

SOLE DESIRE

A SELECTION
OF SENSATIONAL SHOES
27 JULY - 21 SEPTEMBER



Worshipping at the Altar of Accessories

Vestis virum reddit (clothes maketh the man) is a Latin maxim I learnt as a school boy. It is a simple statement that conveys the fact that clothes help fashion both our internal identity and our external reputation within the communities we inhabit. It also demonstrates that a concern for self presentation is a human characteristic that applies across humanity from the Ancient Romans to the present day. In the context of *Sole Desire* it is useful to connect this ancient maxim alongside the observations of contemporary and legendary New York style icon Iris Apfel. Apfel admits that she has “worshipped at the altar of accessories” and believes that ‘*The key to personal style lies in accessories*’ and ‘*Accessories have great transformative powers*’.

Tie all of these observations together (with a gros grain knot?) and we are in territory of *Sole Desire*, Objectspace’s project that enquires into the sway that shoes have and their capacity to enthrall us. At Objectspace, amongst other things, we’re interested in enquiring into and provoking new assessments about the functioning of objects. The shoes, and their owners, participating in *Sole Desire* demonstrate how the quotidian object performs a variety of highly complex roles ranging from individual and tribal signifier as well as being a terrain for aesthetic exploration and the proclamation of culture and value.

Thanks to lenders Nigel Borell, Mary-Louise Browne, Sebastian Clarke, Deborah Crowe, Angus Fletcher, Karen Inderbitzen-Waller, Viv Heslop, Carole Hutchinson, Dylan Richards, Maria Winder and a private lender who not only generously shared their shoes but also were very candid about their relationship with shoes in general.

Objectspace would additionally like to thank Trilby Conway, Sandy Cooper & Charlene Shaw of *Minnie Cooper*, Doris de Pont, William Somerville, Frances Walsh and *Unique Soles* who have all provided invaluable advice and support. And the *London Review of Books* for permitting us to reproduce Peter Campbell’s cover of the 25 June 2009 issue of the *London Review of Books*, which like *Sole Desire*, puts a shoe on a plinth. We are grateful for the assistance of Ben Campbell of the *London Review of Books* and Abby Cunnane Hirschfield Gallery Curator, City Gallery Wellington in obtaining this permission.

I want to acknowledge Objectspace Curator Ioana Gordon-Smith for her great work in curating *Sole Desire* and our colleague Jaqui Knowles for her fine contribution to the project. Creative New Zealand for its ongoing support to Objectspace and Auckland Council, the ASB Community Trust and the Objectspace Donors for the support we receive from them.

Philip Clarke
Director

Sole Desire

In Season Four of the television show *Sex and The City*, character Carrie Bradshaw has a shoe epiphany. She's just broken up with her fiancé, and finds herself with thirty days to either buy their apartment or move out. Alone and potentially homeless, Carrie calculates the cost of her shoes and realises that she's spent \$40,000 on them – the equivalent of a home deposit.

While some of us may not be as enthralled with footwear as Carrie Bradshaw, there's no denying it: shoes have sway. It's not just women who obsess over shoes either. In June 2013, a group of avid male shoe collectors camped outside *Footlocker* on Auckland's Queen Street for more than 60 hours prior to the limited release of twelve 'LeBron James' sneakers, showing the lengths to which some men will go to for a pair of kicks. This feverish consumption of shoes suggests that shoes are widely appealing for reasons that far surpass their utilitarian function as protection for our feet. In order to investigate what some of these reasons may be, *Sole Desire* brings together a selection of sensational shoes from a range of shoe enthusiasts. Each of them has kindly, and candidly, shared the stories that have gathered around certain shoes in their collections. While the motivations of these lenders are expansive, they are by no means exhaustive. By considering just some of the different roles shoes play in the lives of their owners, we can start to understand the reasons for the allure of footwear and begin to appreciate why shoes hold such a captivating place in our sartorial imaginations.

Fashion is a verb

One of the central and most readily available ways that we fashion our identity is through our choice of adornment. Once upon a time, shoes – along with accessories – were viewed as secondary accompaniments to clothing, the central component of any head-to-toe outfit. Now, however, shoes are where we can make our mark. As clothing becomes relatively democratic and standardised, and shoe design becomes more competitive, footwear is increasingly offering a very interesting palette for wearers to work with. "You can really identify yourself culturally through shoes far more than any other piece of apparel," style guru Simon Doonan, the creative director of Barneys New York, argues. "Clothes have gotten so plain and uniform with the minimalist revolution that people are screaming their identity through their shoes."¹

In turn, our choice of shoes can affect us. A number of lenders speak of the increased confidence and sense of stylishness they feel when stepping into a particular pair. It's as if we take on the intentions or persona of the shoes we wear; if our shoes have swag, then somehow so do we. In this light, shoes can be seen not only as items of fashion, but items that actively fashion both our identities and our social profiles.

Social signifiers

From hi-tops to high heels, shoes have been seen and employed as potent signifiers of gender, sexuality, personality, taste and politics. The lineage of shoes is replete with examples of impractical footwear that succinctly conveyed the wealth of the wearer. Nineteenth century aristocratic women in France and the United States, for instance, wore shoes made of brocade so paper-thin that venturing outside would have almost immediately damaged their delicate soles.² A modern-day equivalent is perhaps a pair of designer stilettos, which have earned the nickname 'limousine shoes', a reference to both the cost of the shoes and the fact that the wearer is unlikely to do much walking in them.

The accuracy of what shoes can reveal about a person was the subject of a recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Kansas. In 2012, 63 students were quizzed on the gender, income and personality traits of 208 different volunteers, each of whom completed personality questionnaires and were photographed in their most frequently worn shoes.³ Some of the results were unsurprising: expensive shoes were associated with high-income earners, less expensive shoes with liberals, and unconventional shoes with extroverts. Less predictably, and rather bewilderingly, ankle boots were aligned with aggressive personalities and uncomfortable shoes were seen as indicative of a calm character.

While these associations may be unconsciously emitted, many people choose their footwear with an acute awareness of what they could signify. Well-known New Zealand stylist and fashion photographer Karen Inderbitzen-Waller confesses that she wears heels specifically because of their status as one of the most persistent signifiers of femininity. As a lesbian, she uses heels as a pre-emptive strike against perceptions of being unfeminine. Inderbitzen-Waller also reveals that she wears heels because they're currently the default high-fashion shoe. Despite once breaking her toe in a pair of stilettos at Sydney fashion week, Inderbitzen-Waller continued to wear heels to the remaining runway shows. To this day, high heels are still her go-to shoes for a fashion event or a night out.

Others use their footwear to engage those with similar sensibilities. Artist, curator, and Hi-tops enthusiast Nigel Borell draws upon the capacity for shoes to demarcate a certain space in people's minds. Street-wear, for instance, carries connotations that can repel those with the most conservative taste. Like a sartorial radar, his shoes will attract only those on the same wavelength. Borell calls this the "screening mechanism" effect of shoes.

The eight tribes of shoes

According to William Rossi, writer of *The Complete Footwear Dictionary*, there are only eight basic shoe designs: pumps, oxfords, sandals, boots, moccasins, mules, monk straps and clogs.⁴ Each new shoe style, he argues, is simply a variant of these eight. A number of fashion academics similarly categorise shoes into different classes, though the number of groupings differs with each writer. Intriguingly, this taxonomy of shoes almost always results in describing shoe wearers as if they belong to completely different and distinct groups. In *Shoes: a lexicon of style*, for example, fashion historian and curator Valerie Steele describes loafers as "the footwear of choice for the woman who has her head screwed on and plenty to get done".⁵ High heels, by contrast, "are for those who pay other people to do their walking for them".⁶

Of course, the boundaries between shoe types are more porous than these characterisations suggest. Rather than wear only one type of shoe incessantly, people are more likely to flit between styles, choosing their shoes according to a number of factors, including mood and occasion. Nigel Borell confesses that some kicks take more energy to wear than others. Inderbitzen-Waller also notes that while she might put her best foot forward in high heels at a fashion show — where 'front row shoes' are constantly on display — she spends most of her working week wearing a practical pair of Chucks. Many of us can probably sympathise with this alternation between

footwear, owning at the very least a pair of 'good' shoes reserved for special events and a pair of everyday shoes for almost everything else. Indeed, rather than assigning us to a certain 'style tribe', shoes can enable us to transition from one context to another, and all with a simple change of shoes.

Elite design

Acclaimed shoe designer Roger Vivier once described the shoe as "a sculptural problem in which the centre is always void."⁷ Posed this way, the shoe becomes something of a design challenge to manipulate form, material, colour, proportion and physics, with the objective of creating a sufficient cavity for a foot.

A number of technical and artistic collaborations have drawn on this design potential of shoes. In 2001, global expat-Australian designer Marc Newson worked with Nike to create the *Zvezdochka*. These shoes, consisting of a sock-like mesh inner and a plastic outer cage, draw upon Newson's interest in aeronautics. Additionally, the entire shoe can be pulled apart, allowing wearers mix and match parts and colours between pairs. In the following year, shoe designer Manolo Blahnik teamed up with English artist Damien Hirst to create a series of white canvas ankle boots printed with dots transcribed directly from one of Hirst's signature Spot Paintings. A number of architects have also collaborated with shoe labels, including Rem D. Koolhaas for United Nude and Zaha Hadid for Melissa, Lacoste and most recently United Nude also. The resulting designs, which often remove conventional components of footwear, drastically challenge our assumption of what shoes should look like.

These collaborations, and other daring designs, have caught the eye of a number of lenders in this exhibition. Sebastian Clarke notes that he was initially drawn to *Zvezdochka* because of their bizarre design. Over time, these shoes have transitioned for Clarke from a sneaker he wore at school to an admired object. The appeal of stimulating design is also evident in how some lenders present their shoes. Local artist, educator, and shoe enthusiast Deborah Crowe displays some of her shoes on a specially built shoe tower and shoe low-rise. Similarly, Auckland-based artist Mary-Louise Browne displays her shoes in a vitrine and has often placed a shoe atop a picture frame or painting. Both approaches treat shoes as objects of visual appeal; to be seen and not just to be worn.

Stepping back in time

In fashion, ‘one day you’re in, the next day you’re out’. As Heidi Klum’s catchphrase suggests, fashion is usually perceived to be defined by the moment. Designers and stylists alike are always on the hunt to find (and to be) the next big thing. Many of the lenders in *Sole Desire*, however, demonstrate some kind of counterpoint to the contemporaneity of fashion. One private lender recalls the challenge to rehabilitate a pair of nearly 100-year a pair of vintage glacé kid shoes with very fine beading detail and a Louis heel. Mary-Louise Browne is also constantly seeking shoes that are timeless. In her quest, she is happy to buy both brand new and vintage items. The bespoke Lobb shoes originally purchased by Sir James Fletcher II — and now in the possession of his son Angus — are also representative of the appeal of design and quality that transcends fashion. These shoes, in strong contrast to factory-made shoes, were specifically handmade with full-grain leather for the wearer’s feet measurements. A team of at least nine specialised shoemakers, 190 steps and several weeks are required to craft these shoes. The end result is a classic pair of oxfords, monk straps or balmorals that have been made to last for decades.

Part of the potency of the Lobbs is the fact that they have been fastidiously maintained for approximately 50 years. A private lender similarly devotes a lot of resources (time and space) for the management and care of her shoes. When speaking of some of her other collections, she has confessed that, “condition is everything to me”⁸.

Footnotes: The perfect fit

Shoes occupy a somewhat indefinite category in fashion. No look is complete without a pair of shoes. Yet, many fashion houses refer to footwear as accessories, implying that they are something additional to an already self-sufficient outfit. Fashion commentators similarly speak of shoes as they would of handbags or hats. ‘The It bag is over. Cue the hit shoe’, one New York Times headline reads.⁹ Shoes thus lie in an indeterminate territory between necessity and accessory. The approaches of the lenders in *Sole Desire* reflect this, with each lender seeking a nexus between the how desirable a shoe is and how much value they’ll get out of it. There is the odd indulgence — as well as the occasion pair of shoes that are too small, purchased during a particularly optimistic shopping trip — but for the most part, shoes are bought when everything matches up. In fact, a number of shoes exhibited were acquired in propitious circumstances; Karen Inderbitzen-Waller gained a pair of treasured Miu Miu in exchange for an artwork; Sebastian Clarke purchased his *Zvezdochas* on Trade Me, and as an

uncontested buyer managed to buy them for less than a fifth of their market price; Many of Mary-Louise Browne’s vintage shoes are the result of an opportunistic purchase, nabbed when they were available for a particularly good price.

In many ways, shoes are sought-after because they sit on the boundary between apparel and ornament. As items that need to be worn and purchased — not many of us can make our own footwear — shoes give us license to adorn our feet. Furthermore, because they are often so expensive, they simply have to do more than just assisting locomotion. As Nigel Borell observes, “When you spend that much on shoes, you create a way of valuing what you’ve done.” For some lenders, that value comes from using shoes to declare their affiliations, for others it’s found in admiring shoes as visual treats, for others still it comes from the enhanced confidence that shoes can provide.

It’s worth noting that the lenders in *Sole Desire* represent a wide spectrum of shoe acquisition. Some lenders own a few pairs of shoes while others own close to a hundred pairs. *Unique Soles* founder Viv Heslop notably fell in love with John Fluevog shoes so much that she opened her own Fluevog shoe store in Mt Eden. Yet regardless of how many shoes they own, it’s clear that shoes are viewed by each lender as multifunctional objects of investment. Shoe designer Christian Louboutin once quipped that, “A shoe has so much more to offer than just to walk”.¹⁰ For many of the lenders in this exhibition, that’s exactly why they love shoes.

Ioana Gordon-Smith
Curator

1. Jennifer Steinhauer ‘Walk Softly and Make a Big Statement’, *The New York Times*, May 17 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/17/style/walk-softly-and-make-a-big-statement.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> accessed 21 June 2013.
2. Nancy Rexford, ‘The perils of choice: Women’s footwear in nineteenth-century America’ in Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil (eds.), *Shoes: A history from Sandals to Sneakers*, Oxford; New York: Berg, 2006, p. 142.
3. Omri Gillath, Angela Bahns, Fiona Ge and Christian Crandall, ‘Shoes as a source of first impressions’, *Journal of Research in Personality* 46(4), 2012: 423–430.
4. William Rossi, *The Sex Life of the Foot and Shoe*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1997, p. 83.
5. Valerie Steele, *Shoes: A lexicon of style*, London: Scriptum Editions, 2005.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Mary Trasko, *Heavenly Shoes: Extraordinary Twentieth Century Shoes*, New York: Abbeville Press, 1989.
8. Philip Clarke, *To Have and to Hold: Making Collections*, Auckland: Objectspace, 2009, p.17.
9. Suzy Menkes, ‘The It bag is over: Cue the hit shoe’, *The New York Times*, February 2 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/02/style/02iht-rslug.1.19860459.html?_r=0, accessed 21 June 2013.
10. Lauren Collins ‘Sole Mate: Christian Louboutin and the psychology of shoes’, *The New Yorker*, 28 March 2011, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/03/28/110328fa_fact_collins, accessed 21 June 2013.

Nigel Borell

How many shoes do you own?

I used to think I had 36 pairs but then I stopped counting so it might be more like 45.

How often do you wear them?

Some of them I wear often because they work with whatever's going on at the time. Others I wear a bit less and on certain occasions. I think you decide when to wear them based on context. Sometimes I wear them to work when we have formal meetings just to unbalance things or to get people thinking about something other than the meeting...

Do you look after them?

Yeah, I do. They are like a conversation. If they look ratty or dirty, that disrupts the intent of the shoe. They're going to get eventually old and tatty and unfashionable perhaps too, but it's about making them last, making the conversation last. But I'm not obsessive about it. Now that I have more of them, I'm a responsible shoe owner.

What are you drawn to?

I respond to colour and simple designs, predominantly. They need to speak to my individuality. Some are really out there and I like that because they sort of screen people, repel certain people, which I like, however, they also attract a lot of people and attention too. Ultimately they are a fashion statement, so I like shoes that are quite sophisticated to my sensibility.

What do shoes say about you?

That I'm artistic. That I'm an individual. They sometimes say I'm courageous and sometimes a risk-taker and maybe sometimes they might say I'm a little pretentious, preoccupied and a little obsessed? All of the above.

Favourite shoe memory?

My most expensive pair of shoes I bought was when I was quite young. I was studying at university and I bought a pair of caterpillar boots (originals). They were \$380 and that was really quite expensive back then for me as a student. When you spend that much on shoes, you create a way of valuing what you've done, which usually means looking after them, making them last and making sure you get your money's worth.

What do you think about...

White shoes?

Cryptic. White shoes are like sitting on the fence, they seem too ambiguous.

Wedges?

Something from the 70s with a cork heel? I don't know...

Penny loafers?

I've got a pair in white!

Nigel Borell



Nike Dunk High Pro SB Metal Rock Pack – Motley Crue Dr. Feel Good

Acquired in 2008 in Bayfair, Mt Maunganui

“These shoes are what I describe as a ‘mercy buy’. They were on sale and when looking at them you could see why. They were loud, bold and a little out of control. I sort of liked that about them. They are the hardest pair of shoes I think I own to pull off. They definitely get the most comments and looks, like real blatant stares and comments from people. These would have to be one of the first really ‘out there’ pair of shoes I had purchased to date then. The story behind these shoes is that I was living and teaching in Tauranga and it was a very conservative and a slightly racist place. Something about the mix of those two things made me want to buy them and give the city the ‘big finger’. It was a slightly rebellious act, but they were really unique and still are.”



DC Shoes ‘Graduate LX’ High Top

Acquired in 2013 in Manukau City

“These DCs were my leaving gift when I left my last job. My colleagues know that I am discerning when it comes to gifts (I used to buy all the leaving gifts for staff because I am a runaway shopper). Anyway, when it came to selecting my own leaving gift it was quickly decided (by all involved) that I should go with my colleague to choose the gift. These DC hi tops seemed interesting to me. I was taken with the minimal look off-set by just the bronze upper around the back of the top. I thought they were unusual for DCs too.”

Mary- Louise Browne

How many shoes do you own?

More than 50 pairs.

When will you buy a new pair?

I can't predict this. All my shoe purchases are really opportunistic. I'll walk into a recycle shop and there will be a pair of really good shoes at an absurd price and so I consider whether I'll be able to wear them and where. If it all stacks up...

Where do you shop?

Mainly from op shops and recycle boutiques, both here and overseas.

What do you look for?

I like vintage, any vintage, and shoes with a masculine last. And I've got to know that I'll actually wear them.

Where are your shoes?

They're in a vitrine. Some of them are scattered on the floor of my bedroom but a lot of them are in boxes on shelves in a glass fronted armoire better suited to storing and displaying ceramics or fabrics.

Do you look after them?

Not particularly, I'm just not very hard on my feet. If it looks like my shoes need some attention, then I will clean them. I tend to keep my shoes for a very long time, resting them and bringing them out again when they veer back into fashion. Then eventually they become worn out.

Favourite shoe memory?

This is more of a repressed memory. When I was in primary school, I had these very sensible round-toed buckled Mary Jane shoes. My friend Michelle had these fabulous pointy-toed slip on shoes. I was desperate to try them out so I asked her if I could wear her shoes during the day and then I'd give them back to her at the end of the school day. She was very obliging and I got to swan around the playground and classroom in these not so sensible shoes. Teachers got wind of it and brought it up at assembly. This was a very small Catholic school – there were probably about 100 students altogether – so swapping shoes was very conspicuous. Any humiliation in being named was triumphed over by the immense pleasure I experienced wearing someone else's shoes. This could explain my lack of squeamishness in buying second hand shoes.

Mary- Louise Browne



Antonio D'Anna, made in Spain for The Stone Shoe company

“These are hand me downs I received in 2010 from my mother. Originally purchased in 1976, I was keen to acquire these shoes as I had admired them for many years. I had actively encouraged my mother to purchase them (and another pair in red and cream) when I was at school. We were both taken by the ‘retro’ spectator style and the hand tooling. I still have my mother’s lay-by records of the purchase. She put down a very modest deposit of five dollars.”



Chanel

Acquired in 2011 from Sweet Fashion Recovery

“The Chanel patent leather flats looked so very 1980s and fitted like a glove. The price was also a motivator — no 1980s excess, more post-millennium recession. I had just paid for the shoes and a very svelte and glamorous octogenarian entered the shop, spied them in my hands and gasped. Apparently she had been after a pair like this for decades. Once she realised that I was the new owner, she advised me to take good care of them by regularly smearing them with Vaseline.”

Sebastian Clarke

How many shoes do you own?

I own around 15 pairs of shoes, but not many are like the *Zvezdochkas*.

How often do you wear the *Zvezdochkas*?

It has definitely been some years now, let's just say it's not easy to coordinate an outfit with these shoes.

When and where do you wear them?

I wore them a lot in autumn time and amongst the crunchy, fallen leaves the bronze colour of the material looked terrific.

Do you look after them?

Yes, they're really easy to clean, because you can just deconstruct the whole thing out and take it apart. I would always take the MN (for Marc Newson) metallic buttons off when I would wear them out. I still have them and probably wouldn't if I had worn them out.

Where are your shoes?

Arranged by colour on the floor of my wardrobe. Some are kept safe in their boxes.

Favourite shoe memory?

I remember wearing the *Zvezdochkas* to school and sitting at a round table that was by the school-tuck shop. I was a fourth former at the time and this seventh former had crawled under my chair and began to stroke my feet. I was at a bit of a loss as to what to do. I think I just let it slide and hoped the person would get it out of their system. That was probably the most extreme exchange, but people would definitely come up to me and ask me about the shoes.

What do you think about...

Air Jordans?

I am a fan but I am unsure if I would ever wear them. Kanye West's *Air Yeezys* would be my preference.

White shoes?

While I can appreciate their impracticality, I will always have a minor obsession with white shoes. If only they would stay white...

Ugg boots?

I think I would rather see someone barefoot in public than in Ugg boots.



Sebastian Clarke

Nike Zvezdochka designed by Marc Newson
Acquired aged 14 on Trade Me

“I saw these shoes in an article in *Urbis*. I remember then doing some research online about them. I found a lot of photos from Google images and went so far as to print them out and put them on a piece of paper so I had a scrapbook entry or something. I was not really interested in acquiring the shoes; I was more just fascinated by the shoes themselves. Maybe about 6 months later, I just happened to be on TradeMe and I hardly ever go on TradeMe – I don’t know why I was on there. There was a pair of the shoes – in my size – and the seller was in Auckland. I was uncontested. It was a steal because they had a really limited release. I think they were US \$500 and I got them for NZ \$150.”

Deborah Crowe

How many shoes do you own?

Haven't counted.

What do they say about you?

Many things depending on what shoes I'm wearing: that I don't mind people looking at my feet, that I respect classic design, that I am quite a stylish individual, that I don't mind looking mad sometimes, that I like mixing styles together and that I'm interested in how what I wear affects how I feel.

When will you buy a new pair?

When I next see a pair that catches my eye, doesn't double up on something I already have, and the contents of my wallet can facilitate its acquisition.

Where do you shop?

Just about everywhere I go and online. I buy shoes from makers as broad and deep as the market — from bargain stores to designer salons.

What do you look for?

It varies — sometimes simplicity, sometimes complex/unusual construction or sculptural form. Always, good proportions.

Where are your shoes right now?

Mostly in my wardrobe, but also in my specially built shoe tower and shoe low-rise, where I can admire them as objects.

Do you look after them?

Oh yes.

What's the craziest thing you've done for shoes?

I can't really think of anything really crazy I've done for a pair of shoes, which probably means that, in my book, doing absolutely anything for a pair of shoes is totally acceptable!

What do you think about...

Roman sandals?

Not my favourite proportions, but I've seen some cute spin offs with patterns and perforations. I didn't have to wear these to school, so I don't have childhood memories of these.

Ugg boots?

No thanks.

Platforms?

Handy sometimes.

Deborah Crowe



Joni

Acquired in 2012 in Sydney

“I bought this Joni shoe because of its simplicity and classic lines — it’s about what isn’t there as much as what is there with this design. I was immediately drawn to it, whisked away in my imagination to a *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* moment. This shoe also immediately identified itself to me as a ‘wedding shoe’. It seemed to be crying out to be worn at such an occasion. It attended a wedding, along with its partner, five months after joining my shoe collection.”



Cosmic Girl

Acquired in 2004 in Melbourne.

“This shoe came from Kinki Gerlinki in Melbourne. I was attracted to its sculptural form with talon-like toe. At the time, it reminded me of something from Matthew Barney’s *Cremaster* films. When I wear these shoes my right foot sometimes uncontrollably starts clawing the ground.”



*Deborah
Crowe*

Lapero

Acquired in 2008 in New Plymouth

“These were bought on impulse while on a motor-biking trip as a pillion passenger. Limited room in the saddlebags meant I posted a bundle of clothes home to be able to carry the new shoes.”

Angus Fletcher

The Lobbs in Sole Desire belonged to your father, Sir James Fletcher II. How often would he buy a new pair?

He built up his stock of shoes with at least four pairs of Lobbs and then ordered and purchased to replace as needed.

How would he buy them?

His first purchase was either in the late forties or early fifties on a visit to London. At that time Lobbs took a mould of his foot and kept that on site. This meant that orders could be placed by correspondence. The shoes would be hand-made and then despatched by mail. The whole process might take six months but Lobbs were totally reliable and prided themselves as being recognised and licensed as “boot makers to English royalty”.

What did he like about Lobbs?

Firstly, they were made to measure. He had small feet and if he is like me, a high arch so that it is quite difficult finding shoes “off the rack”

Secondly, they were beautifully made shoes of quality leather that not only looked good but were soft and beautiful to wear. Although Dad bought other shoes (notably Florsheims) I don't think they gave him anything like as much pleasure as wearing his Lobb shoes.

What did his shoes say about him?

My father's liking and preference for nice things should not be misunderstood. My father was not vain or ostentatious. Those that knew him will attest that he appreciated quality and liked things done well.

Why have you decided to hold on to them?

I hadn't decided to keep the shoes! My father predeceased my mother by ten months and following Mum's death we disposed of the majority of their clothes by giving them to the Methodist Mission and the Auckland City Mission. For some reason I kept my father's Lobbs and Florsheims. I had undertaken a further sort of the things in storage some months ago and I had put the box of shoes amongst further items to go to the City Mission. So it was prescient of you to contact me for the exhibition. I think on reflection we should keep the Lobbs as a nice reminder of Dad.

What do you think about...

High heels?

I think they look smashing (from a male perspective).

Red shoes?

As with high heels – fabulous to look at on a woman.

Loafers?

I am a great fan of Country Road loafers, in blue, black and brown.

Angus Fletcher

John Lobb Bootmaker Ltd

“My father was fastidious about cleaning his shoes and built shoe cleaning into his weekly routine. I can still see him in the up-stairs sitting room on a Sunday after-noon, with the sunlight streaming in through the window with Dad on the floor with his array of shoes around him and his shoe polish and brushes within easy reach. He would lay news-paper on the floor and sit and clean all his shoes whether he had used them or not during the week. He used Lobb’s shoe polish for this purpose. When he was travelling he would leave his shoes outside the door of his hotel room for cleaning overnight or, in the States, particularly, he would stop for a shoe shine. In addition he used wooden ‘shoe trees’ in all his shoes to maintain the shoes in their original shape.”



Viv Heslop

How many shoes do you own?

One should never ask a lady how old she is or how many shoes she owns. So let's just say that I don't have as many pairs as a centipede might require, but enough to satisfy my needs.

How many are ?

Once you discover what your heart desires then you never stray from a good thing... so all my shoes are Fluevogs, apart from my netball shoes. I have not yet found a pair of Fluevogs that would be suitable for playing netball in but that won't stop me from trying!

When do you wear them?

For me, my Fluevogs are my everyday shoes. This is the only brand that adorns my feet, day in day out. I wear them everywhere – I ride my bike to work in them, I walk to the dairy for milk in them, I stomp around work in them, I wear them both on road and off road. In fact, there are very few places that I won't wear them!

Why do you like them?

I like colour – I want to be able to look down at my shoes each day and have them put a smile on my face.

What do they say about you?

That I'm confident, not afraid to stand out in a crowd, not a trend follower – and most importantly of all, someone who understands the value of investing in well-designed shoes.

Favourite shoe memory?

I don't think there is anything that could trump the honour of having the lovely folk at Fluevog name a shoe after me. The Kitschy Kitschy Boom Boom Viv is being released soon and I can't wait to get my feet into them!

What do you think about...

High heels?

There is nothing like a well designed pair of high heels to make you feel elegant and bullet proof...and able to kick ass.

Air Jordans?

These shoes are for people with no sense of individuality, who want to blend in with society rather than stand out.

Ugg boots?

I see no reason for anyone to EVER wear Ugg boots out of the house. They are slippers for heaven's sake.

Viv Heslop



Fluevog – Sigourney t-strap

Acquired online in 2010 from fluevog.com

“After six years of working on my PhD, the day of graduation drew nearer and I decided I just had to have something that would shine as I made my way across the stage and morphed into a Doctor”



Fluevog – Munsters

Acquired in 2011 from the Fluevog world headquarters in Vancouver

“On this trip to Vancouver, I became enamoured with these Munsters... D.I.V.I.N.E. For his 40th anniversary, John Fluevog re-released a selection of his favourites, with these Munsters being his 90s choice. The thing I love about wearing these is that everything about them is over the top and exaggerated ... and who doesn't love embracing those attributes!

Carole Hutchinson

How many shoes do you own?

Maybe up to 100 pairs!!

How often do you wear them?

Sometimes never!!

Do you look after them?

Yes – certainly!

What do you think they reveal about you?

That I'm maybe a little androgynous.

Where are they?

In wardrobes, under the bed, in cupboards and in storage!!

Where do you shop?

Not important. Labels are not important to me. I don't care if the shoes are second hand or brand new.

What do you look for?

Design and appeal. When you wear all black, shoes can make or break an outfit. I have a total love affair with shoes.

Do you have a favourite shoe memory?

My mother tells me that when I was a child I use to sleep with my shoes.

What do you think about...

High heels?

Beautiful if she walks correctly and is young with beautiful legs and skin.

Ugg boots?

Detest.

Platforms for men?

Oh No!!

Carole Hutchinson



Minimarket

Acquired in 2011 from Paper Shoes

“I bought these shoes because of their design and because they’re made from laser-cut leather. They also reminded me of ‘Grandfathers’ zipped slippers.”



Channel

Acquired in 2011 in New York

“They’ve never been worn because they’re too small. I bought them because I desperately loved the design.”

Karen Inderbitzen- Waller

How many shoes do you own?

Somewhere between 80 and 100 pairs.

How many of those are heels?

40 to 50 pairs.

Where do you wear them?

When I leave the house for evenings out and special occasions that take place during the daytime like weddings.

Do you look after them?

Yes, to get them re-soled and keep them road-worthy means no dangerous slip ups.

Are labels, designers or brands important to you?

No, but in saying that I buy only European-made shoes as I love quality, nice materials, design and fit. I mostly buy Miu Miu, Marc Jacobs and Kate Sylvester. I also like Repetto.

Why do you like heels?

I like the sexiness that heels bring — a woman's secret weapon. I am a huge fan of Helmut Newton's work, where you never see a lady without heels. I like the glamour and fantasy that heels personify and they are also a big part of my work as a photographer.

What's the craziest thing you've done for them?

All heel purchases seem crazy. They are so expensive and when others struggle to put food on the table, it's a luxury that is not lost on me. They are an indulgence.

What do you think about...

Air Jordans?

Love. I have such fond memories for this cult 80s sneaker and I understand the appeal to all the hardcore collectors out there.

White shoes?

Depends on the shoe. Sometimes it works but they can have bad pimp connotations.

Ugg boots?

ONLY for inside. They're a lazy shoe for wearing outside; you might as well wear slippers out. Pamela Anderson totally wore out this look.

Karen Inderbitzen- Waller



Miu Miu

Acquired around 2002 on eBay

“I adored this Miu Miu collection with its fetish additions of rubber shoes. This shoe also came in a thigh-high boot version – completely insane and amazing!”



Miu Miu

Acquired in 2011 in Sydney

“I found these unworn and for sale in a vintage store on Crown St, Sydney. I saw them at a glance and was lured back. They were in my size so they were all mine. I have a long time obsession with Miu Miu shoes, but this is a painful pair of shoes to wear. Over time, I have realised that patent shoes are the most uncomfortable; they have no give and are always a tighter fit. I usually wear these shoes when I don’t want to stay out too late. They always ensure an earlier return home as they are just painful after a few hours.”

Private Lender

How many shoes do you own?

Currently, 32 pairs.

When and where do you wear them?

My work demands that I wear quite practical shoes, especially if I am styling or art directing a photo shoot for example, however all my shoes need to be interesting in order to please me.

Do you look after them?

I keep them all in their original boxes, tissue stuffed in the toes, wipe the inside of the shoes with a cologne-impregnated cotton ball after wearing them on a hot summer day, always put them away clean and never neglect maintenance. I also always pack them in shoe bags when I travel.

What do you think they say about you?

I think my shoes are a reflection of my personality and help to define my aesthetic as a practising designer.

Where are they right now?

They live in their boxes in my dressing room on black open shelves. They are seasonally grouped and all the evening shoes are also stored together.

Favourite shoe memory?

My very first pair of high heel shoes were purchased for me by my Aunty Lydia, who worked for John Greer. The shoes were red, white and navy blue, had punched detail on the toe, and a small heel. They were carefully chosen to go with the navy blue shirtmaker dress, with double row, trapunto contrast stitching in white (also purchased by Aunty Lydia) that I was to wear to the much-anticipated Form 2 Social. When I tried the shoes on in his shop, I suddenly felt so sophisticated and that this was such a huge step towards being perceived as being more grown up.

What do you think about...

Roman sandals?

Responsible for the high number of New Zealanders that pronate!

White shoes?

Never, never to be worn under any circumstances.

Ugg boots?

Feel the same as I do about white shoes.

Private Lender

Camper

Acquired in 2002 in Noosa

“I saw these shoes in the window of the store and was instantly amazed by them. I had never seen anything like them before and I just had to have them. I was on holiday with my husband and his sister and brother-in-law at the time. My nickname for my husband’s family is the Mc Thrifty’s and I suspect I have a reputation within their family for extravagance. These shoes were very expensive so I did not want my in-laws to know how much they cost. I rushed into the store, tried them on, paid for them at great speed and ran down the street just in time to meet up with them all. Told them all I had got some great shoes in a sale!!”



Maria Winder

How many shoes do you own?

10 pairs of Minnie Cooper shoes and sandals and 2 pairs of Minnie Cooper boots.

What do you think they say about you?

That I'm artsy, mostly sensible, a bit extravagant and silly.

Do you look after them?

Not really, except for replacing soles and heels when they wear out or cleaning my shoes when they're very dirty.

Where are they right now?

On my feet, under my desk, on the bedroom floor and in my wardrobe.

What qualities do you look for in shoes?

Practical but a bit groovy and usually, but not always, black. New Zealand made.

When will you buy a new pair?

I bought some new Minnie's a couple of weeks ago so I'd have something to wear while the exhibition was on!

Do you own any shoes besides Minnie Coopers?

Yes, mostly sandals, runners, jandals, slippers and boots.

What's the craziest thing you've done for shoes?

Carry concert shoes around in my handbag all day.

Favourite shoe memory?

Turning up to perform in Wellington and another member of the quintet having the same Minnies on.

What do you think about...

High heels?

I have one pair of high heels but I feel like a giant when I wear them. Handy for seeing above the crowd in outdoor concerts though.

Roman sandals?

Memories of boys and girls with hairy legs at primary school.

Platforms?

Brown leather platform sandals embroidered with fruit — summer of 1974.

Maria Winder



Minnie Cooper

Acquired in May 2011 from Minnie Copper Shoes,
Ponsonby

“I bought these shoes especially for the University of Auckland Chamber Choir tour to Singapore and London in 2011. I wore them singing in Windsor Castle and St Paul’s Cathedral. Later that year, I wore them in the opening ceremony of the Rugby World Cup at Eden Park and in The Cloud, Queen’s Wharf where, along with another Minnie Girl, I directed the massed rehearsal of the NZ Ukulele Trust Kiwileles orchestra, the biggest NZ Ukulele Orchestra in the world!”



Minnie Cooper

Acquired around 2001 from Minnie Cooper
Shoes, Wellington

“These are my favourite shoes of all time! These are perfect concert shoes. They’re pretty and classy, funky and sturdy. They’ve danced with me at many parties and functions.”