

## **From the fusion of fashion with surrealist art to Vivienne Westwood's anarchic designs – the V&A collaborates with Google to unlock the world of fashion with a new virtual experience**

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The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) joins over 180 renowned cultural institutions around the world from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the Palace of Versailles to create the largest ever virtual exhibition of style. The [“We wear culture” project by Google Arts & Culture](#) uses state-of-the-art technology to allow viewers to explore 3,000 years of world fashion and discover the stories behind the clothes we wear today. The collaboration is one of a number of ways the V&A is harnessing new technologies to bring its unparalleled fashion collection to life online.

As part of the project, a 1990 Vivienne Westwood corset from the V&A's collection has been reimagined in virtual reality for the first time. This new interpretation of the corset celebrates Westwood's unique take on one of the most controversial garments in history. This, and many more exciting features, are now available online as part of the global “We wear culture” platform launching today.

Spanning five centuries, the V&A's fashion collection is one of the most comprehensive collections in the world. The collection includes 17th century gowns, 18th century mantua dresses, 1930s eveningwear, 1960s daywear and post-war couture, including designs by Charles James, Christian Dior and Cristóbal Balenciaga, as well as the greatest designers of our time, from Alexander McQueen to Rei Kawakubo and Vivienne Westwood.

### **Highlights from the V&A now available on the Google Arts & Culture *We wear culture* platform include:**

- A Vivienne Westwood corset from the V&A's collection has been brought to life through an immersive filmed virtual reality experience. The 360° film examines the corset's place within fashion history and discusses its design, which encompasses a

painting by French artist François Boucher, to explore the inextricable links between fashion and art.

- Four ultra-high resolution ‘gigapixel’ images taken by the Google Art Camera reveal details of highlights from the V&A collections, until now hidden to the naked eye. Viewers can now zoom in and marvel at the masterful stitches of an 18th century [Dragon Robe worn by a Qing Dynasty emperor](#); get close to a 1937 [Elsa Schiaparelli evening coat](#) to explore the connection between fashion and Surrealist art; investigate the Arts and Crafts movement through a 1895-1900 [Marshall and Snelgrove evening coat](#); and consider the unprecedented luxury of British court life through a mantua robe dating to 1755-60.
- The V&A has created eight bespoke online exhibitions for the project, unlocking its collections to new audiences. Featuring stunning photography, video content and commentary, these include [Gallery of Fashion](#), which traces five centuries of fashion at the V&A; [The Politics of Fashion](#), a survey of 18th century British court style; [V&A Fashion in Motion](#), showcasing the Museum’s most memorable live catwalk shows, including Alexander McQueen (1999) and Yohji Yamamoto (2011) and [Schiaparelli and Surrealism](#) investigating the artistic genius of Elsa Schiaparelli and how the designer transformed fashion.
- The V&A has made over 5,000 objects from its fashion collection available on the *We wear culture* platform, increasing its accessibility to viewers around the world.

Kati Price, Head of Digital at the V&A, said: *“We are constantly exploring how new technologies can help bring the V&A’s unrivalled fashion collection to life online. Online visitors can now see the incredible detail of highlights from the Museum’s collection, while discovering the tantalising stories behind them in ways never experienced before. Through these revelatory online experiences and exhibitions, we hope viewers will gain a greater understanding of the craftsmanship and design expertise that transforms fashionable clothing into pieces of art.”*

Amit Sood, director of Google Arts & Culture, said: *“We invite everyone to browse the exhibition on their phones or laptops and learn about the stories behind what you wear. You might be surprised to find out that your jeans or the black dress in your wardrobe have a centuries-old story. What you wear is true culture and more often than not a piece of art.”*

The *We wear culture* platform is available online at [g.co/wewearculture](https://www.vam.ac.uk/we-wear-culture) and through the Google Arts & Culture app on [iOS](#) and [Android](#) for everyone.

## Notes to Editors

### About the V&A

The V&A is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity. It was established to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, the V&A's collections, which span over 5000 years of human creativity in virtually every medium and from many parts of the world, continue to intrigue, inspire and inform.

vam.ac.uk

### About Google Arts & Culture

[Google Arts & Culture](#) puts over a thousand museums at your fingertips. It's a new, immersive way to explore art, history and wonders of the world. Following projects that made [Street Art](#), [Performing Arts](#) and [Natural History](#) accessible to people all over the world, "[We wear culture](#)" allows everyone to explore the world of fashion. The Google Arts & Culture app is free and available on [the web](#), on [iOS](#) and [Android](#). The Google Arts & Culture team is an innovation partner for cultural institutions. The team works on technologies that help preserve and share culture and allow curators to create engaging exhibitions online and offline, inside museums.

### About Google Arts & Culture "We wear culture"

"We wear culture" in numbers:

- More than 180 leading cultural and fashion institutions from 42 countries.
- Over 400 online exhibitions and stories sharing a total of 30.000 photos, videos and other documents.
- 4 virtual reality experiences of iconic fashion pieces.
- Over 700 ultra-high-resolution, so called gigapixel images.
- Over 40 venues offer backstage access on Google Street View.

Further highlights from the We wear culture project:

- Step inside the world's largest costume collection at the [Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute Conservation Laboratory](#) thanks to a 360° film and see how the experts work to conserve the 35,000 artefacts the museum holds.
- Make a virtual visit to fashion's many homes like the [Condé Nast's Dream Pad](#) (Condé Nast Archive), the [Palace of Versailles](#) and the [African Heritage House](#).
- Look around in the [MoMu Fashion Museum Antwerp](#) a place where the game changers of fashion await you, or walk through the [Palazzo Pitti](#) with Karl Lagerfeld's 'Vision of Fashion' photography exhibit on display.

### Fashion as a form of art and culture:

- Explore the relationship between fashion and culture by browsing through the [ferocious fashion of the British punk](#) movement (British Film Institute), [the evolution of street style in Japan](#) (ACROSS) and [history of denim](#) (The Museum at FIT).
- Discover the [wardrobe of painter Frida Kahlo](#) (Museo Frida Kahlo) or how Brazilian actress and bombshell [Carmen Miranda popularized the plateau shoe](#) (Museu Carmen Miranda) in the 1930s.

### The craftsmanship behind fashion:

- Learn about fashion's unbreakable ties with [craftsmanship](#). [Watch how a shoe](#) (Museo della Calzatura di Villa Foscari) or a [traditional Kimono](#) (The Kyoto Museum of Traditional Crafts, FUREAIKAN) is made. Explore the skillfulness of [18th Century Belgian lacemaking](#) (MoMu Fashion Museum Antwerp) and the iconic [Delphos Dress](#) (Palazzo Fortuny), dyeing techniques in [India](#) (Avani Society) or [Nigeria](#) (The Centenary Project) or all about the [machines that revolutionized textile making](#) (TextilTechnikum) over the centuries.

### Impact of fashion:

- Understand the diverse impact of fashion how it empowers local [communities in India](#) (Worldview Impact Foundation), has an [environmentally challenged side](#) (Global Fashion Agenda) and of course how it [means business](#) (London College of Fashion).
- Read expert articles about [“Why fashion matters”](#) (by Frances Corner), [“4 ways to love both fashion and the planet”](#) (by Eva Kruse) or [“How to power dress like history’s greatest women”](#) (by Amber Butchart).