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Looking Good in Lamorinda

By Moya Stone

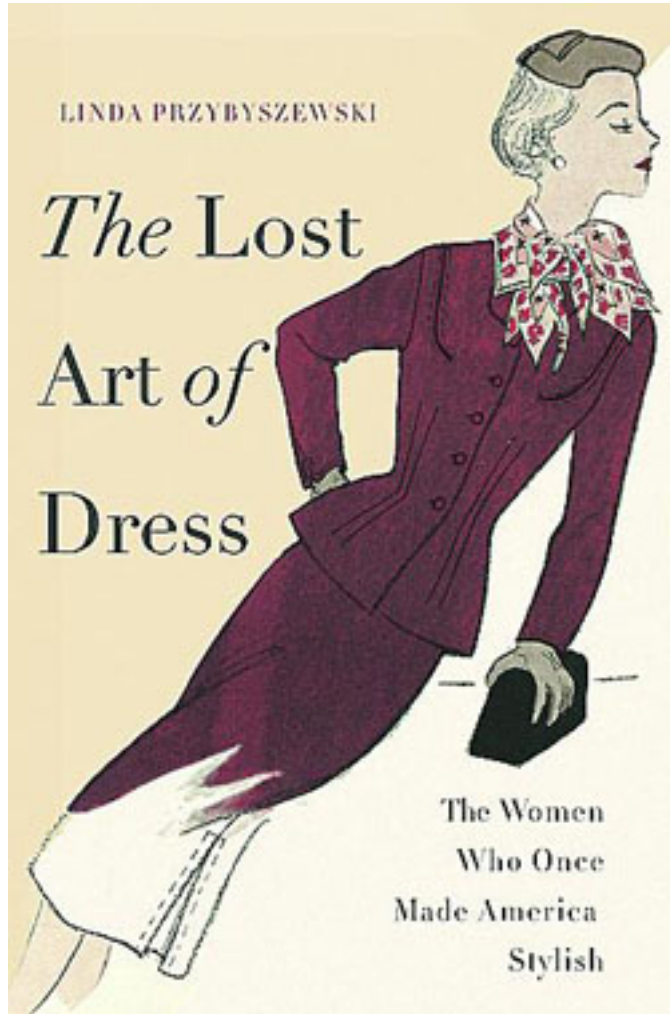


Image courtesy Basic Books

Seems we're trippin' back to the 1970s this summer with the popularity of the maxi. The long dress or skirt actually hit designer runway shows a couple of years ago but the motif has gone mainstream now and can be spotted just about everywhere. No surprise really, as the maxi is marvelous for keeping us covered but still cool and it's a nice choice for summer activities from swim meets to soirees.

Speaking of summer activities, I recommend popping into the Moraga Art Gallery's current exhibit to see a unique line of jewelry by Oakland artist, Margaret Dorfman. Called Vegetable Parchments each piece is made from thin slices of a vegetable or fruit. Carrots, papaya, zucchini, beets, and broccoli are just a few fruits and veggies that Dorfman transforms into earrings, cuffs, necklaces, and decorative bowls. She hand slices the produce with a mandolin slicer and fuses the slices to tarnish-proof copper. A non-toxic lacquer-like finish is then applied, which adds protection and a nice sheen. Dorfman's jewelry will be on display and for sale through Aug. 9.

The Lesley Evers shop in La Fiesta Square closed the end of May, but Evers is still around. She says, "We sure loved our Lafayette clientele and hope that they will come through the tunnel and visit our College Avenue store until we find a permanent location there." Evers is looking for a space in Walnut Creek. I'll keep you posted but in the meantime check out the blog: <http://www.lesleyevers.com/blog/>.

If you're looking for a good book to read this summer, I'm enjoying "The Lost Art of Dress: The Women Who Once Made America Stylish," by Linda Przybyszewski. A professor of history at the University of Notre Dame as well as an author and an award-winning seamstress, Przybyszewski discusses what she calls the "dress doctors" - women in the first half of the 20th century who taught young girls and women how to dress well. In home economics classes and women's clubs, in magazines and on the radio, the dress doctors, armed with basic fashion knowledge and some serious sewing skills, imparted their wisdom on how to assemble appropriate attire for home, school, work, daytime and evening.

Dense with information yet accessible, "The Lost Art of Dress" takes readers on the most interesting of adventures describing the rise of the dress doctors and their eventual decline in the 1960s (due to casual-wear in the suburbs, the youth craze, and designers' simplification of their fashions). In addition to discussing the women themselves, Przybyszewski goes into great detail about what they taught including a description of the five art principles - harmony, rhythm, balance, proportion, and emphasis - which they believed should be applied when creating an outfit. There are plenty of illustrations (a rarity in books these days) that make a nice addition to the text.

Stay cool out there and go forth in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at <http://overdressedforlife.com/>.



Vegetable Parchments cuff bracelets by Margaret Dorfman. Photo provided

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