

History of Fashion at "B" Dry Goods in Crown Heights

The gallery opens its history of fashion exhibit Thursday ahead of New York Fashion Week.



[Hannah Berman](#)

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1 / 3 A Nike high-top quilt by Amy Rauner. | Photo: Hannah Berman/BK Reader



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With New York Fashion Week right around the corner, gallery owner Gabe Boyers knew he would curate an exhibit centered on the historic fashion merchandise he had accumulated over time.

Boyers' show, at his Crown Heights gallery "[B" Dry Goods](#), is called "Fashion Forward." It features a range of pieces sourced from the Roman Empire to the modern era, with an emphasis on the people who make fashion, and the people who wear it.

One standout piece on display is a wardrobe chest used by Marie Antoinette in the late 18th century. It stands large and imposing on a blue block in the center of the gallery and is stamped with the words "Garderobe de la Reine," or Wardrobe of the Queen.

"This is not a 'fine' object, and they would've just gone through these and destroyed them and made new ones constantly," Boyers said. "So it's extremely rare. There's only a few of them that are known to still exist — Versailles has three."



Marie Antoinette's wardrobe. Photo: Hannah Berman/BK Reader



Boyers began collecting inventory for this show when combing through the possessions of the late Chet Baker, a Jazz trumpeter. He was able to sell several of Baker's letters and manuscripts to libraries, but couldn't offload any clothing, so he held onto it.

Later, he bought some of fashion editor June Weir's former possessions; after selling her letters and documents, he was left with a surprising number of physical artifacts from the fashion world.

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"Similar things kept happening until I thought, you know, I've got actually quite a lot of clothes," Boyers said.

With a growing inventory, he began to curate a show that offers a glimpse into the world of fashion. Pieces by fashion icons like Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Dior and Alexander McQueen are also shown.

Then there's a bra made entirely of screws and Liza Minnelli's false eyelashes.



Gabe Boyers at "B" Dry Goods gallery. Photo: Hannah Berman/BK Reader



Many of the items on display are available for purchase and can be bought by scanning a QR code next to the piece. Boyers wanted to be very transparent about pricing.

"I just whistle when I go into about 99% of galleries," said Boyers. "You know, I am a person who buys a lot of art, and I find it completely insane that I have to go through this song and dance with someone to see whether I'm 'equipped' to buy a particular thing. I really didn't want that to be our vibe here."

And the items are not as expensive as you might suspect — select pieces go for as low as \$35.

Boyers opened the gallery in Dec. 2022 and named it “B” Dry Goods after his great-grandfather, who immigrated from Ukraine in the 1920s and ran a dry goods store 10 minutes away from Boyers' current gallery.

“He was a much-beloved figure in the family, and certainly would've been utterly perplexed, I think, by the things that I deal in,” Boyers laughed.

“Fashion Forward” runs from Jan. 25–Mar. 30 at “B” Dry Goods, 679 Franklin Ave.



***About the Author:* Hannah Berman**

Hannah Berman is a Brooklyn-born freelance writer. She writes about food, culture, and nonprofit news, and runs her own grumpy food newsletter called Hannah is Eating.

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