



Wednesday 18 November 2009

In 1994 when Aussie drag flick *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* first hit the screens, more than one reviewer described the outrageous costumes as "Edith Head on acid". The following year, when costume designer Lizzy Gardiner won the Academy Award for her work in the film (wearing a frock completely made out of gold American Express cards, remember? – gives a new meaning to the expression "financially covered"), she owed more to Edith Head for her shining moment than she probably realised. In this week's episode of "Wardrobe Mistress", you'll find out why...

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Folded Log Cabin Cushion class!!!](#)**

Wardrobe Mistress

The life of legendary Hollywood costume designer, Edith Head.

Episode 4 - "I'd Like To Thank The Academy..."



*Overlooked:
Joan Fontaine
in one of Edith Head's
stylish creations for
The Emperor Waltz*

Although a major and very visible part of every movie that was made, by the 1940s, costume design still wasn't recognised with an Academy Award of its own, something that designers and supporters began to lobby for as the decade progressed. Edith Head put the force of her dynamic personality behind this crusade, tirelessly lobbying the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for the award to be created.

Success came in 1949 when the 21st awards ceremony inaugurated the Academy Award for Costume Design for movies made in 1948. Two separate awards were presented, one for black and white movies and one for colour movies, something that would continue well into the 1960s.

Head was a natural favourite for the lavish outfits she had created for *The Emperor Waltz* (pictured), but was visibly stunned when the very first award in the category that she had helped to create (and would later dominate) went instead to Dorothy Jeakins and Barbara Karinska for *Joan of Arc*.

In the wake of this very public snub, there was fierce speculation within the industry that The Academy had deliberately overlooked Head as a tit-for-tat response to her perceived "pushiness" and her prominent role in lobbying for the creation of the award.

Head's disappointment must have been understandable, but it proved to be fairly short-lived. Now that the Academy Award for Costume Design was up and running (to become unofficially known as the Edith Head Award), she was about to enter the most successful period of her professional life, garnering four statuettes over the next three years, and then going on to win four more over the next 19 years.

Tune in next week...

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Show and Tell

Show us the item and tell us the story

Veronica Smith's cathedral window cushion

What was your inspiration for this cushion?

It was the black and white pattern. I first saw it in Blueberries and found it so striking I wanted to make one for myself, but in different colours.

Can you describe how you made the cushion?

It involved three different fabrics, one for the background, one that you showcase and one for the frame. I chose two different red fabrics, the one that I showcased was in red roses. Then I used a black homespun fabric for the frame. All the fabrics came from Blueberries.



How long did it take you to make?

I did most of it in one day at a class at Blueberries then finished it at home later on.

Have you been sewing for long?

I've been a sewer forever but I've only been doing patchwork and quilting for the last couple of years. I made my first quilt for my Grandmother's 85th birthday after one day's training in Sydney. I find doing a cushion is very different to doing a quilt as you can finish it so quickly, which helps with motivation. Finishing quickly is good.

Til next week!

The Blueberries Team.