

Finding Enid with LOVE



Discovering Enid Collins through Purse Anthropology

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“Purse Anthropologist” Karen Adler to Attend “Finding Enid with Love” Debut at the Hill Country Film Festival June 3

Emmy-winning filmmaker Mike Maloy’s documentary about mid-century fashion icon Enid Collins focuses on interviews with Adler and other avid collectors, as well as Collins’s family.

LONGMONT, Colo. (May 27, 2022)—A healthy obsession with vintage wooden purses is not a typical route to the red carpet. Then again, not much about such an offbeat passion *is* typical.

Take Karen Adler, an artist trained in cultural anthropology who has turned her skills toward an unlikely research subject: faux-jewel-decorated wooden handbags made by mid-century Texas fashion maverick Enid Collins (1918-1990).

From her Longmont, Colo., office and temporary digs at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Adler collects, researches, documents and studies hundreds of original box handbags and other artworks created by Collins from the mid-1950s to 1972. Since about 2011, she’s amassed a physical collection of more than 1,000 period objects and restored about 300 vintage bags.

She also helps people identify and authenticate Collins works, a skill that’s made her an expert on the faux-jewel patterns that took Collins of Texas from small-town Medina to Fifth Avenue.

Along with Collins’s family, Adler and a host of other Collins devotees are featured in “Finding Enid with Love,” a new documentary that will have its world-premier screening June 3 at the Hill Country Film Festival in Fredericksburg, Texas, where the designer lived until her death in 1990.

Adler will attend the festival June 2 through 5 to celebrate the film, which is not affiliated with her project and merely borrows its name, and to conduct further research on a woman she says was much more than a bygone trend.

--MORE--



Finding Enid with LOVE featured in new documentary - 2

“Enid Collins made a mark on American fashion because she combined being an artist with being a savvy entrepreneur, at a time when women were still mainly excluded from business,” says Adler. “That combination – fashion designer, folk artist, businesswoman—made her. I took part in this film because I want more people to discover that.”

The purpose of Adler’s work—she calls it “purse anthropology”—is professional and simple: to learn about and illuminate the significance of Collins as a fashion icon, but also an entrepreneur and folk artist.

“Enid took everyday subjects from the world around her and painted them in jewels,” says Adler, whose collection includes thousands of the glass and plastic gems that Collins of Texas used on its bags in the 1960s and 1970s. “The world needs to know about her. She deserves it.”

Emmy- and Peabody-winning filmmaker Mike Maloy seems to agree.

Maloy explores the designer’s life and legacy in “Finding Enid with Love” through archival and new footage (shot entirely on an iPhone 13), but primarily interviews and fly-on-the-wall moments with people strongly affected by her art.

They include Collins’s grandchildren and her son, Jeep, who published a memoir sharing the personal story behind Collins of Texas in 2021. Also featured are devoted collector-researchers like Adler whose passions for the sparkly bags have made them go-to experts among buyers and resellers.

According to Maloy, his interest in Collins was sparked when he read a March 2021 *New York Times* article that interviewed Jeep and Adler and other collectors to look into a resurgence of interest in Collins purses on e-commerce platforms such as Etsy and Ebay.

This online demand for Collins bags and jewels helped verify her instincts about Collins, Adler says.

“I’m surprised, and yet not, that people get obsessed with Enid,” she says. “Each time you discover something about her, whether it’s a purse or a jewel design you didn’t even know existed, or

--MORE--



Finding Enid with LOVE featured in new documentary - 3

some anecdote, it's another piece of the puzzle, another story that gives her artwork a context and puts us into her world.”

That world is much more complex than what her purses' surface sparkle and silly puns may suggest, Adler adds.

“It's no wonder Mike wanted to make a film about her.”

“Finding Enid with Love” will be shown at 7 p.m. June 3 in the Admiral Nimitz Historic Ballroom, 311 E Austin St., Fredericksburg. The screening is open to the public.

Prior to the screening, Finding Enid with LOVE will host a “Finding Enid on the Red Carpet Photo Booth” where attendees can get a photo on the red carpet posing with a vintage Collins bag of their choice (or with their own). It will run from 5 to 6:45 p.m. and be located by the event entry

Adler will attend the screening and Q-and-A to follow. She will be available for interviews or to meet members of the press throughout the festival, June 2 through 5.

Film trailer:

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/706971529?h=9a376aedd9&title=0&byline=0&portrait=0>

Tickets are \$10 and available here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/finding-enid-with-love-at-hcff-2022-tickets-337443090367>

For more information about the Finding Enid with LOVE project, visit www.findingenidcollins.com.

For more about the Hill Country Film Festival, visit www.hillcountryff.com.

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About Finding Enid with LOVE

Finding Enid with LOVE is a multi-disciplinary project based in Longmont, Colorado, that collects, researches, documents, curates and studies the artwork of Enid Collins (1918-1990), a mid-century designer and entrepreneur whose name has become synonymous with the bejeweled box purses that made her a fashion legend. Our mission is to discover Enid Collins through her handbags and the people who wear them. We seek to assemble a museum-quality collection of Collins original artworks so that we may



Finding Enid with LOVE featured in new documentary - 4

illuminate her significance as an American folk artist, fashion designer and mid-century female entrepreneur, and help create a world where the everyday is art, and art is for all. Today, the physical collection includes more than 550 original Enid Collins box bags, plus hundreds of totes, objects and documents. For a peek at the collection and more information, visit www.findingenidcollins.com.

About Karen Adler

Karen Adler is an artist and entrepreneur with a background in cultural anthropology, fine art, travel and journalism. She founded *Finding Enid with LOVE* in 2012 as a personal project after discovering a vintage 1968 Enid Collins LOVE box purse in a Chicago thrift store, and featuring Collins works in a “Tramped” show at her Niwot, Colo., *manifest ART gallery*. She completed doctoral study in cultural anthropology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, holds an M.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Northern Illinois University and a B.S. in Journalism and Spanish from Southern Illinois University. She is currently earning a Professional Certificate in Museology at CU Boulder. Prior to launching *Finding Enid with LOVE*, she worked as a painter, photographer and gallery owner while raising two children on a ranch in the Rocky Mountain foothills. She also served 20 years as a flight attendant with United Airlines. She lives in Longmont, Colorado.

About Mike Maloy (from the filmmaker)

Mike Maloy is a prolific producer of bold and memorable non-fiction television programming with significant achievements in premium documentary formats, including multiple Emmy and Peabody awards. From ‘Extreme Makeover Home Edition’, which he helped create and ran for three seasons to ‘9/11’, the highly acclaimed feature documentary and countless others, Maloy’s work has left indelible impressions on a mass audience.

The constant in his work is passionate, immersive storytelling, producing projects across a spectrum of networks and genres. In addition, he has maintained an active presence in the feature documentary world with projects ranging from Ayahuasca to O.J. Simpson.

Maloy is grounded in his unique background in journalism and the music business. As a journalist, he worked at The Washington Post, ABC News, CBS News and Rolling Stone Magazine, developing a gut level understanding of story and the ability to work under extreme deadline pressure. As a music video director, producer and editor he worked with a wide array of chart-topping artists, developing a distinctive visual style.

His production company, Empirical Media, is a creative collective with a dynamic slate of compelling projects. From development through delivery, Maloy is able to guide a project with hands-on expertise.