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Getting to Know a Garment through Conservation

Patterns for All Bodies: Repatterning the Collection of Canadian Dress at Agnes

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SPEAKERS

Marissa Monette

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TRANSCRIPT

[Music]

Marissa Monette: Here, all along the lace on the front panel but also on the shoulders and there's a small peek-a-boo area on the elbow, we have these beautiful strawberries and raspberries. So, we can imagine that potentially the area that she would be hosting tea would have a lot of floral motifs. In addition, you can also think about having, you know, strawberry and raspberry jam with your tea. And so, it kind of allows for the wearer to kind of accentuate certain things that they would like to show off their personality, which they may not do in more formal types of dress from this period. So, this particular garment has had a longer history than just the way it was worn by the original wearer, which is always really interesting. And a lot of the condition issues will also point to that and point to the way it was cared for. It's clearly a beloved gown and I think that the colours and the frivolity really demonstrate why people would be drawn to it, even though at first glance, some of the condition issues now may deter us. But it's really exciting to see it being worn in a different way for *Patterns for All Bodies*. I would definitely say the funnest part of this particular -- the conservation work on this gown really has been getting to know the garment itself, getting to know the interior, getting to know the different facets, the fact that it has a pocket, the fact that it has a front opening. So perhaps this person was able to put it on themselves or with only one -- or one person aiding them which, again, lends itself to the history. And before this particular project, I didn't know what a teagown was. So, it has really opened my eyes to really look at, you know, the types of lace that have been chosen, and the types of colours, and the way that that would really represent the viewer, like the way that the gown would have been seen by the lady of the house's friends and presented.