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BUF 1101  
FALL 2019  
DESIGNER REPORT

The two costume designers selected were Edith Head and Lou Eyrich. Edith Head is a historical costume designer and Lou Eyrich is contemporary costume designer. Head has won eight Academy awards and was nominated for 35 nominations. Eyrich has received four primetime emmys, eight CDG awards, one OFTA Television Award, and one PGA award. Head worked in the Hollywood film set while Eyrich works on television series.



**Edith Head**



Mae West in ***She Done Him Wrong***  
**1933**

**Edith Head** was one of the most successful historical Hollywood costume designers. Head was known for her “trademark look of the short black bob and thick-rimmed glasses.” Edith Head graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a bachelors in French in 1919. And later received her masters in romantic languages from

Stanford University in 1920. Head became a French and Art teacher at the Hollywood School for girls. In 1923, Head applied to become a costume designer artist at Paramount Studios. Howard Greer, The chief designer of Paramount studios hired her. Before making a name for herself, Edith worked very closely with Howard Greer and Travis Branton. Branton was Head's mentor at the time, "he began to give her the sole responsibility for designing costumes when he was too busy to do the work himself, or when he did not particularly like the actress." Head's first major project was Mae West ***She Done Him Wrong*** in 1933. West began to regularly request Head to design her costumes. Head also design a dress for Dorothy Lamour in ***The Jungle Princess*** in 1936. This design became an "instant fashion hit among women of

all shapes and sizes." Head had become very popular by the late 1930s. She began to dress Barbara Stanwyck, and eventually becoming Stanwyck's most trusted costume designer. Head was written into all of Stanwyck's contracts. One thing to note about Head is that she rarely did the sketches for her own designs. She had a very dedicated staff of artist that did almost all of the sketches for her. She barely had enough time in her schedule as she began to gain popularity. She designed for as much as 50 films each year. She worked for Paramount studios for 43 years, and then began working with Universal studios until she passed away. Head became famous and well known for her timeless costume designs. "Edith was known for avoiding trendy pieces when she designed film costumes, and her classic aesthetic translated to her

personal style as well. Edith was very careful not to choose pieces that could easily be dated.” Edith was also known for integrating the ideas of her clients and her own to create the final master pieces. She collaborated with the actors. Her concerns were not only on the storyline but also making her actors feel good while looking beautiful.

The most interesting thing about Edith Head is that she did not sketch her own designs. She had other people sketch them for her. She was very often criticized for it. At the start of her career she even used some of the sketches her classmates did to get a job with Paramount studio. Another thing I found to be very interesting about Edith was her collaboration with Hitchcock. Hitchcock is one of the most influential producers and filmmakers in history. And to think that most of the costumes

of his most iconic films were created by Edith is simply amazing. Many of her designs have been recreated by other designers. Many of these looks can be seen on the red carpet. Edith loved using colorful components to her costumes, which to me seemed quite odd since most of the films she participated in were in black and white. She also used thick black eyeglasses to get an idea of how the garment would look on a black and white screen tv. This to me was interesting because she was not just thinking of how the garment would look in person but how the audience would perceive it. But most importantly Head was known for her iconic designs.



Dorothy Lamour in *The Jungle Princess* (1936)

**Lou Eyrich** is a contemporary costume designer and producer. She is most well known for her costumes in *American Horror Story*, *American Crime Story*, and *Glee*. Eyrich went to St. Cloud State University for three years, and then graduated from Minnesota State University. Over the years she has

collaborated with several people in multiple television series.



(Lou Eyrich)

Lou Eyrich is known for her contemporary costumes in *Glee*. Contemporary costume designers make clothing that is accessible and affordable in price to the everyday consumers. As you can see in the image below, the *Glee* costumes have a much younger and modern audience. They are aimed towards a younger audience members

so the costumes depicted what the stereotypical teenage high school kids would wear. Eyrich received 16 awards this far, many for her contemporary costumes. Unlike Edith Head, whose main concern was making the actress look as beautiful and angelic as possible, In the American Horror Story Lou Eyrich designs in were sometimes gory, gruesome, and straight out terrifying. Lou Eyrich's ability to adapt to the storyline and bring to life her interpretation of the characters is probably the thing that makes her most unique.



(GLEE)

Unlike Edith Head, I think that Lou Eyrich has not really had as big of an impact on fashion. But she certainly has made a big influence on younger audience. For instance her costumes for Glee and for American Crime Story are very identifiable amongst the average person. Anyone can probably look at the characters she has styled and immediately find themselves resonating with them. She definitely can create looks that are very approachable and relatable. Like Edith, Lou is open to collaboration and feedback from the actors. She loves to incorporate their ideas into her own designs.

The study of historic and contemporary fashion designers tell us that many of the historic designs were setting stones for the designers today. Most of the iconic designs were made by historic designers. They were then adapted by

contemporary designers and interpreted in a way that made it affordable and easier for the average person to have access to them. The historic designers very often cater to celebrities. They were more about creating luxury items than that of the everyday items.

## AMERICAN HORROR STORY



[INSTAGRAM.COM/ALADDINSAINE](https://www.instagram.com/aladdinsaine)

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