

# The man, the legend, the clothes

The Sun's Marie-Joelle Parent gets up close with the King of Pop's famous wardrobe — and even the white suit from the Thriller album

*All photos by the Sun's Marie-Joelle Parent*



Marie-Joelle Parent  
IN LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES — Short pants, sequin-covered socks, red leather jackets, metallic leggings, military uniforms, and fedoras.

Michael Jackson's wardrobe, white gloves included, is every fashionista's dream.

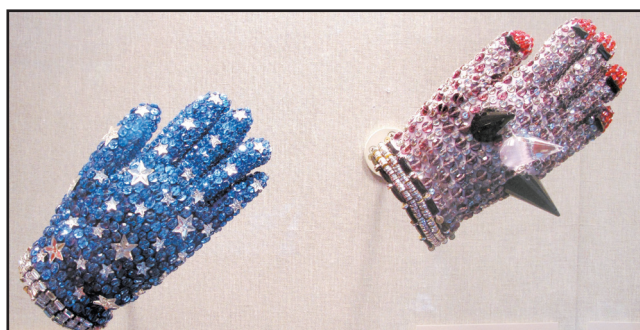
While you can claim they're only clothes, it's still inspiring to stand next to the items that helped set fashion trends and make the man famous. It's almost as if part of the pop legend lives on through these outfits.

Jackson saved and stored every one of his costumes at a secret L.A. location — something like Walt Disney's archives in Burbank. The director of the Grammy Museum, Bob Santelli, was given access to this treasure trove.

Last January, when the museum opened its doors in L.A., Jackson contacted Santelli and said he would loan him the collection.

Jackson won 13 Grammys over his 45-year career and wanted to be a part of the exhibit.

"He gave a lot, but the collection is impressive," he said. "It's all organized on shelves — there's a bit of



These gloves and jackets were donated by Michael Jackson to the Grammy museum. The Thriller album suit (near right).

everything. A fan going in there would get weak in the knees."

Santelli came away with 20 pieces.

The biggest surprise was the weight of the clothes themselves.

"The jackets covered in gems weigh between 15 and 17 pounds each," he said.

## 'Extravagant'

"You have to ask yourself how he managed to dance. He was very thin and managed to dance by defying the laws of gravity while wearing all this gear."

The clothes are incredibly detailed and to handle them you have to wear white gloves like in a laboratory. They're kept in a room at constant temperature of 20C and 50% humidity.

The most unique item wasn't loaned by Jackson but by a private collector. It's the white linen Hugo Boss suit worn in 1982 for the cover of *Thriller*. A rare item, to say the least.

All of Jackson's costumes were handmade in Europe by couturiers. Each item has the

singer's name sewn on the inside.

"Michael was very involved in the creation," said Santelli, who met Jackson a few years ago at Neverland. "The costumes were very extravagant, but he managed to have a distinct style of his own."

Santelli said the King of Pop's look could best be described as princely and military.

"He loved that because it gave him a feeling of command and domination," he explained.

The white sequined socks and the short pants also had a purpose: to make sure people in the back rows could see his dance moves.

The day Jackson died, last Thursday, the Grammy Museum was in the middle of taking down the exhibit.

"At the last minute we stopped everything and put several items back up," Santelli said. "We're preparing a big retrospective exhibition, but it could take a while. It's a complicated story to tell."

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**MICHAEL JACKSON** 1958-2009