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"A Queen Within"
Inside the World Chess Hall of Fame’s Exhibition Preview in NYC.

by JENNIFER DULIN WILEY

WHEN THE WORLD CHESS HALL OF FAME approached ALIVE to attend an exclusive NYC preview of the upcoming "A Queen Within" exhibition, we were there in a New York minute.

Amidst an elite crowd of national and international fashion influencers, ALIVE co-founder and publisher Elizabeth Tucker joined the likes of Vanity Fair, Women’s Wear Daily, fashion and others for a sneak peek of the ground-breaking exhibition that debuts in St. Louis Oct. 14. The high-profile event teased curator Sofia Hedman’s unique concept of using design elements to explore the personas of the queen archetypes in chess. Among the pieces previewed were Alexander McQueen’s Anabelle Lee poison coat with paws by Edgar Allen Poe, Vanessa’s Chairy’s 2007 Bubble dress and the snake dress by Iris van Herpen.

In response to Hedman’s quote that “The queen is the most unpredictable piece, we wanted to have quite unpredictable designs in the exhibition,” Tara Levy wrote, “Mission accomplished.” Likewise, Interview Magazine said, “Like any good queen, the exhibit was equal parts logic and beauty.”

With so much fanfare, the star-studded list of preview attendees came as no surprise. Actors Radha Mitchell, ABC’s Deborah Roberts, CFDA’s Steven Kolb, fashion historian Valerie Steele, Decades’ Cameron Silver, fashion blogger and STL native Derek Blasberg, New York Fashion Week bounders Fern Mallis and McQueen’s muse Anabelle Neilson all made appearances. Equally impressive was the list of St. Louisans who made the trip to support Executive Director Susan Barrett and the World Chess Hall of Fame, including fashion influencers Susan Sherman, Tania Breyer-Jolly, and Karina Kelly Moler, Peggy Reilly, Tharp, Sam Posman, Jeremy Janousek, Matt Stewart, Kevin Glass, Jen Goldstein, Helene Sayal, Alison MacI, Phil St, Kitty Raisoff, Lauren Airways, Amanda Cook, Kelly Peck, Emily Kiphal and Aria Katara.

Here we are in the middle of an A-list fashion crowd—including Amy Fine Collins, Simon Doonan, Nadja Swarovski, Cameron Silver, Nicole Miller and many others—and all were totally entranced by the exhibit, as well as the idea of chess in general.” says Susan Sherman, project manager for the exhibit and surrounding events. "I think the show is going to blow people away by combining chess and fashion in a very powerful way. The exhibition is a literal call for any museum would be proud of— it’s yet another chance for St. Louis to shine!"