

THE BONNIE CASHIN ENDOWED FUND FOR STUDY ABROAD

Established by the Estate of Bonnie Cashin to honor the life and career of this influential fashion designer. This travel fellowship is awarded to BGC students of high promise, for the purpose of travel and study abroad in the areas of clothing design, textile and fashion history.

About Bonnie Cashin

Bonnie Cashin (1908–2000) was one of the foremost American fashion designers in the second half of the 20th century. Cashin was at the vanguard of her field for nearly 40 years, and it is impossible to overstate the enormity of her influence on 20th-century design. She was best known for modular, layered clothes for Sills and Co. and her accessories for Coach, fashion design was only one medium of expression for a woman whose work and life were a seamless continuum and madcap adventure. A “nomad by nature,” Cashin grew up in a string of Californian cities, particularly fascinated by the jostling of Asian and South American cultures. She dreamed of being a ballerina, an artist, or a writer. These early passion—for travel, exoticism, dancing, drawing, and storytelling—combined with her determination and talent, led to a series of creative careers on both American coasts. She designed costumes for chorus girls, uniforms for World War II, and wardrobes for more than 60 Hollywood movies, before her decades of fashion work as a “name” on Seventh Avenue. Cashin’s oft-stated credo, “chic is where you find it,” sums up her belief that a “habit of wonder” and an ability to see relationships between objects and ideas far removed from the fashion world were the most important tools for a designer. Rather than look at fashion history, she was apt to cite the “rhythm of poetry or good reading” from John Gardner, Henry Thoreau, Georges Seferis, Buckminster Fuller, or Bertrand Russell as a means to stretch her mind and find inspiration for ready-to-wear designs. It is appropriate that Cashin’s archive, a gift from her estate to Special Collections in the summer of 2003, now resides in a library. It was her hope that exposure to her whimsical, inimitable approach to design as a way of life would encourage the creative process in any endeavor.

Stephanie Lake (BGC Alum, 2000)
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The Bonnie Cashin Foundation
www.BonnieCashinFoundation.com