



Handbags: The Making of a Museum

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The history of the handbag—its design, how it has been made, used, and worn—reveals something essential about women's lives over the past 500 years. Perhaps the most universal item of fashionable adornment, it can also be elusive, an object of desire, secrecy, and even fear. Handbags explores these rich histories and multiple meanings.

This book features specially commissioned photographs of an extraordinary, newly formed collection of fashionable handbags that date from the 16th century to the present day. It has been acquired for exhibition in the first museum devoted to the handbag, in Seoul, South Korea. The project is a commission undertaken by experimental exhibition-maker Judith Clark, whose innovative practices are revealed in Handbags.

Essays by leading fashion historians and an acclaimed psychoanalyst investigate the history of gesture, the psychoanalysis of bags, and the museum's state-of-the-art mannequins and archive cabinets. In order to preserve the words that describe the unique qualities of each bag, a terminology of handbags has been compiled.