

Short Subjects

Spiderman Co-Creator Steve Ditko Passes Away

Famed artist who inspired generations of costumers and artists was 90 years old.

Steve Ditko, the comic book artist who co-created Marvel's Spider-Man and Doctor Strange, was found dead in his apartment in New York City on June 29th. He was 90 years old.

Ditko's love of comics came from his father. The publication of Bill Finger's and Bob Kane's *Batman*, and Will Eisner's *The Spirit* comics in the 1940s inspired him to pursue a career as a comic book artist. Ditko enlisted in the US Army after World War II and drew comics for the Army's newspaper in Germany. After his discharge, Ditko attended The Cartoonists & Illustrators School in New York City, where he studied under Batman artist Jerry Robinson, and eventually sold his first comic in 1953.

For the next couple of years, he developed his artistic style while drawing horror comics for small publishers. Stan Lee eventually spotted Ditko and hired him for Marvel Comics, where he wrote for

titles such as *Marvel Tales* and *Worlds of Suspense*. Ditko and Lee eventually began working closely together, with Lee writing and providing ideas, and Ditko illustrating them.

Their most famous collaboration became Marvel's biggest hit: *Spider Man*. Lee had originally tasked fellow artist Jack Kirby with the art, but Ditko soon took over. In an article for the [November, 2011 issue of VC](#), Lee said that Kirby drew a muscular character, which Lee did not want. "So I gave it to Steve Ditko, who tended to draw things a little more realistically and down to earth." Ditko redrew the character, and created the iconic red-and-blue costume. When the character first appeared in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 in August 1962, it was an unexpected hit, and defined Marvel's approach to superheroes.

Ditko continued to draw the character for a new publication, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, and helped create some of Peter Parker's most iconic villains, such as Doctor



Superhero Artist Steve Ditko.

Octopus, the Sandman, and Green Goblin. He also developed another famous Marvel hero, Doctor Strange, which allowed him to use some of his more surrealistic styling. Ditko and Lee had a falling out in 1966, and Ditko ended up working for DC Comics for a short while before

freelancing for a number of independent publishers, as well as for Marvel and DC.

Superheroes have recently taken over the Hollywood box office, led in part by Ditko's creations. Spider-Man has seen three different incarnations in the past several years, while Doctor Strange, received his own block-buster treatment. *Doctor Strange* director Scott Derrickson never contacted the artist. He noted that Ditko was, "like J.D. Salinger. He is private and has intentionally stayed out of the spotlight." Ditko retired in 1998, but he continued to work out of his Midtown apartment in New York City..

Ditko's legacy is both far-reaching and complicated. He was not a showman like his colleague Stan Lee. Instead, he worked quietly behind the scenes, devoting his considerable talent to creating some of the industry's best-known characters, and inspiring generations of younger artists and costumers in the process.



TDF Costume Collection

Arts organization offers Broadway, opera costumes to non-profits, theater groups.

Many costumers are familiar with Western Costume, who supplies costumes to movies and theaters. An east-coast group is doing something similar for non-profit and small-scale theater groups. The Theatre Development Fund (TDF), is a not-for-profit service organization for the performing arts group whose mission is, “bringing the power of performing arts to everyone.”

“We are making it possible for schools, regional theatres, and operas to raise their production value,” according to Victoria Bailey, TDF Executive Director. “As a service organization, it’s something you do for the field.”

TDF has a large collection of “used” costumes from Broadway shows and operas, from a medieval suit of armor to a 1950s poodle skirt to modern cocktail attire — as well as everything in between.



TDF Costume Collection warehouse. Photo: TDF.

Schools, colleges, and charitable organizations aren’t the only ones who can take advantage of this incredible variety of costumes. Any theatrical group, opera, TV show, photo shoot, or film company can rent from the Costume Collection. In fact, television shows such as “Saturday Night Live” and “The Today Show”, as well as many motion picture productions, regularly visit the Costume Collection.



Empire nightgown by Christine Rabot-Pinson for Anna Netrebko’s performance as “Donna Anna” in Metropolitan Opera Japan tour of *Don Giovanni*.

The collection is located within New York’s historical Kaufman Astoria studios, and sprawls over 16,000 square feet on the seven-building campus where numerous films and television shows produced.

While they do not rent for Halloween, they do allow visitors to view the regular stock items without an appointment. However, trying things on will require that you book a free fitting room in advance of your visit.

Visit the TDF Costume Collection [website](#) for more information on the collection and renting costumes. You can also get the latest information about the collection on their [Facebook page](#). Photos of costumes from the collection are also available on [Pinterest](#), [Flicker](#), and [Tumblr](#). A short video about the collection is available on [YouTube](#).

If you are visiting NYC, you can also “join” TDF to get discounts on theatre, dance and music tickets.

Vintage Cosmetics

Several companies offer vintage cosmetics for historical costumers.

Several companies are offering hand-crafted cosmetics that historical costumers can use to complete their look.

[Little Bits](#) is an Etsy shop based in Wisconsin that stocks historic cosmetics and hair products covering from the 1600’s to the 1930’s. One item of particular interest is the Easy Bob Hair Helper, a way to keep



Vintage cosmetics from Besame Cosmetics.

your long hair and still look right in deco era costumes. They also sell “Scandalous Love” a French aphrodisiac perfume for those brave enough to risk it!

[Besame Cosmetics](#) has a storefront in Los Angeles, California as well as an online shop. They create modern reproductions of classic luxury makeup from the 1920s, ‘30s, ‘40s, and ‘50s. This is also the place to find the “Agent Carter”, “Avengers Infinity War” and “Snow White” cosmetic collections. Some products have limited production. You can sign up for a newsletter and watch a video about them on [Facebook](#).

[Vermont County Store](#) offers products that vary from the original 4711 Cologne for men or women from 1799 to the 1922 Tangee “customizable” lipstick and blush to several shampoos of the 1960’s and 70’s. The VCS also has a newsletter that covers the entire store including the reproduction brand items.

Art of Television Costume Design at FIDM Museum

FIDM Museum and Television Academy presents 12th annual exhibition.

Television is accessible now more than ever thanks to digital streaming platforms that have joined mainstream network stations; for Costume Designers, this means more opportunity and freedom to explore character development onscreen.

The FIDM Museum’s Art of Television Costume Design showcases the work of this year’s Emmy®-nominated costume designers, costume supervisors, and assistant costume designers. Emmy-nominated costumes from nine television shows, and include over 100 costumes from a total of 24 shows and series. Shows and series represented in the exhibition include long-running shows like *Game of Thrones* and *Outlander*, and new-comers like *Schitt’s Creek* and *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

The exhibition runs through October 6, 2018 in Los Angeles, California. Visit the FIDM Museum [website](#) for details.



Display of costumes at 12th annual Art of Television Costume Design at FIDM Museum in Los Angeles.

Contemporary Muslim Fashions Exhibition

The de Young exhibition features Muslim fashion from around the world.

The de Young Museum in San Francisco, California will open a new exhibition on Contemporary Muslim Fashions in September. This is the first major museum exhibition to explore the complex, diverse nature of Muslim dress codes worldwide. The exhibition examines how Muslim women—those who cover their heads and those who do not—have become arbiters of style within and beyond their communities, and in so doing have drawn mass media attention to contemporary Muslim life.

The exhibition runs from September 22, 2019 through January 6, 2019 in the Herbst Exhibition Gallery. For more information visit the exhibition [website](#).

