

on exhibit

HI FASHION

The Legacy of Alfred *Shaheen*

A WHIRL OF VIBRANT COLORS, LINES, IMAGES, AND PATTERNS. BREATHTAKING FLAIR, SUNNY MOTIFS, AND "BOMBSHELL" SENSATIONS. SPLENDID ALOHA STYLES OF THE FIFTIES AND SIXTIES. WEAVE THESE TOGETHER WITH A NEW APPROACH TO DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICE WITHIN THE HAWAIIAN GARMENT INDUSTRY AND WHAT RESULTS IS THE STORY OF ALFRED SHAHEEN, A MAN WHOSE IMPACT WAS MORE THAN MOST WILL EVER RECOGNIZE.

BISHOP MUSEUM CELEBRATES SHAHEEN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH *HI FASHION: THE LEGACY OF ALFRED SHAHEEN*, A SPECIAL HOLIDAY EXHIBITION IN THE CASTLE MEMORIAL BUILDING THAT WILL EXCITE AND DELIGHT MUSEUM VISITORS AT EVERY TURN. THE EXHIBITION FEATURES OVER TWO HUNDRED GEMS OF SHAHEEN FABRIC AND FASHION, ON DISPLAY FROM NOVEMBER 10, 2012, THROUGH FEBRUARY 4, 2013. *HI FASHION* IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE VERY GENEROUS AND GRACIOUS EFFORTS OF ALFRED SHAHEEN'S DAUGHTER, CAMILLE SHAHEEN-TUNBERG. PROGRAMMING FOR THIS EXHIBITION IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE *HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER*, HAWAI'I COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES AND BY THE HIROAKI, ELAINE & LAWRENCE KONO FOUNDATION.





Shaheen moved to Hawai'i from New Jersey with his family in 1938, went on to earn an engineering degree at Whittier College in California, then served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He returned to the Islands in 1945 and stepped easily into the family clothing business. His mother had a custom clothing shop called Margo's. With vision and confidence Shaheen established his own shop, Shaheen's of Honolulu, in 1948. In a Quonset hut outfitted with equipment that he designed, Shaheen built his remarkable silk screening business—an innovative move that led to local production of large quantities of printed fabric, and with quality control in his hands. Prior to this, most fabric used for Hawaiian clothing was manufactured on the U.S. mainland or in Japan.

By 1950, Shaheen put together a business that allowed him to print, dye, and finish his own brand of fabric and streamlined his production to the point of producing 60,000 yards of fabric a month. His fabric was not just of run-of-the-mill cloth—Shaheen teamed up with a textile chemist and others to create metallic paints that glimmered in many of his textiles. These unique inks were just part of the Shaheen library of over 1,000 colors and tones.

Shaheen was a proponent of cultural diversity. His team of local artists and designers reflected a Hawai'i blend of Japanese, Hawaiian, Chinese, and other ethnic groups. Those who worked in the House of Shaheen were encouraged to research, explore, and incorporate cultural motifs in fabric design. Shaheen sent his designers outside the Islands on international trips to gather new ideas. These were combined to create Shaheen's "fashion fusion" style. Shaheen invested in his employees' development, provided good compensation, and valued their work and ideas. In return, Shaheen employees were highly motivated and loyal to the business.

"The greatest lesson he ever taught me was to not have to rely on others when embarking on business ventures, but learn to do things for yourself."

—Camille Shaheen-Tunberg
daughter of Alfred Shaheen

By the time Hawai'i achieved statehood, Shaheen was Hawai'i's largest manufacturer of aloha wear, employed 400 people, and grossed more than \$4 million annually with sales worldwide. His outstanding success resulted from his "vertical manufacturing"—creating his own designs and fabrics, turning them into stunning fashions, and distributing these in his own retail shops and through world-wide wholesaling. This system allowed for a unique branding and rapid popularization of his high-fashion aloha line.

Shaheen retired in 1988, forty years after starting his business. He was honored by the State of Hawai'i with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001. In 2006, the *Honolulu Advertiser* named him one of the 150 most influential people, events, and institutions to effect social, economic, political, and cultural change in Hawai'i from 1856 onward. Alfred Shaheen died in 2008 at the age of 86.

The treasures that make up the Bishop Museum exhibition are from the collection of Camille Shaheen-Tunberg, who has sought out and collected hundreds of garments produced by her father. In 2010, Shaheen-Tunberg worked with the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles to create the first exhibition of Shaheen's work, titled *Hawaii's Alfred Shaheen: Fabric to Fashion*. Bishop Museum is delighted to share the Shaheen story through *HI Fashion: The Legacy of Alfred Shaheen*, a new and larger exhibition featuring the styles and stories of this great pioneer of the Hawaiian garment industry.



Top, left to right: Completing a stencil in the Pua Lani Pareau design for a Shaheen silk screen, 1957. Large printing screens were prepared with designs created by Shaheen and his team of artists. Photo courtesy of Camille Shaheen-Tunberg.

Alfred Shaheen, pioneer of the textile and fashion industry in Hawai'i, 1954. Photo courtesy of Camille Shaheen-Tunberg.

Shaheen's textile printing factory, 1957. By 1950, Shaheen had engineered and built equipment to print, dye, and finish his fabrics. By doing this he assured control over the quality and the quantity of fabric needed for his burgeoning garment business. Photo courtesy of Camille Shaheen-Tunberg.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 9, 2012 — Member Preview. Reservations required (808) 847-8296 or www.bishopmuseum.org.

Nov. 10, 2012 — Exhibit Opening.

Nov. 17, 2012 — *An Evening of HI Fashion*, 6 to 9 p.m. For ticketing, visit www.bishopmuseum.org/hifashion.