



Here is a story about Roy Halston Frowick. American wonder turned international pop culture king of the fashion beating current. The mover of all shakers. What Halston set in motion was a platform for the future of the American designer, one that extends to today and beyond. Halston's story starts off as any may and continues as most do not. A kid grows up in a small town with big talent, goes off to college and eventually ends up in New York City. His success in millinery from donning the likes of Jackie Kennedy and Barbara Streisand leads him to start designing clothes.

Before you knew it Halston was a household name. Whilst dancing between the lines of popularity from form to function (personal/business) Halston was more than an icon celebrated and sought after. He truly was a visionary. His business wasn't fashion, it was lifestyle. What Halston sold was an idea. Glamour could be easy and comfortable, is the lesson I learned. His work coincided with his personal life so much so that the both supported each other.

Halston wanted to provide for the American woman. A type of woman he described as all kinds of things. “She’s a mother, she’s an older woman, she lives in the south, she lives in the north, she’s a business woman, she has all kinds of different things. You have to say what do you do and what do you need for your daily toil...affluent and conservative.” He refused to dress just one type of woman or one market alone because he recognized that there was not just one type.

As I walked up the steps of the museum on what happened to be a beautiful day my stomach gulped. The excitement was probably on my face as I had finally arrived. The Halston Style retrospective was everything and more. Each room felt as if there was an unspoken narrative going on amongst the garments and items, whispering stories to each other about revealed moments. These were stories I wanted to know but felt I learned the more I walked through, the more I became a part of it. The museum sits on a vast property and hosts a sculpture garden. Once a home, its lavish setting and design make for a perfect location to honor the legacy of Halston. He would probably throw a party there himself. The museum makes you feel like you are visiting someones grand home of which you never want to leave.

The first room I walked into was a large rectangular room that had sections of mannequins, but just for this articles purpose and for irony I will call them Halstonettes, the name used for Halston’s models. It was more like a ballroom. Each group of Halstonettes told a different story. At the head of the room was a group of three, the middle in a long black velvet halter dress and cape standing as if she was hailing a cab with the other two Halstonettes looking on to see if one was showing up. The textures and styles coincided with a “going to the theater” storyline. Even though the looks were from separate collections, the scene was cohesive. There were display cases by the fireplace in the room. In the displays were pieces of art drawn of Halston in different settings some of the artwork sketches were by Niro and some were from Joe Eula, artists from the seventies and the eighties. There were also personal notes and letters from friends and clients that I imagine would be sent as texts today. In one letter from Elizabeth Taylor, she thanked him for orchids he sent her for her birthday. There was also a letter from someone who signed off as Chateau Margaux whom I have the suspicious feeling is Margaux Hemingway, a known muse and good friend of Halston. In that

letter she (if it is her) wrote “I never had so much cow shittin fun in all my life.” Now that sounds like a party! One of the letters was from Diane Von Furstenberg wishing him luck on one of his perfume launches. This room was filled with multiple classic Halston silhouettes. On one side was work wear. There was a green leather pant suit and turtleneck top next to two other professional looking Halstonettes. Across the way stood the golden goddess hammered silk sarong. It looks so light weight it could blow away with wind. In between the display cases stood a Halstonette in a red tie dye poncho with hombre fringe that had the artwork of Niro hung up behind it and could’ve easily been the inspiration for design. This room led to another room that I like to call the “ultra suede” room because most of the garments in that room were ultra suede and it was ultra cool. There were a few pastel colors and some bold colors. One Halstonette was in a onesie and scarf, she was just missing the sleigh. Adorning the walls of this room were sketches from the Halston limited collection.

The next phase in the retrospective was a vast hallway with built in display closets that looked out through windows to the backyard of the museum. These display cases had all kinds of Halston accessories. There were beauty kits, belts, jewelry and the entire perfume collection. This sort of hallway continued on with a framed timeline of Halston’s life. It was broken up by four frames focusing on the highlights and key points in Halston’s life and career.

If you continue down that hallway you get to the hat room. It depicted the time that Halston was working in hats. The displays around the room had hats from the very beginning of his work to the later years. There were many Bazaar magazine covers. One of the display cases hosted four hats of different styles and fabrics. Some velvet, some straw. The other hat display had fur hats and tweeds with corresponding newspapers sitting behind them.

Across from the displays were two Halstonettes in black. One was a short mod dress with long sequin beaded sleeves. The other was a jumpsuit in sequin and bead as well. That was the end of the line for the first floor.

The second floor had a straight hallway that led to the viewing room where they played the video of the Lincoln Center tribute to Halston, created by Liza Minelli. This hallway had images from many of Halston's fashion shows and could easily be called the *Hallway of Halstonettes*. There were rooms on both sides of the hallway each centered around a different theme.

One room was dedicated to his relationship with Martha Graham, renowned dancer and choreographer. In this room were five Halstonettes. The main focus was on the singular Halstonette in what looked like a medusa costume. Halston worked very hard with and for Martha Graham designing costumes for her and organizing fundraisers to help her with her company. In the left corner of the room was the poster for the last dance Halston designed for, *The Scarlet Letter*. The display in this room had books and sketches from the Martha Graham archives donated for the retrospective. One of the dresses in the room was a red velvet dress with poof shoulders, a corset and exaggerated hips in a renaissance style. Although it was a costume it could be worn anyway. Next to that dress was what I call the sexy dress. It was a black velvet sleeveless column dress that was a showstopper. A recurring theme in the world of Halston. Simple, sleek, sexy and chic.

Another room was dedicated to collaborations of which Halston was king of. The room featured looks from when Halston designed for Braniff airline in 1977. There were images from olympic tower and from product launches all along the walls. The displays in this room had outerwear sketches and Halston hosiery as well as the famous H towels. It also had a press release for when Halston designed the uniforms for the olympics.

Next up was a room that had one dress. It was a purple tulle off the shoulder fit and flare that looked like it could stand on its own. The images on the wall in that room depicted the life of Halston behind the scenes. There were photographs of his parties and his house. The impression you were left with was that every night was another party / let's work hard and play harder, and if you were lucky the work became play.

One of my favorite rooms was the studio 54 room. That's where the disco looks were. Sequins and beads everywhere. Silk pants, a dripping beaded long sleeve top, a blue beaded jumpsuit with cinched waist black leather belt,

a ruby red midi sparkled up, half turtleneck dress, a zebra sequin long sleeve long dress, a black tuxedo with diamond crusting all over and a shimmering liquid gold/silver looking fabric on a long halter dress. These are a few of the jaw dropping drool worthy Halstonette looks in the Studio 54 room.

The next room had what I call the firework dress because it looked like there were fireworks exploding all over it. That stood next to two belted Halstonettes that were also super sparkled up. The room itself literally had colorful spot lights. In the center of this room was a display with the Andy Warhol money hat. Warhol created it for a friend for his 30th birthday. The hat went on auction for \$1.2 million in 2015.

The final room was the Halston Heritage and Andy Warhol room. Warhol and Halston were good friends during the hype that was studio 54. Both giants in their own right, when they came together it probably felt like magic.

Although I had learned about Halston in school and knew the general story, never did I imagine the affect of learning about his life in depth would have on me. His every move was calculated, every seam accounted for. He was ahead of the game before anyone knew how to play. Trying to fit the life of someone so spectacular into an article seemed like an impossible task, and it was. I believe that Halston truly believed in the fabulousness of everyone. He could see it being attainable and wanted to make it so. It's like he was the Robin Hood of fashion and just wanted everyone to be a part of it.

To the man from which one can find endless inspiration and for a place to turn when one needs to know how high the bar is set, thank you. Roy Halston Frowick passed away in 1990 but in Spring 2017 I got to meet him.

Meeting Halston:

an interview with Cameron Silver

Fashion director of the H Halston and H by Halston brands.

TB: Has Halston, the man and the brand, affected your personal style?

CS: “Halston has been on my radar since I was a kid in the 70s and 80s.” A period of time my mother constantly tells me I should have been around more for. The imagery and memories of Halston are things that stick out most. *Limelight* one of THE spots to party at that time also comes to mind. It helped mold my taste. I appreciate both his personal and design style, which do not always go hand in hand. I would go so far as to say “I eat, sleep and breathe Halston. His taste has influenced my personal taste. This further proves the longevity of what being inspired by someone can mean and how it can carry through generations. It’s physical, visual proof.

TB: Being a fashion historian how do you make sure to stay true to the Halston aesthetic while still keeping it current?

CS: “WWHD, which translate to, *What Would Halston Do?* It’s being able to communicate the history of Halston in today’s day and age through contemporary fashion. This is a great way to help the brand grow and still be able to stay true to its bones. I believe it’s what Halston himself would be doing today. Social obligations and brand building is another way to pay respect. Halston was the first to do plus size in the 70s. There was ethnic diversity, an exciting dynamic, reflective of the multiculturalism connected to the beat of the cultural zeitgeist. Halston always knew what was going on in the social scene. A very serious part about being successful in any industry is always having your ear to the ground. You can’t be insulated. Another part is being able to recognize where there is a possibility for growth and where there is not.

TB: Thoughts on the current fashion climate?

CS: There is a client disarray in the fashion industry. There’s disconnect and confusion. The industry is going in so many different directions that it’s sometimes hard for the consumer to grasp the concept before it’s changed again. People don’t know where to shop or rather where not to. The “disruptors” at Halston, QVC, are doing things differently. This is where

we're going to go with fashion. It's a fast growing medium and a great way to interact with the client. It's reactive to the customer, addressing that we can react to customers demands. QVC is like landing a Las Vegas residency for fashion. It is less confusing thanks to E commerce, a direction the industry is heading toward fast."

TB: What is the best advice you were given when going into the fashion industry?

CS: The best advice came from performing. He knew to be nice. Kindness really matters. A point too many forget. You attract more with honey than with vinegar. I always did love the supportive community of theater. You don't have to be mean to someone to get the job done. Being nice changes the game. Decades started with thank you notes. Decades, the vintage luxury couture boutique is located on Melrose Ave in Los Angeles, opened in 1997. It's always about connecting to the customer. My BA was theater, I studied design and knew history. Everything a person learns is added up into a bank of what you can do with it. The ability to communicate language still matters. Some people have a hard time with communication, others are better at communicating their vision through different mediums. I'll almost do improv. when dealing with people. In a way, life is improv. If you don't seduce your collection to me, good luck. Period. I had an unconventional circulative path to fashion. Knowing what you want will separate you. Know your path. Even if you aren't sure where it will take you, at least know the direction you want to go in.

TB: If you weren't in fashion, what would you be doing right now?

CS: I could've had a successful political career. My passion is politics, and service to our country. We all have a responsibility to our community. I'd be very enthusiastic about that. It's important to be informed about the local and global happenings of the world.

TB: If you had to wear one era's style of clothes for the rest of your life, what would you choose?

CS: "The 70s. Modern minimalism. It's American luxury. The 70s wasn't just about what Halston designed but what he himself wore as well. There's also a rococo side that I love, but "I've become more suburban."

TB: You already have unmatched experience in the industry. Is there anything you haven't done yet that you would like too?

CS: All well intended plans don't always pan out. To say "along with success there is also trial and error" would be an understatement. No paths are paved before the first to trek. With exciting projects alongside the first luxury American brand, who knows, anything can happen. Everything I did in the past prepared me for this, even though the path wasn't what I intended. A fortuitous occurrence that actually took years of discipline and effort, like a perfect game of jenga, it wasn't luck at all. I want to work on my odd personal journey in fashion and QVC. It's very mysterious to some people, which I understand because the QVC I knew as a child is not the QVC I know as an adult. Not that I have fully succumbed to my adulthood but we are getting there. It's impact and almost prolific vision are perfect for the current customer's requirements. QVC controls a nice amount of e-commerce in the fashion industry. Companies have skyrocketed after moments on a QVC segment. Luxury can learn a lot at QVC.

TB: If you could tell your childhood self one thing what would it be?

CS: "I had a very good childhood. Maybe I would wish my parents were more athletic, in that it would've been great to grow up with an athletic discipline. Or a discipline to work out regularly."

TB: What would the name of the book about your life be called?

CS: *Costume Changes*. Aren't we all in costumes, everyday? Halston said it himself, "Accessories really complete a woman's costume." and he was talking about everyday wear. It would also be about the transition from metro life to suburban life. The ultimate switch up. One can almost call it a life's migration. The fascinating balance between. One I am certainly curious of and can't wait to read.