

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*The Bata Shoe Museum Presents
WANT: Desire, Design and Depression Era Footwear*

BSM-Original Exhibition Explores the 1930s from Economic Crisis to Hollywood Glam

January 30, 2019, TORONTO --- The Bata Shoe Museum is excited to announce the opening of its newest exhibition *WANT: Desire, Design and Depression Era Footwear*. A powerful reflection on a turbulent decade, *WANT* explores the myriad dramatic design changes seen in footwear fashion, including the introduction of the wedge and the re-emergence of the platform.

As global economies tumbled when the U.S. stock market crashed in 1929, *want* proliferated—want of employment, want of security, want of escape. The desires born from want drove an explosion of cultural creativity from film to fashion. Some creative endeavors offered distraction from the troubling times, while others stoked desire in the hopes that by encouraging consumption the economy could be redeemed. Many of the most innovative shoe designs in the history of Western fashion were created during this decade of want. Shoe designers Salvatore Ferragamo, André Perugia, and Steven Arpad played with the architecture of footwear creating uplifting platforms and wedges as well as futuristic novelty heels and revealing peep toes that reflected escapist Hollywood glamour and new conceptions of fashionable femininity.

“I’m absolutely delighted to have arrived at the Bata Shoe Museum at such a time of creative ambition and excellence”, said Steven Parissien, Executive Director. “*WANT* demonstrates what our museum does so brilliantly: making historic subjects and issues come to life through insightful and invigorating interpretation while showcasing the breadth of our own, world-class collection. It’s the first of many engaging and thought-provoking exhibitions we are planning over the next few years - exhibitions which we hope will attract more and more visitors from Toronto and further afield.”

Designed by award-winning firm, Arc & Co., *WANT* showcases approximately 60 rare and exquisite 1930s artefacts and focuses on themes such as *Novelty, Exoticism, The New Leisure, Objects of Desire, All That Glitters* and *Future Footwear*. Exploring these themes, the exhibition takes visitors on a journey through the fashions of the time, the styles, colours and the materials used. Highpoints of the exhibition include:

- Iconic *Rainbow Platform* by Ferragamo designed for Judy Garland in 1938
- Bold black and white leisure shoes worn by Hollywood actor Bela Lugosi
- Charming compilation reel of 1930s Hollywood clips chosen by film consultant and journalist Nathalie Atkinson
- Powerful timeline highlighting the highs and lows of the decade

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Curated by the Bata Shoe Museum's Senior Curator Elizabeth Semmelhack, the exhibition includes artefacts from the Bata Shoe Museum's permanent collection, as well as loans from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC), the Ferragamo Museum (Florence) and the personal collection of Shoe Icons (Moscow).

"The Great Depression was a period of incredible creativity in shoe design from uplifting platforms to flashy spectators," said Semmelhack. "While these shoes are incredible in their own right, the reasons behind this explosion of new shapes and styles in the 1930s is equally fascinating and reflects many of the cultural and economic stressors of the decade."

An exciting array of programs have been created to accompany the exhibition. More information can be found at batashoemuseum.ca. In addition, the museum is thrilled to be partnering with The Kimpton Saint George as the exclusive exhibition hotel partner - visit kimptonsaintgeorge.ca for more information.

Strikingly beautiful and powerful, *WANT: Desire, Design and Depression Era Footwear* will be on view until March 30, 2020.

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ABOUT THE BATA SHOE MUSEUM

With an International collection of over 13,000 shoes and related artefacts, the Bata Shoe Museum celebrates 4,500 years of footwear history in four distinctive rotating galleries. In addition to our popular semi-permanent exhibition, *All About Shoes*, the museum has three galleries for changing exhibitions, ensuring that each visit to the museum offers a new experience. Other exhibitions currently on view include: *The Gold Standard: Glittering Footwear from Around the Globe* and *Art & Innovation: Traditional Arctic Footwear from the Bata Shoe Museum Collection*. Through the creation of its innovative exhibitions, the BSM strives to enlighten and entertain visitors of all ages. *For every shoe there's a story. Discover thousands at the Bata Shoe Museum*. Further information is available at www.batashoemuseum.ca or [@batashoemuseum](https://twitter.com/batashoemuseum).

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