



PURSEONALITY

A WORLD-CLASS COLLECTION OF HANDBAGS

OCTOBER 11, 2019 - APRIL 30, 2020

 Historic Bethlehem
MUSEUMS & SITES

PURSEonality: A World-class Collection of Handbags was developed by Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites, a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring history to life by educating the public about Bethlehem's rich heritage, by preserving historic sites, and by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting historical and artistic artifacts that can be used to tell the stories of Bethlehem's people.

Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites' primary entry point to Bethlehem is the Visitor Center located at 505 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018.

To learn more, visit online: www.HistoricBethlehem.org or call: 1.800.360.TOUR.

This publication was designed and edited by Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites.
Photo credits: Peter Gourniak (Front Cover, Back Cover, pp: 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12);
Ilene Hochberg Wood (pp: 2, 3, 7); and Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites (pp: 13).

Printed in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, U.S.A
by Christmas City Printing, 610.868.5844, xmascity.com

No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means— electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other— except for promotion or quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

PURSEonality is a multi-site exhibition that celebrates the transformation of the handbag from utilitarian accessory to fashion statement through the collection of visionary collector and handbag historian, Ilene Hochberg Wood.

Wood's world-class collection of approximately 3,000 handbags makes its debut to the public in this colorful, modern exhibition of over 300 handbags that spans centuries. View the most remarkable, unusual, and expensive purses acquired by Wood. Explore how the handbag has changed over time, reflecting the climate in which it was produced, and the demands of the people who carried it.

Enjoy custom tours and workshops, participate in the interactive exhibition, commemorate your visit with photo opportunities, and shop the unique museum shop with one-of-a-kind fashion pieces.



Champagne Bucket Handbag
Ann Marie of Paris
Circa 1940s

Castle Handbag
Ann Marie of Paris
Circa 1940s

Anne Marie Simmonot designed figural handbags. The typically black, white, or red purses are made to look like other objects, such as a bottle of champagne in an ice bucket, a telephone, or a radio. These novelty bags are believed to have been sold from a boutique on the ground floor of the Hotel Le Meurice in Paris. While Anne Marie bags are rare due to their fragility and wartime production, the castle handbag in particular is even more elusive. It is referred to as a "Unicorn" piece since seeing it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



**THE
U**

N

I

C

O

R

N

MOST

UNUSUAL



Lucite Purse
O.E.L. (Bud) Graves
Circa 1960-1970s

O.E.L. Graves was a Palm Springs, California-based artist known for his experimental use of materials. His artwork was popular among Hollywood celebrities including Clark Gable, Bob Hope, and Bing Crosby. His art was collected and exhibited at museums, including the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. He loved to work in new media, and devised a way to sculpt unique lucite bags with embedded gems and seashells, often customized for a specific client.

MOST

O P U L E N T



Resting Crane Minaudiere
Judith Leiber
Circa 1985

Judith Leiber was known for her crystal encrusted evening bags. They were an accidental design. A shipment of metal clutch bags arrived damaged, so she covered them with crystals, and a new category of evening bags was born! This piece is modeled after a Japanese 'koro' incense holder.

Red Alligator Kelly Bag
Hermès
1995

The Kelly bag draws its name from Grace Kelly, who was first introduced to the design in 1954, when she used it in "To Catch A Thief." Two years later, she would famously use the Hermès bag to cover her pregnancy from Paparazzi. The red alligator Kelly bag pictured is larger than the typical Kelly Handbag. A smaller, red, alligator version of the bag was used in the film "Le Divorce," but due to its unusual size, this bag is more valuable. It appears that size does matter...



**MOST
VALUABLE**

Monogram Speedy 25
Louis Vuitton
Circa 1980s

Louis Vuitton first created the Iconic Speedy Bag in 1930 as the "Express." It was only available in the 30 cm. size until 1959 when Audrey Hepburn requested one in 25 cm. The Speedy Bag pictured here is an "old model," predating Louis Vuitton's 2015 redesign. Louis Vuitton has been deemed the most counterfeited handbag company in the world. The duffel shape has been copied by other manufacturers in a variety of materials and is available at a range of prices.



THE

INSPIRATION

THE MOVIE STAR



The Rear Window Bag
Max Holzman for Mark Cross
Circa 1955

This is a version of a bag designed in 1954 by Max Holzman for Mark Cross. The bag was created for Grace Kelly in the Hitchcock movie "Rear Window," and is the centerpiece of a scene in which she pulls a voluminous negligee from its compact, structured interior. The popularity of the "Grace Box" bag launched an enduring trend for "box bags," and an exact replica named the "Rear Window Overnight Case" was re-released by Mark Cross in 2015.

Jewelry-Encrusted Trunk Bag
Ilene Wood
2006

This bag started out as a velvet-covered trunk bag that was customized by Ilene Hochberg Wood using a glue gun, broken jewelry and buttons. Upon completion, it entered into a long legacy of Do It Yourself handbags. Handbag kits assisted fashionistas as they made custom purses from the comfort of home. The resulting bags included painted baskets, bedazzled cases, embroidered clutches, and knitted satchels. DIY kits promised an affordable custom piece and an evening of entertainment.



THE

PROJECT



THE COMEDIAN

The "Hen Bag" Handbag
Sarut
2015

One cannot help but smile upon glimpsing this satirical silicone chicken handbag. When collector Ilene Hochberg Wood saw this bag in the window of a gift shop, she had to have it. The absurd, whimsical accessory reminds its beholder that fashion and humor are an "eggcellent" pairing.

Safety Pin Handbag
Ingber
Circa 1955

The Safety Pin Handbag was designed during World War II. The bag's message was "be safe," and it was first made in fabric as leather was being rationed. Picked up by several companies (Ingber, Koret), the motif has been revived by contemporary designers including Versace, Moschino, and Marc Jacobs. The most notable revival is by Bodhi, whose Safety Pin Clutch was featured on *Gossip Girl* in 2012. The safety pin once stood as a symbol of resistance. Today, it is used as a symbol of solidarity, a good luck charm, or as a way to ward off evil.

THE

COMEBACK

KID

THE COMEBACK KID

KID



THE ELDEST

Carpet Bag
Maker Unknown
Circa 1850s

The oldest bag in Ilene Hochberg Wood's collection is a needlepoint travel satchel, commonly called a Carpet Bag. Carpet Bags became popular in the 1800s, and were used as one might use a carry-on today. This carpet bag features custom embroidery. The monogrammed "B" represents the bag's owner, perhaps making it easier to claim the bag when travelling. Though this travelling companion got its start in Victorian dry goods stores, the trend has resurfaced, most notably in the 1980s.



ILENE HOCHBERG WOOD

Ilene Hochberg Wood is the author of several best-selling books, including *Dogue*, a canine version of *Vogue* magazine, which became an international bestseller; *Catmopolitan*, a feline look at *Cosmopolitan* magazine, which spent nine weeks on The New York Times bestseller list in the number-two spot; as well as *Vanity Fur*, *Forbabes*, *Good Mousekeeping*, *Who Stole My Cheese?!!!*, *Stylish Knits for Dog*, *Dogs by Design* and *Posh Pups*.

Ms. Hochberg Wood is known for her wit and style, and has appeared on television, in newspapers and magazines to promote her projects, both here and abroad. She is recognized as a leading authority on pets, fashion, and handbags. Ms. Hochberg Wood has the largest privately held handbag collection in the United States, and plans to create The American Handbag Museum.

Ms. Hochberg Wood holds a B.S. in Design and Environmental Analysis from Cornell University. She is a member of Mensa and has been an instructor at Parsons School of Design.

Prior to her writing career, Ms. Hochberg Wood spent over eight years in retail management as a Director of Fashion Coordination and Visual Merchandising for several department and specialty stores. She left retail merchandising to begin her own business, *Dogwear*, manufacturer of fashion for pets. She created a new and unique niche in a formerly utilitarian industry. The success of *Dogwear* led to the creation of a canine fashion newsletter, *Dog Wear Daily*, a knock-off of the women's fashion bible, *Women's Wear Daily*. This became *Dogue*, and the rest is publishing history!

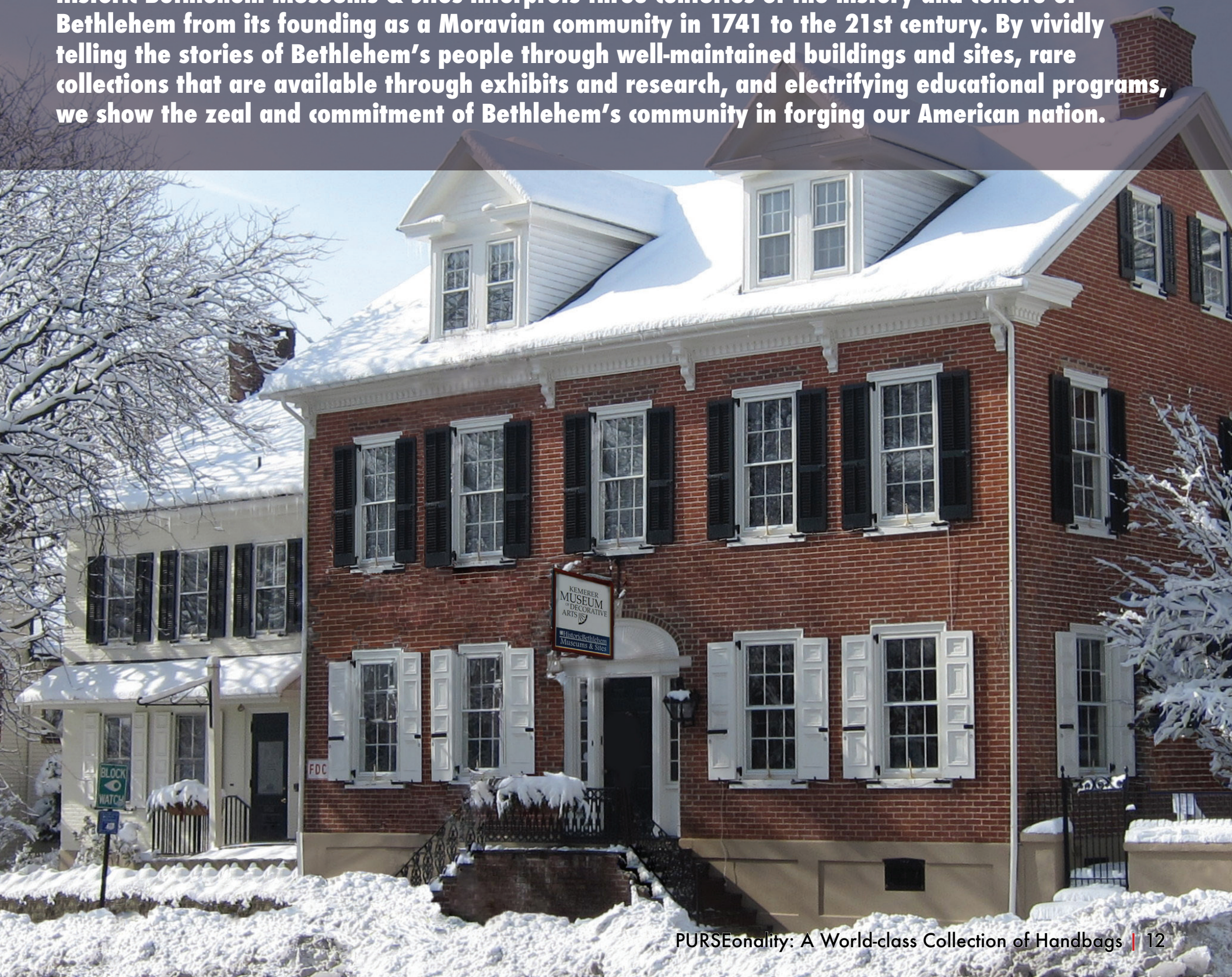
In addition to her interest in pets, Ms. Hochberg Wood holds a black belt in shopping, is a patron of the arts, and is an intrepid handbag collector. She enjoys collecting and selling handbags, vintage fashion, and art. She is an avid community activist, and is involved in a number of non-profit organizations.

"Women love handbags. They are totems, and objects of desire, that convey who we are and what we hold dear, both literally and figuratively. Look at any woman and the bag she carries, and you learn a lot about her, and the image she wants to convey to the world. Empty the bag out and examine its contents, to learn who she really is inside, and what she finds essential to her everyday existence."

-Ilene Hochberg Wood

Historic Bethlehem MUSEUMS & SITES

Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites interprets three centuries of the history and culture of Bethlehem from its founding as a Moravian community in 1741 to the 21st century. By vividly telling the stories of Bethlehem's people through well-maintained buildings and sites, rare collections that are available through exhibits and research, and electrifying educational programs, we show the zeal and commitment of Bethlehem's community in forging our American nation.





PURSEONALITY

A WORLD-CLASS COLLECTION OF HANDBAGS

 Historic Bethlehem
MUSEUMS & SITES

www.HistoricBethlehem.org | 1.800.360.TOUR