

MEDIA RELEASE – NOVEMBER 2024

Style and Spirit: The Fashion of Chester Weinberg

Step into a world where fabric becomes art, and style transcends time in this world-first exhibition, *Style and Spirit: The Fashion of Chester Weinberg* at the David Roche Gallery from November 8 2024 – January 25 2025.

The exhibition, jointly curated by David Roche Gallery curator Timothy Roberts and Skye Bartlett, Team Manager of SAMESH (South Australia Mobilisation + Empowerment for Sexual Health), presents more than 50 garments designed by American couturier Weinberg during his prolific career from the 1950s to the 1980s in New York, alongside pieces by Cristóbal Balenciaga, Christian Dior, and Pierre Cardin.

Weinberg often employed luxurious fabrics designed by international artists including Andrée Brossin de Méré, whose fabrics were also employed by Christian Dior and Yves Saint Laurent. Significant American artists also designed fabrics for Weinberg, including Julian Tomchin, Tzaims Luksus, and Gerald Laing. One of Weinberg's most innovative design idiosyncrasies is the inclusion of discreet pockets in almost all his garments.

Testament to his skill, in the early 1980s Weinberg was appointed head designer of Calvin Klein Jeans, then the largest fashion brand in the world.

Exhibition co-curator Roberts says it is a privilege to showcase pieces from David Roche's art collection alongside the extraordinary fashion in *Style & Spirit*.

"Weinberg's clients included socialites Amanda Carter-Burden, Babe Paley, and Judy Peabody, whose homes, like David's, were also furnished with extraordinary works of art," Roberts says.

"In April 1985, at the age of 54, Weinberg was the first designer known to die from AIDS-related illness. His death came as a shock to the industry, and his name was quickly written out of fashion history. This exhibition seeks to reintroduce Weinberg's inspiring career to lovers of vintage fashion and reduce stigma around HIV/AIDS."

Exhibition co-curator Skye Bartlett hopes this exhibition will introduce Australian and international audiences to Weinberg and that his home country will again embrace and celebrate his creativity and acknowledge his influential contribution to the world of fashion.

"Clothes are such a personal expression of our style and taste, but we also want to draw attention to the unquantifiable cultural loss resulting from the ongoing HIV epidemic," Bartlett says.

“I hope this exhibition captivates audiences about the life of Chester Weinberg; see the fashion, learn his story.”

A handsomely illustrated, 96-page catalogue accompanies the exhibition, and is priced at \$30. In this volume, new biographical research is enriched by personal recollections of Weinberg, offering his perspectives on fashion, his approach to design, and the changing social landscape surrounding him.

What: *Style and Spirit: The Fashion of Chester Weinberg*

Where: David Roche Gallery, 241 Melbourne St, North Adelaide

When: Tuesday to Saturday, 10am-4pm (closed Sundays, Mondays, and December 22 2024 – January 6 2025)

Cost: Adult \$12 | Concession \$10

David Roche House tours: 10am, noon, 2pm

Adult: \$20 | Concession \$17

(from 8 November 2024 – 25 January 2025, ticket price includes entry to *Style & Spirit: The Fashion of Chester Weinberg*)

For more information and events, visit rochefoundation.com.au

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Chester Weinberg (designer), Julian Tomchin (fabric design), *Evening dress* and *Cocktail dress* Spring/Summer 1968. Private collection, Adelaide.



Chester Weinberg (designer) for Samuel Robert (manufacturer), *Dress* c. 1976, *Ensemble* c. 1974, *Dress* 1977. Private collection, Adelaide.