

Fashion Museum Announces Major New Exhibition: A History of Fashion in 100 Objects

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The Fashion Museum, Bath, will unveil a major new exhibition called 'A History of Fashion in 100 Objects' on March 19, 2016. Celebrating fashion throughout history, from the 1500s to the present day, this headline exhibit will showcase 100 star objects drawn from the Fashion Museum's world-class collection.

The exhibition, which will run until January 1, 2018, will feature garments and fashion accessories that created the look of history or hit the headlines. From a late 1500s 'blackwork' embroidered man's shirt, dating from the time of the Spanish Armada, to a 'body-con' Galaxy dress of the early 2000s, a time when the world was facing economic downturn, the exhibition will present iconic and influential garments and accessories spanning five centuries of innovative fashion design.

The Fashion Museum is run by Bath & North East Somerset Council. Cllr Patrick Anketell-Jones, the Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said: "The Fashion Museum is consistently named as one of the world's top fashion museums. This new exhibition will give local residents and visitors a chance to see some of the finest fashion garments and accessories from the museum's fabulous collection."

Fashion is defined as the latest style of dress, decoration or behaviour, and the new exhibition will showcase artefacts that tell personal stories or are symptomatic of moments in world history.

One of the earliest fashion garments to go on display is an intricately embroidered woman's jacket (Object 2) – known at the time as a waistcoat – worked in coloured silks and glittering metal thread and dating from the time of Shakespeare.

Fast forward over 300 years, and visitors to the exhibition will also be able to see another embroidered jacket (Object 75), this time from 1948, by Paris couturier Lucien Lelong and worn by major film star 'Gone with the Wind' actress Vivien Leigh.

Graceful silk robes and embroidered and tailored coats for men, the styles fashionable during Bath's Georgian heyday, will also be on display, along with Regency fashions from the time of Jane Austen.

Big names of fashion history will feature in the exhibition. Visitors will see gowns by the first fashion designers in history, including the Houses of Worth and Lucile, through to names that are more familiar today, such as Christian Dior and McQueen.

The House of Worth in Paris was the 'go-to' designer in the 1890s, and the exhibition will present a grey silk Worth gown (Object 53) worn by Mary Chamberlain, an American by birth and wife of British politician Joseph Chamberlain.

British designer Lucile, Lady Duff Gordon (1863-1935), was one of the first women's fashion designers, an astute business woman, and also a Titanic survivor. 'A History of Fashion in 100 Objects' will feature a Lucile embroidered silk chiffon wedding dress (Object 61) worn by Mabel Chappell on her wedding to Robert Fuller in 1907. Mabel and Robert went on to live at Great Chalfield Manor, a medieval manor house in Wiltshire near to Bath, now managed by the National Trust.

Christian Dior (1905-1957) is one of the most famous fashion designers in history; the work of this master couturier is represented in 'A History of Fashion in 100 Objects' in an original New Look suit (Objects 74) from 1947, worn by British ballerina Margot Fonteyn, as well as a cream silk shantung halter-neck dress (Object 77) from the mid-1950s.

The finale of 'A History of Fashion in 100 Objects' is a selection of the most recent choices in the Fashion Museum's noted Dress of the Year collection, commencing with the Dress of the Year 2011, a magnificent dress in ivory silk tulle embroidered with tiny silver bullion eagle motifs (Object 96) by Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen.

Each year the Fashion Museum invites a fashion expert to select a 'Dress of the Year' that epitomises – for them – the year in fashion, and the chosen ensemble becomes part of the museum collection. 'A History of Fashion in 100 Objects' ends with the Dress of the Year 2015, two outfits by visionary British menswear designer Craig Green, giving an up-to-the-minute, contemporary take on historical fashion.

Visitors to 'A History of Fashion in 100 Objects' will also be able to engage with additional aspects of the Fashion Museum's collection through extra displays incorporated as part of the exhibition. This includes 10 'shoe moments' throughout history – from Georgian silk shoes to Air Jordan trainers – plus a children's trail showcasing 10 fashion looks for kids, from the 1700s to the 2000s.

The exhibition will also include four collections of exquisite accessories to dress – gloves, fans and jewellery – amassed variously by an artist, an expert collector, and passionate enthusiasts, all of whom have directly or indirectly gifted or loaned their collections to the Fashion Museum. This includes, from the 1600s, a collection of historic gloves collected by artist Robert Spence now owned by the Glove Collection Trust and loaned to the Fashion Museum through the generosity and support of the Worshipful Company of Glovers of London, one of the City of London's ancient livery companies.

Find out more on Twitter – you can follow @Fashion_Museum or use the #HFx100 hashtag.

The Fashion Museum will remain open during the exhibition changeover from January to March 2016. However some parts of the museum may be closed during this period and visitors are advised to check the Fashion Museum website (www.fashionmuseum.co.uk) before they travel.

Entry to the Fashion Museum is free to Bath and North East Somerset residents with a Discovery Card, and from January 18 to February 12, 2016 the museum is offering free admission to all visitors.

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