Chanel, Pucci, Dior, Oh my!
Exhibition: Dreaming of Chanel, 26 August–16 October 2011

It’s every woman’s dream come true, inheriting a priceless couture wardrobe with thousands of original pieces from the world’s biggest fashion houses.

For Charlotte Smith it’s a reality, and Brisbane will get to peek inside her coveted closet when *Dreaming of Chanel* opens as part of the *Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival Brisbane* on 26 August.

Charlotte Smith is the guardian of the Darnell Collection, Australia’s largest private collection of international vintage clothing and accessories, which she inherited from her American godmother, Doris Darnell.

*Dreaming of Chanel* presents over 60 garments plus accessories from the Darnell Collection, each with its own story.

Designers include Vivienne Westwood, Emilio Pucci, Christian Dior, Schiaparelli, Mary Quant and, of course, Chanel.

The show also features accessories by Hermès and Tiffany & Co., and original illustrations by Grant Cowan featured in the book *Dreaming of Chanel* (HarperCollins, 2010).

“It is the stories of the garments and the women who wore them that make this book and exhibition extremely unique.”

“As the curator of the show this is what drew me to the project and to Charlotte’s collection,” curator Nadia Buick.

*Dreaming of Chanel* is sponsored by QueensPlaza.

OPENING NIGHT
Thursday 25 August, 6.00pm for 6.30pm
QUT Art Museum, 2 George Street, Brisbane
RSVP 07 3138 5370 or artmuseum@qut.edu.au

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE: THE DARNELL COLLECTION (WITH CHARLOTTE SMITH)
Friday 26 August, 11.00am
QUT Art Museum, 2 George Street, Brisbane
RSVP 07 3138 5370 or artmuseum@qut.edu.au

EXHIBITION
Dreaming of Chanel
26 August to 16 October 2011
QUT Art Museum, 2 George Street, Brisbane
Tues-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat-Sun 12pm-4pm | Admission Free
www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au | (07) 3138 5370

–ENDS–

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**Background info**

**Nadia Buick**  
**Curator – Dreaming of Chanel**  
Nadia Buick is a fashion curator and PhD candidate in the school of Fashion Studies at Queensland University of Technology. Her recent curatorial projects include Imelidic! 20th Century Shoe Design, and Wearer/Maker/Wearer: recent work by Paula Dunlop and Material Memories: restaging the eCHO project. She is a regular guest lecturer in fashion at the Queensland University of Technology.

**Charlotte Smith**  
**Author, Curator – Darnell Collection**  
Charlotte Smith is the curator of the Darnell Collection, Australia’s largest private collection of vintage clothing and accessories, which she inherited from her American godmother, Doris Darnell. Born in Hong Kong and raised in the United States, Charlotte has lived and worked in America, England and France but now lives in the Blue Mountains, Australia. She has a degree in Art History and lectures on the history of fashion.

**The Darnell Collection**  
For over 70 years Doris Darnell, a Quaker from Pennsylvania, pursued a passion for fashion by collecting vintage clothes and accessories. For Doris, the social history behind the items was as important as the items themselves and preserving them and their stories for future generations became an important part of her passion. The Darnell Collection grew out of donations and gifts from her family’s wide circle of friends and acquaintances around the world. Importantly, most of the items came with accompanying letters, photographs and stories which linked them to the original owners or donors and often to the occasions to which they were worn.

Charlotte Smith inherited the collection in 2004. It has continued to grow through further bequests to over 5500 pieces representing 23 different countries and is considered the largest private vintage clothing collection in Australia. Included are many internationally recognised 20th century designers such as Lucile, Vionnet, Dior, Chanel, Balenciaga, Pucci, Jean Muir, Zandra Rhodes, Westwood, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana and Jil Sander among many other names.

Every aspect of a woman’s wardrobe since 1720 to present day is included: outerwear, underwear, nightwear, day and evening dresses, wedding dresses, sportswear, shoes, hats, handbags, gloves, jewellery, lace, buttons, fans, feathers, textiles, wire hoop crinolines and bustles. Men’s and children’s clothing is also represented as is a large reference library of books, journals and museum exhibition catalogues.

In 2007, the collection was enhanced by a bequest of 600 items from the 19th and 20th century from the late Deborah McKeown of Adelaide and most recently, Australian Wool Innovations (AWI) donated 75 stunning contemporary Australian designer wool garments.

The backbone of the collection is the bequest of Doris Darnell, whose values of preserving the provenance of garments and accessories and honouring personal donations continues. Accepting further bequests from individuals and organisations in Australia and around the world will continue to be the principal method of acquisition and growth.