.”

The Toronto Vintage Clothing Show takes place Saturday, Sept. 28, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the North Building, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 255 Front St. W. For more information, see: torontovintageclothingshow.ca. Admission is \$10.

Karen von Hahn is a Toronto-based writer, trend observer and style commentator. Contact her at kvh@karenvonhahn.com.