

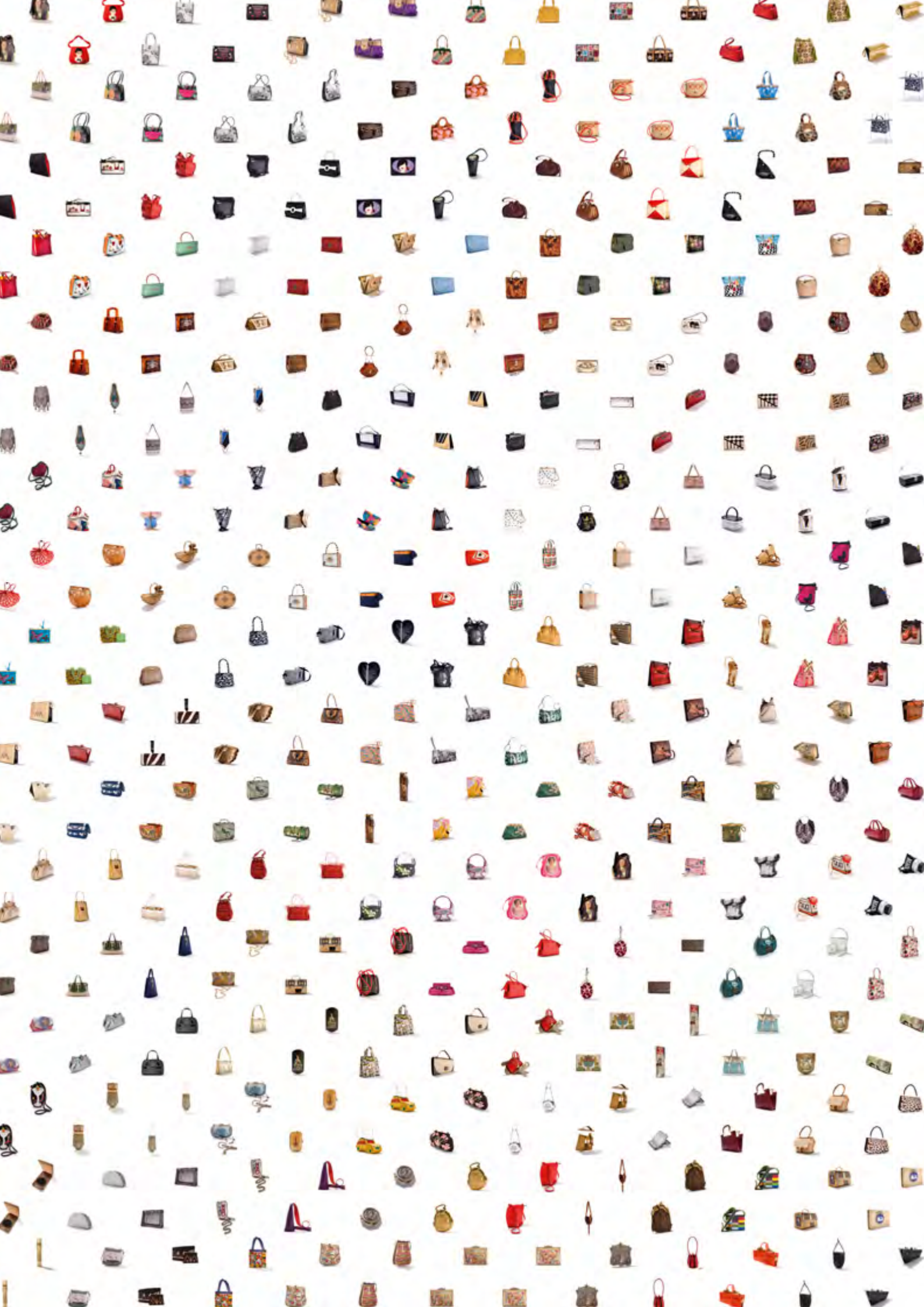


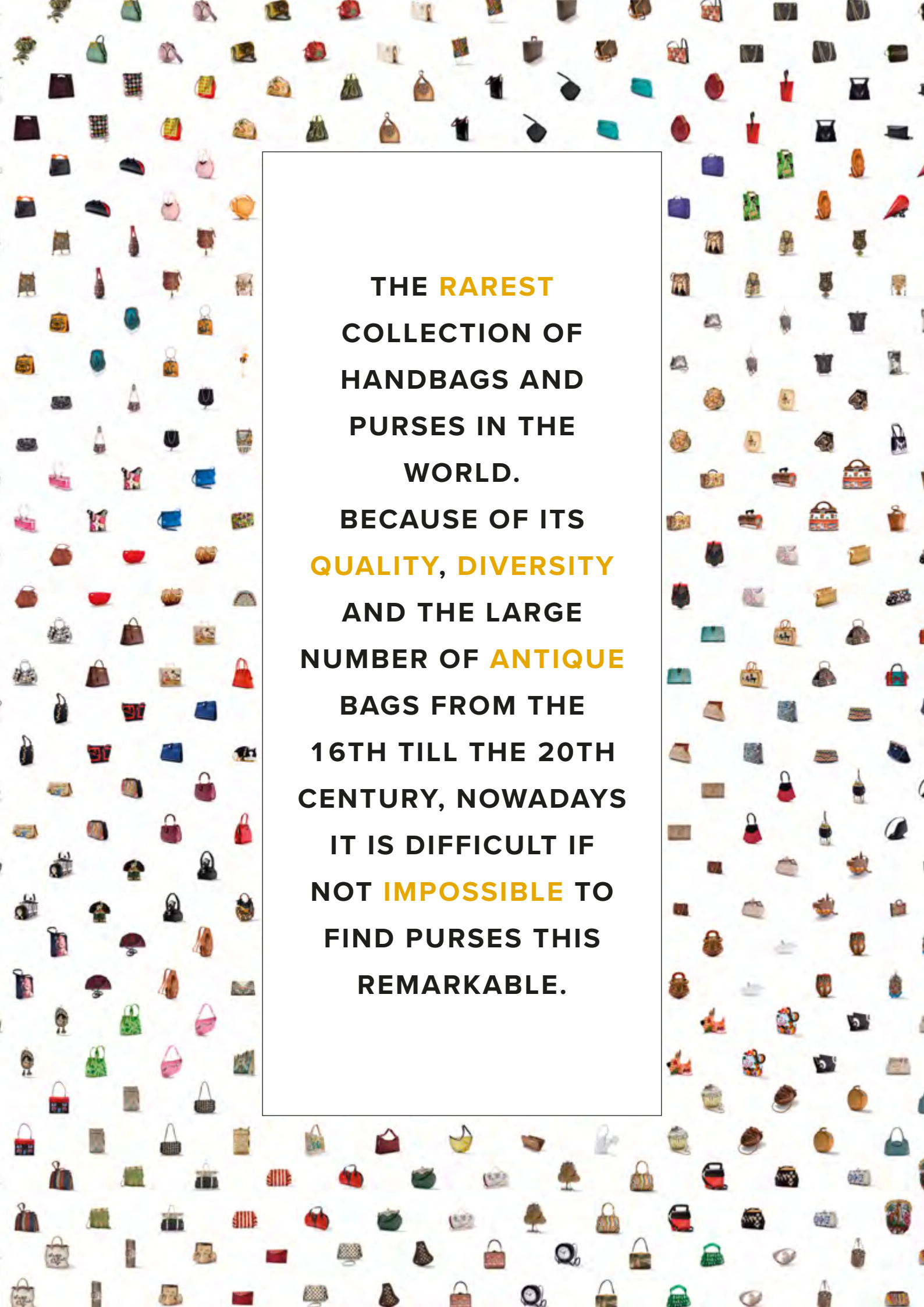
# THE IVO COLLECTION

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THE FORMER MUSEUM OF BAGS AND PURSES

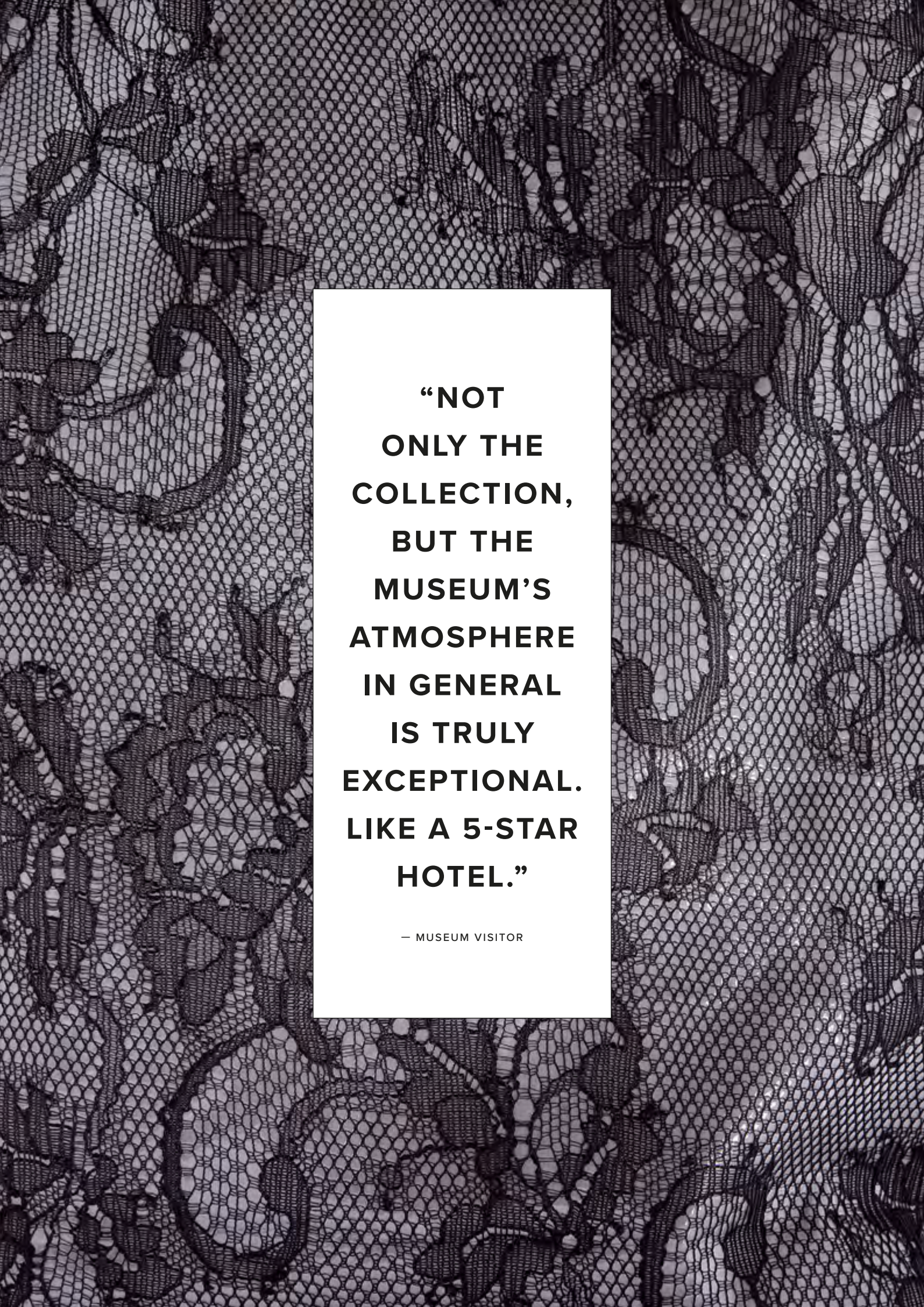
★  
THE LARGEST  
COLLECTION  
OF BAGS AND  
PURSES IN  
THE WORLD

OVER 5,000 ARTIFACTS REFLECTING  
500 YEARS OF HISTORY





**THE RAREST  
COLLECTION OF  
HANDBAGS AND  
PURSES IN THE  
WORLD.  
BECAUSE OF ITS  
QUALITY, DIVERSITY  
AND THE LARGE  
NUMBER OF ANTIQUE  
BAGS FROM THE  
16TH TILL THE 20TH  
CENTURY, NOWADAYS  
IT IS DIFFICULT IF  
NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO  
FIND PURSES THIS  
REMARKABLE.**



**“NOT  
ONLY THE  
COLLECTION,  
BUT THE  
MUSEUM’S  
ATMOSPHERE  
IN GENERAL  
IS TRULY  
EXCEPTIONAL.  
LIKE A 5-STAR  
HOTEL.”**

— MUSEUM VISITOR



## P.07 Introduction

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A New Place for a  
Magnificent Collection?



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A Rare Purse and  
a Museum in an  
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A unique overview of the  
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From a Mansion to a  
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Nº 1158

FROM PERSONAL FASCINATION TO  
THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF BAGS AND PURSES

**A  
NEW PLACE  
FOR A  
MAGNIFICENT  
COLLECTION?**

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Anyone thinking that an everyday object like a purse is not interesting and that the Museum of Bags and Purses is for women only, is manifestly wrong. Not many people know that purses and bags have an extraordinarily rich history. Over the many centuries of its existence bags and purses have developed in remarkable ways. The collection tells you all about it.

THE COLLECTION OF MORE THAN 5,000 PURSES, POUCHES,  
SUITCASES, BAGS & OTHER ACCESSORIES IS KNOWN AS

# THE IVO COLLECTION

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As the daughter of the founders and former director of the Museum of Bags and Purses until 2018 I am obviously prejudiced. But the enthusiasm, interest and appreciation of the museum's visitors convinced me that my parents' extraordinary collection truly deserved a museum.

There is no other collection or museum in the world that is this specialized and deals in such a comprehensive way with this theme. The Museum of Bags and Purses in Amsterdam was the only one in Europe and it was the largest in the world.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the museum had to close its doors permanently in 2020, but the collection of more than 5,000 purses, pouches, suitcases, bags and other accessories continues to exist as the Ivo Collection.

## A PASSION FOR COLLECTING

Many visitors had questions about the collection, its origins and about the beautiful Amsterdam building which housed it. Like so many museums the Museum of Bags and Purses also evolved from a passion for collecting. Over a period of forty years my parents Hendrikje and Heinz Ivo built the collection. Once begun as a personal fascination it resulted in an extensive collection and a museum. In 1996, Hendrikje and Heinz opened

their first Museum of Bags and Purses in their personal residence. In order to meet that purpose they renovated and adapted their home to properly showcase their collection. As the collection expanded in items as well as in



popularity, it soon outgrew the space. With the help of an anonymous benefactor the museum was relocated to a splendid Amsterdam canal house. It was elegant yet accessible and appealed to a wide audience. The

Amsterdam Museum of Bags and Purses was an instant success, averaging a 12% increase in visitors per year. Before it finally closed, it is estimated that between 70,000 and 85,000 people frequented the museum each year.

## ART WITH A LOWER-CASE A

I am often asked, what prompted our benefactor to spend so much money on this museum. He himself expressed it as follows: "The Museum of Bags and Purses, the Ivo Collection, shows art with a lower-case a, because it is accessible for rich and poor, educated and uneducated. Furthermore, at least half of the world's population and more should be interested in it. It is a premier collection on an international level that deserves a premier location. It would be very unfortunate if such a special and unique collection fell apart and disappeared."

Thanks to Hendrikje and Heinz Ivo and their benefactor we enjoyed the privilege of working with such a beautiful collection in a magnificent building each and every day. Through their passion, commitment, contribution, and vision many visitors were able to enjoy the Museum of Bags and Purses on a daily basis. It is our aim and wish to keep the magnificent collection together and give it a new place somewhere in the world. 🗝



A portrait of Dr. Sigrid Ivo, a woman with short, reddish-brown hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a purple button-down shirt. She is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a gentle smile. The background is a patterned wallpaper with a repeating floral and scrollwork design in gold and red tones. The lighting is soft, highlighting her face and the texture of her clothing.

## Drs. Sigrid Ivo

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Founders' daughter and curator of the Ivo Collection and former Museum of Bags and Purses Amsterdam.



**A**  
**RARE PURSE**  
**AND A MUSEUM**  
**IN AN**  
**AMSTERDAM**  
**CANAL HOUSE**

---

She hadn't planned to start a museum, but then a rare purse crossed Hendrikje Ivo's path. 'My husband and I were totally enchanted by this gem. Soon we started to collect more purses.' This was the beginning of a glamorous private museum in Amsterdam.



As an antique dealer and collector, Hendrikje Ivo used to explore antique shops. One day, somewhere in the English countryside, she stumbled across a delightful purse. It was made of tortoise-shell and had a mother-of-pearl inlay.

This purse from the 1820s sparked a collection which eventually amounted to more than 5,000 bags and purses; the largest collection of bags and purses in the world. In the process, Hendrikje learned that purses can be made of almost all materials: melon seeds and cactus fibres, glass beads and pearls, fabric, silver and gold metals, tortoise-shell, ivory, synthetic materials, and last but not least leather. 'Thanks to this variety of materials and the many decorations, there is a wide range of purses and bags.'


#### A UNIQUE MUSEUM

Hendrikje and her husband Heinz wanted other people to enjoy the beauty of the bags and purses they collected so they came up with a bold

plan: a small-scale museum in their own house. This unique museum opened in 1996 and was an instant success. After some years, however, their home museum became so successful that it was too small to accommodate all of the visitors.

Additionally, they could no longer house the growing collection of bags and purses.

#### HENDRIKJE:

'When looking for a sponsor we found a ministering angel; an anonymous Maecenas who saw a superb museum that deserved a high-quality location. He wanted to bring the collection to a higher plane and bought a canal house in Amsterdam where the purses and bags could be properly showcased. In 2007 we moved the collection to this beautiful 17th-century property built by one of Amsterdam's men of influence.' 

*The first bag  
Hendrikje Ivo  
bought sparked  
her love for bags  
and purses and  
gave birth to  
the Museum  
of Bags.*



**N<sup>o</sup> 0040**

*Handbag made of tortoise-shell  
inlaid with mother-of-pearl.*

GERMANY | 1820<sup>s</sup>



## Mrs. Hendrikje Ivo

---

with the first bag she fell in love with,  
the one that started it all.



**Nº 1254**

*A beadwork purse with inscription  
'Remember the pore 1630'. The  
favorite bag of Heinz Ivo.*

ENGLAND | 1630

THE IVO COLLECTION  
IN A NUTSHELL

A  
UNIQUE  
OVERVIEW OF  
THE HISTORY  
OF BAGS AND  
PURSES

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*"Initially a collector collects anything that crosses their path. After some serious study, however, the more goal-oriented search begins."*

— Hendrikje Ivo, founder of the Museum of Bags and Purses



Hendrikje took the hunt for rare and exceptional purses seriously. She and her husband Heinz searched high and low, both at home and abroad, always having their eyes out for quality, uniqueness, an unusual story or exceptional design. This resulted in an unparalleled collection of more than 5,000 bags, purses, pouches, suitcases, and other accessories. Together this collection reflects the history of the handbag in the Western world

**No museum  
in the world  
can boast  
a similar  
diversity and  
excellence in  
style.**

from the end of the Middle Ages to the present day. Famous designers such as Gucci, Prada, Hermès, Chanel, Emilio Pucci, Yves St. Laurent, Judith Leiber, Louis Vuitton and many more are part of this fabulous treasure trove. No museum in the world can boast a similar diversity and excellence in style. For good

reason, the Amsterdam Museum of Bags and Purses, the largest in the world, was praised worldwide for its versatility and quality.

The collection, now identified as the Ivo Collection, is far more than an accumulation of bags and purses. The purse itself has an exceptionally rich history, and over the centuries it developed in remarkable ways. It has been influenced by fashion, the history of art, design, decorative art, female emancipation, industrial and socio-cultural developments. Thus, the purse is more than a pretty accessory, it is also a historical artifact.

#### **LEATHER, TORTOISE-SHELL AND PERSPEX**

What makes the Ivo Collection so unique? Of course there is the quality of the purses as well as their diversity ranging from 16th-century purses and pouches to purses and clutches from contemporary designers. A substantial part of the purses and pouches dating from the 16th till the 20th century is so exceptional that nowadays it is difficult if not impossible to find purses this remarkable.

Then there are the incomparable specimens of hand-made purses and pouches. Some purses are embroidered in 400 stitches per square centimeter. Other purses are made of glass beads as small as a grain of sand. There are tortoise-shell purses set with mother-of-pearl, purses made of cut ivory and purses made of fine silver or golden chain mesh, or set with exclusive, precious stones.

More contemporary are Art Deco handbags like the leather clutch designed in the shape of the luxury cruise ship 'Normandy'. First class passengers received the purse as a souvenir of the ship's maiden voyage in 1935.

In those days new materials were introduced. Initially, synthetics like celluloid, casein fibre and acetate were intended as cheap imitations of elegant tortoiseshell and ivory. By the 1930s, however, these alternatives were appreciated in their own right for giving bags the sleek lines of the time and a modern feel. All kinds of new synthetic materials such as PVC, perspex, and nylon were discovered and incorporated into bags, especially after the Second World War.

#### **FROM HANGING POUCH TO LADIES' CLUTCH**

The Ivo Collection also gives an overview of the use of purses throughout the centuries. What we now know as a handbag is actually quite new. Originally, women wore detachable pouches under their wide skirts. Made of silk, cotton or linen and sometimes beautifully embroidered, they were bound with a ribbon around the waist.



**Nº 1207**

*Leather clutch designed  
in the shape of the luxury  
cruise ship 'Normandy'.  
First class passengers  
received the purse as a  
souvenir of the ship's  
maiden voyage in 1935*





*The collection  
reflects the  
history of the  
handbag in the  
Western world  
from the end  
of the Middle  
Ages to the  
present day.*

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**Nº 2458**




**N<sup>o</sup> 1436**

*Leather and silk wallet with a painted miniature by Favorin  
Lerebours and embroidered with a love poem.*

***'From my love for you is this portrait the proof and the assurance  
but my heart will be jealous if you are comforted by my absence.'***

FRANCE | 1806



Que de mon Amour pour Vous,  
Ce portrait soit le gage & l'assurance  
Mais mon cœur en seroit jaloux,  
S'il Vous consoloit de l'absence.





**N° 1800**

*Handbag worn by  
Madonna at the première  
of the movie Evita.*

GIANNI VERSACE  
COUTURE

ITALY | 1997

Additionally, it was fashionable for both men and women to have their bags hanging from a belt. Women had fine velvet or bead pouches, or pouches exquisitely enhanced with silver, gold and/or silk thread. Until the 19th century they also had so-called chatelaines: decorative hooks on a belt from which short chains were suspended holding a watch, purse, keys, thimble and other personal effects.

When rail journeys became more and more popular, so did hand luggage. This luggage developed into the predecessor of the handbag: the purse was no longer just for travels but also for paying social visits or going shopping.

Gradually, the handbag became more than a practical accessory. Its appearance dictated by fashion and celebrities, women had a purse for each occasion. Influenced by movie stars, fashionable women started to smoke and to use more cosmetics. The answer to women's needs for purses with cigaret and make-up compartments was the 1920s vanity case and the 1930s minaudière, beautifully

made by Lacroche Frères, Van Cleef & Arpels and Cartier. For centuries designers were obscure craftsmen, but that changed drastically in the 20th century. Well-known fashion brands and designers became leaders in creating handbags.

The huge diversity in design, materials and craft has always pleasantly surprised visitors of the Museum of Bags and Purses. Additionally, the multitude of purses and the stories told by the many bags never ceased to impress people visiting the museum. Even men, initially sceptical about the exhibited objects and mostly 'just accompanying their wives or girl friends', experienced the museum as amazing and interesting. Thus, the collection, varying from a 16th-century goatskin gentleman's bag to the Gianni Versace purse Madonna wore at the Evita film premiere in London, attracted many visitors.

## ROYALTY AND CELEBRITIES

The Ivo Collection includes several exceptional and rare purses such as those once owned and worn by royals or celebrities. Princess Maria Leszczyńska's bridal purse, for example, is included in the collection. She married the French King Louis XV in 1725, thus becoming Queen of France.

Princess Lilian, the Belgian King Leopold's second wife, has her handbag displayed as well; so has Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco, the former movie star. The Hermès-made Kelly Purse is named for her. With a similar purse Grace Kelly hid her pregnancy in 1956.

The Dutch royal family is represented in the collection with two bags. In 2011 the museum bought a, leather carryall owned by King William III (1817-1890). It has a silver monogram. At the same time the

**The huge diversity in design,  
materials and craft has always  
pleasantly surprised visitors of  
the Museum of Bags and Purses.**





**N° 3960**

*Les extraordinaires, alligator  
and lizard maxi-bucket with  
gold hardware. Limited edition.*


LOUIS VUITTON  
FRANCE | 2006

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museum acquired the travel trunk of Prince Bernhard, the present Dutch king's grandfather. The leather trunk includes toiletries and is monogrammed in silver.

A number of heads of state are represented in the collection as well. For example there is Margaret Thatcher's handbag, which she carried when inaugurated as the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom in 1979. The Hungarian-American fashion designer Judith Leiber has immortalized President Bill Clinton's cat Socks with her so-called 'cat bag'; and Imelda Marcos, First Lady of the Philippines and quite famous for her shoes, donated two purses to the Ivo Collection.

Invited by the Dutch former Queen Beatrix the Turkish president Abdullah Gül went on a state visit to the Netherlands in 2012. His wife made an official visit to the Museum of Bags and Purses and donated, on her husband's behalf, a bag handcrafted in Turkish silver 'Telkari' work to the museum. Another purse, woven with gold thread, was presented by the Japanese emperor to former Dutch prime-minister Wim Kok. This purse is now part of the Ivo Collection.

In addition to Madonna's famous purse by Versace several evening purses once belonging to film star Elizabeth Taylor are included in the versatile collection. These and other extraordinary objects have constituted the present day, internationally acclaimed Ivo Collection of Purses and Bags. 

**Nº 3911**

*The leather trunk includes toiletries and is monogrammed in silver.*



# Bernhard, Prince of the Netherlands

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the museum acquired the travel  
trunk of Prince Bernhard, the present  
Dutch king's grandfather.

GERMANY | 1930s





**Nº 0178**

*Belted pouch with a metal clasp and 18 pockets. The Ivo Collection's oldest bag.*

FRANCE | 16<sup>th</sup> C.



**Nº 0842**

*Drawstring bridal purse made of 'Sable' beads as small as grains of sand*

FRANCE | 18<sup>th</sup> C.



**Nº 1438**

*Silk bridal purse with copper plates. The bride, Princess Maria Leszczyńska, and groom, the French King Louis XV, are depicted in enamel.*

LIMOGES, FRANCE | 1725



**Nº 4197**

*Chatelaine made of polished steel with a watch and miniatures.*

FRANCE | LATE 18<sup>th</sup> C.





**Nº 4116**

Bag handcrafted in Turkish silver 'Telkari' work, donated to the museum by the wife of the Turkish president Abdullah Gül during their state visit to the Netherlands in 2012.



# Hillary Clinton

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with evening bag 'Socks'  
named for the cat of former President  
Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton.  
it was designed by Hungarian-American  
handbag designer Judith Leiber



**Nº 1304**

JUDITH LEIBER  
USA | 1996



**Nº 4771**

*Margaret Thatcher's handbag which she carried when inaugurated as the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom in 1979*



**Nº 0997**

*Bag embroidered with thistles and the initials J.R. 8 for the former Prince of Wales James VIII, nicknamed the Old Pretender.*

SCOTLAND | 18<sup>th</sup> C.



**Nº 2100**

*'Call me'. Patent leather handbag with a working telephone. Dallas Handbag.*

USA | 1980<sup>s</sup>.



**Nº 1357**

*Embossed leather handbag.*

GERMANY | 1880<sup>s</sup>



**Nº 0311**

*Handbag made of the finest petit point with more than 400 cross-stitches per cm<sup>2</sup>.*

AUSTRIA | 1920<sup>S</sup>-1930<sup>S</sup>



**Nº 4196**

*Coin purse made of gold en chain mesh with diamonds.*

FRANCE | EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> C.



**Nº 3232**

*Minaudière with a jeweled, detachable clasp which can also be used as a brooch.*

APREY, LONDON

UK | 1939



**Nº 3634**

*Fabric shopper 'I am not a plastic bag'.*

ANYA HINDMARCH

ENGLAND | 2007



**Nº 0276**

*Lucite handbag.*

CHARLES S. KAHN

USA | 1950<sup>S</sup>

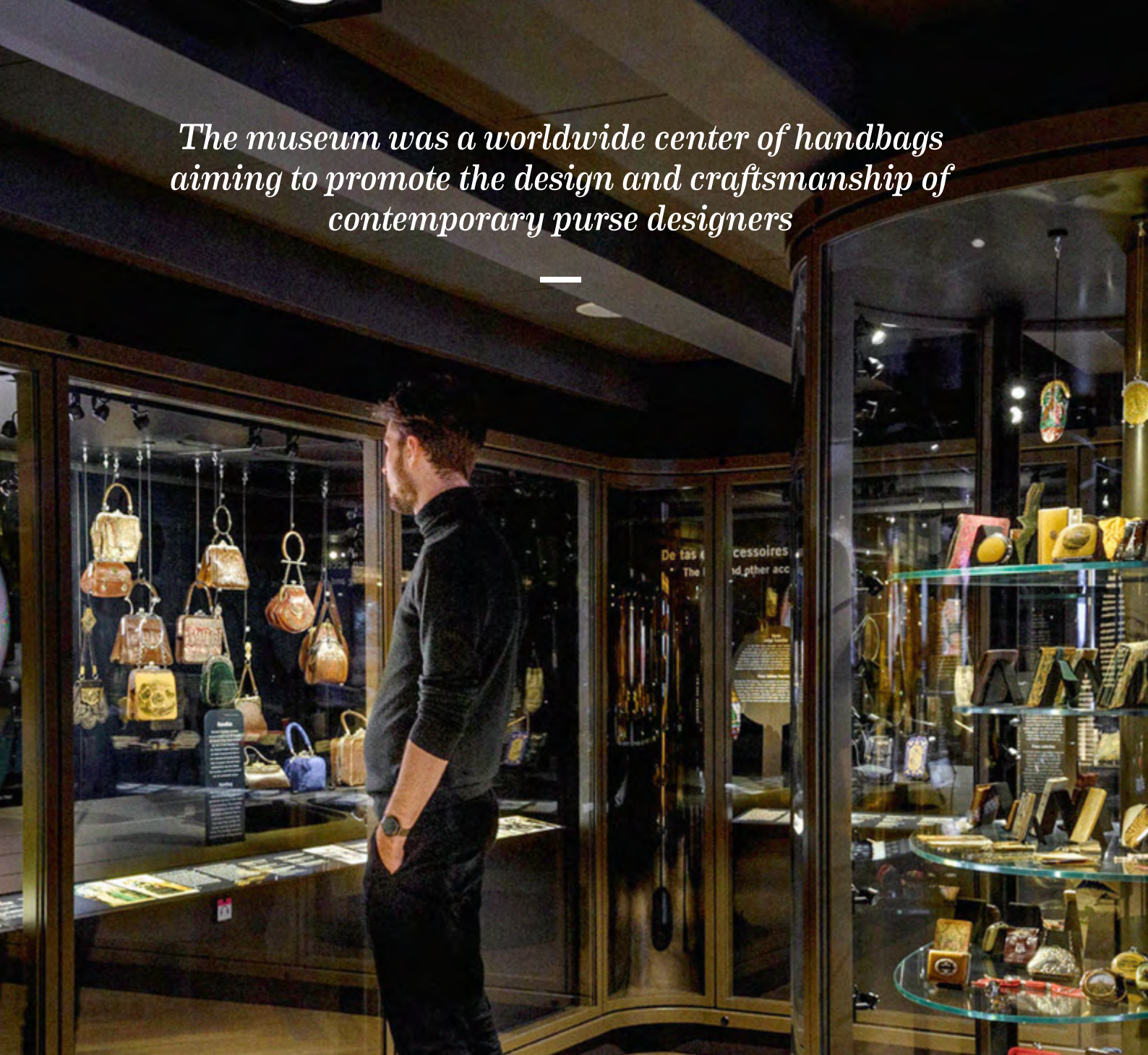
REMARKABLE EXHIBITIONS IN THE  
MUSEUM OF BAGS AND PURSES

**ROYAL  
PURSES  
AND  
MEN'S  
BAGS**

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Each year the Museum of Bags and Purses supplemented their permanent collection with two large, high-profile exhibitions and seven smaller exhibits of contemporary handbag designers and crafts. These memorable expositions stood out.

*The museum was a worldwide center of handbags aiming to promote the design and craftsmanship of contemporary purse designers*



**S**howing a valuable and permanent collection of bags and purses was just one aspect of the Museum of Bags and Purses. The museum was a worldwide center of handbags aiming to promote the design and craftsmanship of contemporary purse designers. Furthermore, it stimulated (young) talent from home and abroad. Several times a year museum curators organized exhibitions showcasing work by these modern designers.

Whereas the exhibits were a unique opportunity for visitors to meet promising handbag designers, the designers found a terrific platform to show and sell their designs to a larger audience.

For the true purse lover the museum had a magnificent museum store, selling these exclusive contemporary designer purses. Quite popular were Dutch Design bags such as by Hester van Eeghen and the by-Lin company.

#### **REMARKABLE EXHIBITIONS**

The museum often managed to surprise its visitors with unusual and interesting exhibitions with themes such as Ugly Bags (2015); Beastly Bags, the animal as inspiration (2009); Welcome on board, about the history of traveling bags and suitcases (2014); Trunks (2020); Street Couture (2016) and The Bead goes on (2016).

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# IT'S A MAN'S WORLD

—  
2017

The most remarkable major exhibition was It's a Man's World in 2017. It gave an overview of the history of gentlemen's bags and purses. It's a Man's World was unique, in the sense that no other museum had ever shone a worldwide spotlight on the history of men's bags and purses.





IT'S A MANS WORLD

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# GIRL'S BEST FRIENDS

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## 2017

For this exhibit the Museum of Bags and Purses closely cooperated with Amsterdam's famous Rijksmuseum. The absolute highlights of the Rijksmuseum's accessory collection were showcased in the Museum of Bags and Purses. The items included umbrellas, hats, hair accessories, shawls, gloves, fans, shoes and stockings. The young and upcoming designer Harm Rensink designed the exhibition. It started with a fresh sunset showing delicate and light objects slowly transforming into night-fall, where glitter and feathers stole the show.



**Nº 9015**

*Pink canvas and trimmed leather handbag with matching hat*

DIOR  
FRANCE | 2000-2009



**Nº 1215**

*Gold metal mesh vanity case with enamel powder and rouge compartments in lid*

EVANS  
UK | 1930-1949



**Nº 3082**

*Black leather shoulder bag and matching shoes both printed with floral design*

DOLCE & GABBANA  
ITALY | 2006



# ROYAL BAGS

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## 2016

Unparalleled was the 2016 exhibition Royal Bags designed by OPERA. The museum spent a year composing a display of royal purses and handbags, highlighting the style of some of Europe's most iconic kings, queens and princesses.

For this exhibit, Queen Maxima of the Netherlands selected three bags from the collection of the former Dutch Queen Juliana. Also on display were six bags contributed by Great Britain's Queen Elizabeth II. Hollywood icon Grace Kelly, who later became Princess Grace of Monaco, was represented with the famous Kelly bag designed by Hermès and on loan from Monaco's Royal Family. Purses from Empress Elisabeth of Austria, Sisi, were exhibited as well. They were loaned by the Vienna Sisi Museum.

In addition, a lot of other royal bags and purses were part of this special exhibition. An example is the travel trunk that belonged to the late Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, the grandfather of the present Dutch King Willem Alexander. This trunk is part of the Museum's permanent collection, built up by the Ivos.

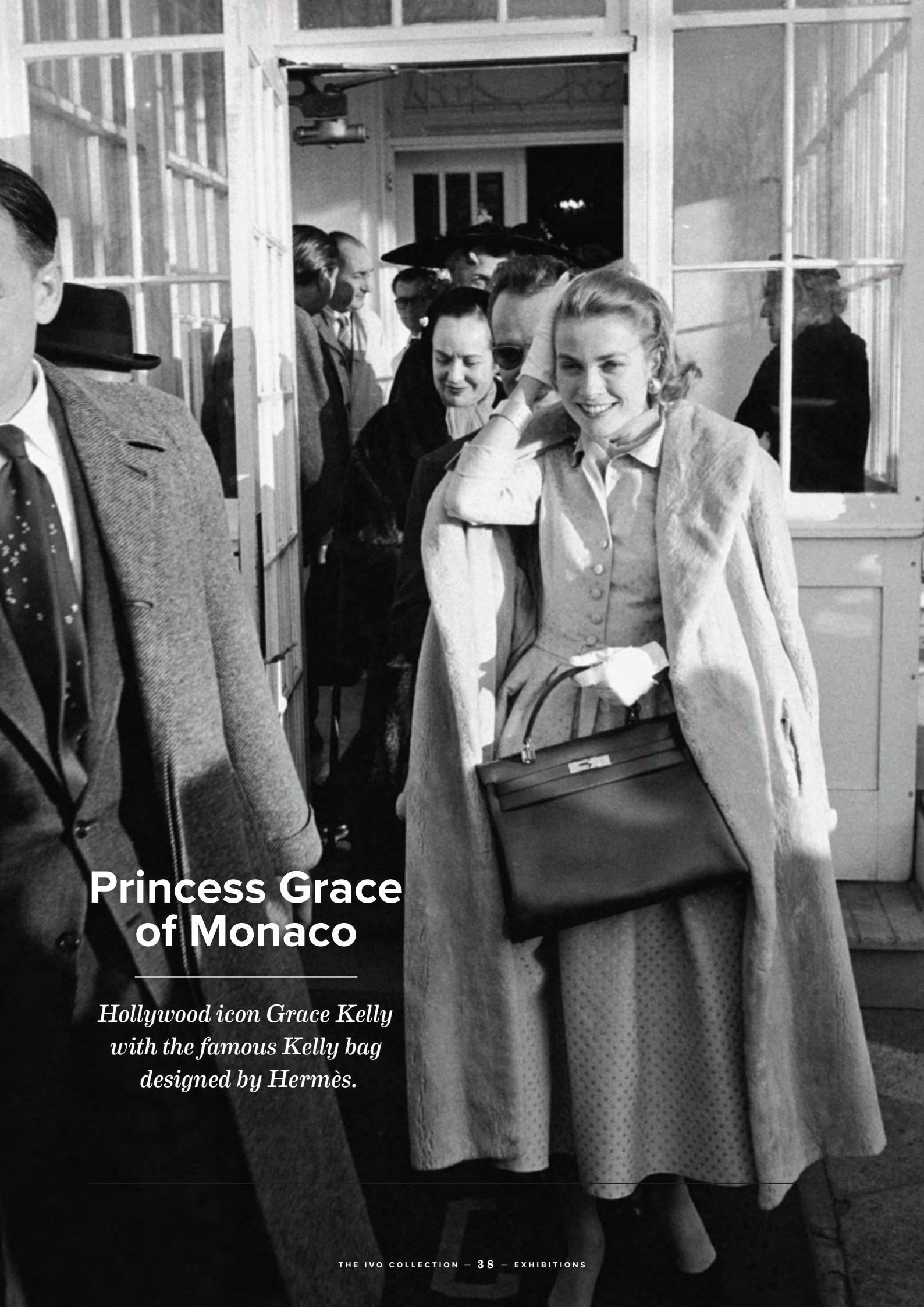
Not only purses and bags were shown in the Royal Bags exhibition. It also presented an overview of royal fashion, etiquette, travels and the functions of the royal purses and bags.



*Queen Maxima of the Netherlands selected three bags from the collection of the former Dutch Queen Juliana*



*Six bags contributed by Great Britain's Queen Elizabeth II were also on display*



## Princess Grace of Monaco

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*Hollywood icon Grace Kelly  
with the famous Kelly bag  
designed by Hermès.*



**Nº 3078**

*Leather 'Kelly' bag*

HERMÈS

FRANCE | 1990<sup>s</sup>



**STREET  
COUTURE**  
—  
**2016**





**Nº 4302-4303**

*Patent leather handbag  
and Flame Shoes*

PRADA  
ITALY | 2012



**Nº 3588**

*The 'Fudge The Fashionistas,  
Let Them Eat Cake' handbag*

MOSCHINO  
ITALY | 1996



**Nº 3967**

*Handbag designed by Marc  
Jacobs for s/s collection 2006*

LOUIS VUITTON  
FRANCE | 2006

A close-up photograph of a tiger's face, focusing on its eyes and nose. The tiger's fur is a mix of brown, black, and white stripes. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

# BEASTY BAGS

THE ANIMAL  
AS INSPIRATION

—

2009



# THE TRUNK SHOW

—  
2019



Goyard, 1932  
Frankfurt, France  
Louis Vuitton, 1930  
Frankfurt, France

Goyard, 1932  
Frankfurt, France  
Goyard, 1932  
Frankfurt, France



Beaded purses and accessories,  
past and present

THE  
BEAD  
GOES  
ON

—  
2016



**Nº 1339**

*Beaded coin purse depicting the  
arrival of the first giraffe in France.*

*The arrival of the first giraffe in France  
turned the whole country upside down.  
The giraffe became the craze of the season.*

FRANCE | 1827



## Exhibition floor redesigned by OPERA

In 2018 one floor of the Herengracht building was renovated by OPERA, Amsterdam's premier design company. This company specializes in creating communicative spaces, as well as permanent and temporary exhibitions in practically every possible context. OPERA is renowned worldwide and has a large range of museum clients all over the world.

OPERA's portfolio includes major exhibition designs and large-scale museum interiors. With its permanent installation designed by OPERA the Dutch Boerhaave Museum in Leiden won the European Museum of the Year Award 2019.

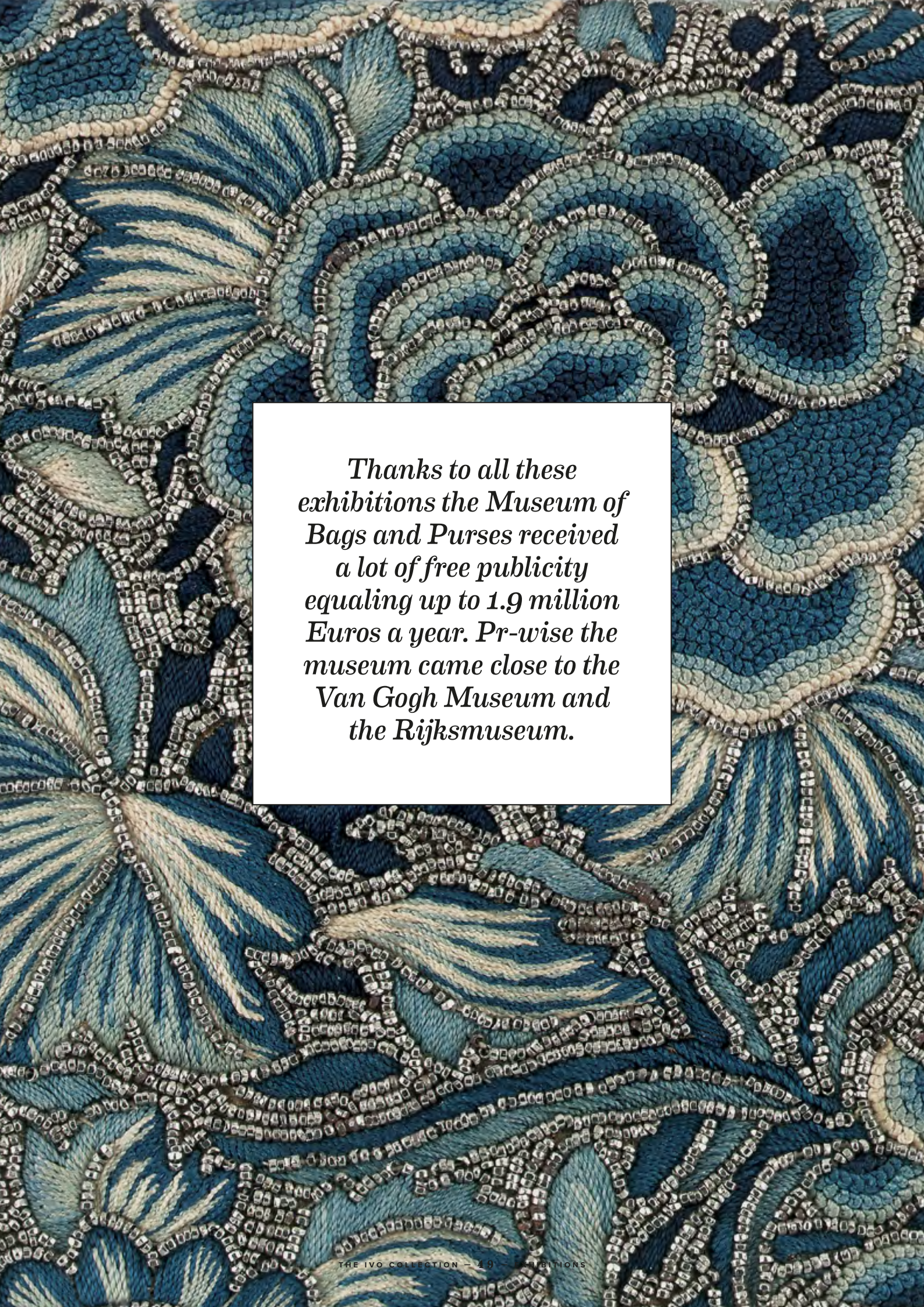


### EXAMPLES OF OPERA'S WORK:

- Renovations for the Sheikh Zayed Visitor Center, Founder's Memorial, Abu Dhabi (UAE) in 2018
- The British Museum London (UK) in 2020
- Exhibitions in the National Museum of Qatar in Doha in 2019
- Traveling Shapes and Colors in the Abu Dhabi Louvre - Children's Museum in 2017
- The Buddha Gallery in the National Museum of Korea in Seoul in 2011
- Evolving English, the British Library in London (UK) in 2010
- Ceramic Study Galleries in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (UK), in 2010.







*Thanks to all these exhibitions the Museum of Bags and Purses received a lot of free publicity equaling up to 1.9 million Euros a year. Pr-wise the museum came close to the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum.*

WORKSHOPS, TOURS, WEDDING VENUE  
AND TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS



# THE MUSEUM OF BAGS AND PURSES AS A CULTURAL ENTREPRENEUR



The Museum of Bags and Purses was known for its excellent public relations and initiatives in the field of marketing, tourism, education and collaborations. Its success made this small museum so popular that large museums such as the Van Gogh Museum, the famous Rijksmuseum and international museums were only too willing to cooperate with the Museum of Bags and Purses.



Museum shop



High tea at the Museum cafe



The museum as a wedding location

### AN INTERESTING DAY OFF

A visit to the Museum of Bags and Purses meant a day filled with new and interesting stories about bags, their history, materials and design. It also meant a day full of fun, catching up with friends for a nice lunch or a fancy Fashion High Tea. Visitors enjoyed a tour or workshop and went home with a new bag from the museum store. The total experience of a day out at a magnificent location with

a terrific collection delighted people and made a visit to the museum very special.

During the day the splendid second floor period rooms were used for lunches and high teas. These rooms were also very popular for weddings; many bridal couples favored them as the best spot in Amsterdam to get married.

In addition, companies rented the period rooms for meetings. A famous

exclusive Swiss Watch company, for example, when launching their newest collection from there, invited their most valued clients to attend a watch making workshop.

### EDUCATION

Each year the Museum of Bags and Purses organized a wide range of activities such as lectures, afternoon activities for children, fashion documentaries, concerts and all kinds of

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## Hundreds of children from Amsterdam's primary and secondary schools visited the museum on a yearly basis to learn about handbags and their history

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Childrens workshop at the museum

educational programs. Hundreds of children from Amsterdam's primary and secondary schools visited the museum on a yearly basis to learn about handbags and their history.

Students attending art academies majoring in design, fashion, bags, jewelry, and textiles both in the Netherlands and from abroad came around for inspiration, but also to learn about the handbag's history and design. There were special tours for design

students in the museum's storage space. Furthermore, the museum welcomed social scientists from all over the world who were researching certain aspects of the history of handbags. The museum also published a book titled 'Bags' as well as several articles about the collection.

In the newly renovated section exhibiting purses dating from the 16th till the 19th-centuries creative visitors could try their hand at designing their own bags. Additionally the museum gave workshops, where visitors could redecorate their handbags and make a pencil case.

A professional team of tour guides led groups from all corners of the world; for individual visitors there were

extensive, multilingual audio tours about the collection and the building. Additionally, the museum organized rounds of discussion with influential people from the fashion world about current themes in their industry.

During two days in the spring and autumn experts came to the museum to evaluate handbags, antique textiles, vintage clothing and accessories brought to them by the public. These days were hugely successful, drawing large crowds and attracting much media attention.

### COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Marketing the museum meant collaborating with authorities both in the Netherlands and abroad. A lot



The Book 'Bags' published by the museum.



Amsterdam Museum Night.

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of pieces were loaned to other museums such as the Resistance Museum in Amsterdam, the Art Museum in The Hague, the Fashion Museum in Hasselt, Belgium, and many more. The museum held an exhibition in The Lightbox Gallery and Museum in Woking (UK) and cooperated with Amsterdam fairs such as the Fashion Fair, the Millionaire & LXRy fair, the RAI Home Fair, and other design and antiques fairs. Additionally, the museum promoted young talent in handbag design by working together with the Dutch school for design and craftsmanship

in leather and the Dutch Design Week. Of course, the museum took part in events like Amsterdam's Museum Night, which attracted approximately 1,500 visitors. There were plans to organize a traveling exhibition about bags and purses that would have visited Russia, China, Hongkong, Singapore and Japan. The museum also collaborated with several handbag and fashion designers, who presented their collections in the museum. In the area of marketing it cooperated with several fashion



Hester van Eeghen's jubilee bags

websites such as the online Zalando store and Rebelle.com, an online platform for high-quality secondhand designers' products. Furthermore, the museum received bags from renowned fashion brands such as Louis Vuitton, Prada and Karl Lagerfeld. Among other activities, the Museum



Cooperation with fashion website Rebelle.com.

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**the museum promoted young talent in handbag design by working together with the Dutch school for design**

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of Bags and Purses organized the presentation of the Hester van Eeghen Leather Design Award every other year. Van Eeghen is a well-known Dutch bag designer. The museum director was a jury member and the Museum of Bags and Purses staged exhibitions of the participants in the Design Contest. In the area of public relations and marketing the museum worked together with the tourism industry and travel agents such as the Amsterdam & Dutch tourist offices, Viking cruises, booking.com, KLM and many more. 🗝



★  
VISITORS  
RATED THE  
FAMOUS FASHION  
HIGH TEA WITH SPECIAL  
DELICACIES IN THE  
SHAPE OF BAGS AND  
SHOES WITH  
8.7 POINTS  
★

## 8,000 high teas served

*With more than 8,000 high teas served in the museum café, the Museum of Bags and Purses proved to be a prime location.*

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# THE MUSEUM

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## CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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The museum averaged between 70,000 and 85,000 visitors per year. Visitors from abroad accounted for about 35% of that total. According to the Continuous Visitor Survey of 2018, visitors regarded the museum as unique (67%), accessible (62%), creative (58%), and sympathetic (55%). The historic building was seen as an attractive factor (66%). The friendly

welcome (79%) and the pleasant atmosphere (75%) also scored points.

These percentages were all higher than those of other cultural-historical museums in the Netherlands. The entire museum visit (permanent collection, special exhibitions, catering and shops) scored 8.5 on a scale of one to ten. International visitors rated the museum a 9.1.

The earnings from admissions, the museum café and museum store increased each year by as much as 12%.

With 70,000 to 85,000 visitors, that was around 69% of the museum's total income, which, by Dutch standards, is very high. With more than 8,000 high teas served in the museum café, the Museum of Bags and Purses proved to be a prime location.

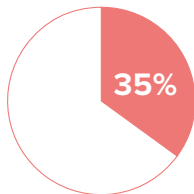
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# 70,000 – 85,000

VISITORS PER YEAR

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VISITORS FROM ABROAD



INTERNATIONAL VISITORS RATED THE MUSEUM A

# 9.1

ACCORDING TO THE CONTINUOUS VISITOR SURVEY OF 2018 VISITORS REGARDED THE MUSEUM AS:

*Unique*  
*Accessible*  
*Creative*  
*Sympathetic*

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*“Not only the collection, but the museum’s atmosphere in general is truly exceptional. Like a 5-star hotel.”*

— VISITOR MUSEUM OF BAGS AND PURSES ‘HENDRIKJE’

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# IN THE TOP TEN OF INTERNATIONAL FASHION MUSEUMS



During its existence, the Museum of Bags and Purses was praised by several internationally acclaimed magazines. Thus, the museum received lots of free publicity from the very start. Beginning at a few hundred thousand Euros annually, this publicity finally equaled 1.9 million Euros a year. That's quite something compared to the world-renowned Van Gogh Museum with its more than two millions Euros worth of free publicity.





From its inception in 1996, the Museum of Bags and Purses has invariably been mentioned in internationally renowned magazines and it was regularly included in the top 10 of fashion museums worldwide. In 2010, for example, Fodor's Travel included the Museum of Bags and

*“Impressed by both the ‘most important collection of bags in the world’ and its location on Amsterdam’s famous Herengracht.”*

— FODOR'S TRAVEL

Purses in that category. Fodor was impressed by both the ‘most important collection of bags in the world’ and its location on Amsterdam’s famous Herengracht. The Museum of Bags and Purses shared this honor with the London Victoria and Albert Museum, the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Paris Palais Galliera, Musée de

*Winner of  
Amsterdam’s*

**BEST  
SPECIALITY  
MUSEUM  
2012**

— TIME OUT MAGAZINE

la Mode, and the Museo Salvatore Ferragamo in Florence, to name a few. One year later — in 2012 — the Amsterdam magazine Time Out voted the Museum of Bags and Purses winner of Amsterdam’s ‘Best Speciality Museum’. In 2015 the Guardian termed the museum one of the ten best museums in Europe: ‘A museum that you’ve probably never heard of, but you must see.’ In 2019,

**AMONG  
SIXTEEN  
OF THE  
WORLD’S  
GREATEST  
FASHION  
MUSEUMS**

— THE ART OF STYLE

Christies was also most impressed by the Museum of Bags and Purses and rated it ‘the best museum for handbag collectors’.

In Forbes (2015), Laurie Werner sang praises about the museum and described it as ‘Not the typical Amsterdam museum: a jewel box devoted to purses’. The Art of Style (2016) rated the museum among sixteen of the World’s Greatest Fashion Museums.

*“Not the typical  
Amsterdam museum:  
a jewel box  
devoted to purses”*

— LAURIE WERNER, FORBES





Superior Room dedicated to the Museum of bags and purses at the 4-star Manor Hotel in Amsterdam.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The 2016 Royal Bags exhibition was so exceptional, that Dutch national television included it in its prime time news bulletin, an unparalleled event in the history of Dutch newscasts. Additionally, several national and international television channels came to the museum to make recordings of the collection and the rotating exhibitions.

The museum was quite active on social media such as FaceBook, Instagram, and Twitter. In 2017 it had 10,861 followers. The museum website attracted lots of attention as well. 234,161 People visited the website in 2015, marking a substantial 45% increase since 2014. Eventually, visitors to the website totaled around 40,000 per month.

**The 2016 Royal Bags exhibition was so exceptional, that Dutch national television included it in its prime time news bulletin, an unparalleled event in the history of Dutch newscasts.**

## JOINT MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Thanks to this worldwide publicity, the larger Amsterdam museums and well-known organizations such as KLM and their in-flight magazine Holland Herald, the Dutch Railways, ANWB — the Dutch version of Triple A — and booking.com contacted the Museum of Bags and Purses for joint PR- and marketing campaigns.

Booking.com, for example, offered clients tickets to the Museum of Bags and Purses when they purchased a hotel room. The 4-star Manor Hotel Amsterdam even created a special hotel room modeled on the Museum. Its walls are decorated with photos of the purses. 📌



**N<sup>o</sup> 3910**

*Travelcase of King Willem  
III of the Netherlands.*

*From the estate of Queen  
Juliana of the Netherlands  
and part of the exceptional  
Royal Bags exhibition*

GERMANY | 1880



# Herengracht 573

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The Museum of Bags and Purses was situated in an imposing 17th-century canal house on Amsterdam's most exclusive canal. Close to the 'Golden Bend' and in the vicinity of major museums such as Museum Het Rembrandthuis and the Hermitage on the Amstel river.

A UNIQUE MUSEUM IN A MAGNIFICENT  
17TH-CENTURY BUILDING

**FROM A  
MANSION TO  
A STATELY  
AMSTERDAM  
CANAL HOUSE**

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The elegant presentation, the warm and welcoming interior and the historic aspects of the beautiful building on one of Amsterdam's major canals made a visit of the Museum of Bags and Purses a completely unique experience. The building itself was a bonus to the exquisite collection. It's no wonder that the six-star Waldorf Hotel across the museum quite happily recommended the museum to its guests.



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After years of collecting and preparing Hendrikje and Heinz Ivo opened the first Museum of Bags and Purses in their own rebuilt Amstelveen mansion in 1996. Many visitors enjoyed the purse collection and the temporary exhibitions, paying special attention to designers.

After a few years, however, the museum fell apart at the seams. Despite being professionally designed, the museum was still a residence with

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**From the start, the museum took advantage of renowned designers to furnish the exhibition rooms**

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all its limitations. Sometimes lines formed outside the museum, and for both Dutch and foreign tourists it was difficult to find their way to the Amstelveen based museum.

Thus, after a decade, the collection and the museum's future were in jeopardy. A decision had to be made

about this singular museum with the largest collection of bags and purses in the world.

#### **REOPENING IN AMSTERDAM**

Like so many collectors the Ivos secretly dreamed of a Maecenas. Theirs actually appeared one Sunday afternoon in the form of a businessman, most impressed by the collection, who wished to anonymously help the museum. To house the Museum of Bags and Purses he bought an imposing 17th-century canal house on Amsterdam's Herengracht.

After the necessary renovations the museum reopened on June 9, 2007 in the elegant premises of Herengracht 573, on Amsterdam's most exclusive canal. The museum is situated close to the 'Golden Bend' and in the vicinity of major museums such as Museum Het Rembrandthuis and the Hermitage on the Amstel river. The luxurious interior added to the experience of a museum visit.

With the new museum the Ivos aimed to create an elegant ambience that would do justice to the purses made from so many fine materials. They wished to create an environment that would envelop visitors like a beautiful yet comfortable coat. The goal was

for visitors to feel relaxed and enjoy a day out with a partner, friend, mother, daughter or sister.

On two floors of the building, a former mayor's house, visitors could trace the history of purses from the 16th century to the present day. The purses told stories about their histories from a simple, useful item to an iconic fashion statement; they gave information about the craftsmanship that created them. There were also galleries for special, temporary exhibitions with historic themes or for those highlighting modern purse design.

From the start, the museum took advantage of renowned designers to furnish the exhibition rooms. In 2018 for example the fifth floor was renovated by OPERA, an Amsterdam company that designs museums worldwide. This renovated floor proved to be an amazing treasure trove for visitors.

#### **PAINTED CEILINGS AND AN ELEGANT GARDEN**

The first residents of the building now housing the museum were the De Graeff family who built the house in 1666. The De Graeffs and their descendants transformed two rooms employing beautiful historical elements such as painted ceilings and fireplaces from the 17th and 18th centuries. These elements have been carefully restored and maintained to provide visitors with a sense of traveling back in time as they explore the period rooms.

When visitors needed a break, they could sit in the museum café on the magnificent second floor period room and enjoy a tempting array of tasty snacks, lunches or tea-time treats. The front of the café faced the historic canal while the rear overlooked an elegant 18th-century style garden, giving guests a choice of two interesting views.





**STYLISH COMBINATION  
OF ANTIQUE AND MODERN**

During the 20th century the building was used as an office. When the museum moved to the canal house it was a challenge to blend contemporary design and modern standards within the monumentally historic space.

The interior designer Jantien Nunnikhoven did a splendid job decorating the house, and she achieved a magnificent result: an extremely stylish combination of antique and modern. The period rooms with their restored 17th- and 18th-century painted ceilings and mantelpieces, used for lectures, social gatherings and receptions, called for a new classic character.

Fabrics were specially woven for the walls of the smaller period room and anteroom. The chairs in both period rooms were upholstered in crimped velvet, and the elegant silk curtains were handmade. The trimmings came from a well-established French family business.

As a contrast to these special rooms, the interior designer created a contemporary and convivial feel for the foyer and museum café at the rear. Thus, in addition to the fine period features there were modern elements and specially designed lamps. A superb view of the lush and flower-filled garden made the foyer and the museum café a perfect venue.





In 2014, the Dutch Parool newspaper evaluated ten museum stores in Amsterdam. They selected the Museum of Bags and Purses Store to be number one.

## AMSTERDAM'S BEST MUSEUM STORE 2014

— PAROOL  
NEWSPAPER

The Parool jury's report:  
*"The very best store in which to shop after a museum visit is in the Museum of Bags and Purses. After viewing hundreds of beautiful bags and purses on display, you may want to take one home for yourself. This inviting store with its very friendly salespeople tempts shoppers with original items reflective of those in the collection."*



### MUSEUM STORE AND GARDEN

The Museum of Bags and Purses promoted contemporary bag designers by mounting changing exhibitions of their work and selling their designs in the museum store. In addition, the store carried an extensive range of cards, books and gift ideas. Former director Sigrid Ivo called it 'A candy store for purse lovers'.

The museum store proved to be an important element of the site. Passing by it on their way out, visitors found a variety of extraordinary bags and purses from both Dutch and foreign designers. It was the ideal spot for someone looking for something special. In 2014 the Parool newspaper chose the Museum of Bags and Purses store as the best in Amsterdam. The Ivos were very happy to take first place in the museum store test, besting the celebrated Van Gogh Museum store which came in second.

The garden was another exceptional feature of the Museum of Bags and Purses. During the 2006-2007 renovations, the well-known landscape architect Robert Broekema redesigned the exterior space. He incorporated sleek lines, box hedges, and water features characteristic of 18th-century baroque city gardens. 🏡





# COLOPHON

## TEXT

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—

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—

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Rebecca Harlan

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Bert Zuiderveen

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## DESIGN

Yazoka.com



**N° 9149**

*Leather handbag  
with gold metal handles*

DIOR

FRANCE | 1960<sup>s</sup>