



## ***V&A to open Marie Antoinette Style, the first UK exhibition dedicated to the most fashionable queen in history***

### ***Marie Antoinette Style***

**Sponsored by Manolo Blahnik**

**20 September 2025 – 22 March 2026**

**Galleries 38 & 39, V&A South Kensington**

**Tickets on sale today at [vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/marie-antoinette](https://vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/marie-antoinette)**

- Marie Antoinette Style to feature 250 objects, including exceptional loans never seen before outside Versailles and France
- On display will be rare personal items owned and worn by Marie Antoinette including the Queen's own silk slippers, jewels from her private collection and the final note she wrote in her life
- Contemporary clothing including couture pieces by designers such as Moschino, Dior, Chanel and Vivienne Westwood and costumes made for screen, such as for Sofia Coppola's Oscar winning *Marie Antoinette* will also feature

Opening in September 2025 at V&A South Kensington, *Marie Antoinette Style* will be the UK's first exhibition on the French queen Marie Antoinette. The exhibition will explore the origins and countless revivals of the style shaped by the most fashionable queen in history. A fashion icon in her own time, and an early modern 'celebrity', the dress and interiors modelled and adopted by the ill-fated Queen of France in the final decades of the eighteenth century have had a lasting influence on over 250 years of design, fashion, film and decorative arts. Tickets for the exhibition go on sale today.

250 objects, including exceptional loans from the Château de Versailles never before seen outside France, will go on display including historical and contemporary fashion, alongside audio visual installations and immersive curation to explore how and why Marie Antoinette, the person, has provided a constant source of inspiration. The exhibition will also consider afresh the legacy of a complex figure whose style, youth and notoriety have all contributed to her timeless appeal. International loans will be displayed alongside key objects from the V&A's own collection.

The exhibition will trace the cultural impact of the Marie Antoinette style, and her ongoing inspiration for leading designers and creatives, from Sofia Coppola and Manolo Blahnik to Moschino and Vivienne Westwood. On display will be exceptionally rare personal items owned and worn by Marie Antoinette including richly embellished fragments of court dress, the Queen's own silk slippers, and jewels from

her private collection. Other highlight objects which have never left Versailles or France before, including personal effects such as the queen's dinner service from the Petit Trianon, her accessories and intimate items from her toilette case. The exhibition will also feature contemporary clothing including couture pieces by designers such as Moschino, Dior, Chanel, Erdem, Vivienne Westwood and Valentino and costumes made for screen, such as for Sofia Coppola's Oscar winning *Marie Antoinette* starring Kirsten Dunst, as well as shoes designed by Manolo Blahnik for the film.

Marie Antoinette shaped not just the fashion, design, interiors, gardens, fine and decorative arts of her own time but has continued to exert an influence over more than two and a half centuries of graphic and decorative arts, fashion, photography, film and performance. Through theatrical staging and sensory experiences, the excessive, lavish and feminine style will come to life and set the stage for over 250 years of style reimagined again and again. A scent experience will re-create scents of the court, and the perfume favoured by the Queen herself.

**Sarah Grant, Curator of *Marie Antoinette Style* said:** *"The most fashionable, scrutinised and controversial queen in history, Marie Antoinette's name summons both visions of excess and objects and interiors of great beauty. The Austrian archduchess turned Queen of France had an enormous impact on European taste and fashion in her own time, creating a distinctive style that now has universal appeal and application. This exhibition explores that style and the figure at its centre, using a range of exquisite objects belonging to Marie Antoinette, alongside the most beautiful fine and decorative objects that her legacy has inspired. This is the design legacy of an early modern celebrity and the story of a woman whose power to fascinate has never ebbed. Marie Antoinette's story has been re-told and re-purposed by each successive generation to suit its own ends. The rare combination of glamour, spectacle and tragedy she presents remains as intoxicating today as it was in the eighteenth century."*

- ENDS -

**For further PRESS information about the *Marie Antoinette Style* please contact [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk).**

#### **About the Exhibition**

Presented chronologically, the exhibition's first section will begin in 1770, and ends at Marie Antoinette's execution in 1793. **Marie Antoinette: The Origins of a Style** will set the scene by presenting the life of Marie Antoinette and tell the story of the beginnings of the style she forged and shaped. On display will be key pieces of furniture, fashion, jewellery, porcelain and musical instruments from her court, and will reveal her roles and interests as queen consort. It will consider the way in which she embraced some aspects of enlightenment thought, through her approach to maternity and childhood and support of new technologies. It will also address the 'let them eat cake' mythology and mythmaking that surround the queen to this day, drawing on recent research on early modern women, queenship and celebrity. Highlights in this section include a replica of the Boehmer and Bassenge diamond necklace, from the diamond necklace affair of 1784-85, commissioned for Madame du Barry in 1772. The original necklace was famously stolen, broken up and sold in Bond Street and the replica will sit alongside the Sutherland diamond necklace from the V&A collection, thought to be made from

the original diamonds. This section will also display exceptionally rare loans, which have never left Versailles or France before, including personal effects such as the queen's dinner service from the Petit Trianon, her accessories and items from her toilette case.

Other personal items include the queen's armchair from the V&A's collection with Marie Antoinette's monogram and a jatte téton/bol sein or 'breast cup' – one of four from the queen's Sèvres Rambouillet dairy service delivered in 1787 – which has led to the persistent though erroneous belief that it was modelled on the queen's own breast, inspiring modern-day examples. Finally, this section includes the **final note** Marie Antoinette wrote before she died, on a blank page in her prayer book.

The exhibition's second section, **Marie Antoinette Memorialised: The Birth of a Style Cult** explores the revival of Marie Antoinette's style in the mid-1800s (1800 – 1890), at the impetus of Empress Eugénie. A romanticised and sentimental view of the queen took hold and a phenomenal wave of interest continued throughout the century, peaking again in the 1880s and 1890s. Elements of Marie-Antoinette's style became the 'French' or 'French Revival' style – the dominant style in Britain and North America for over fifty years. English collectors sought to acquire objects, furniture and mementoes associated with the queen and important collections of eighteenth-century French art were formed. Highlight objects include fancy dress costumes by Worth and other couturiers and photographs by Eugène Atget and Francis Frith.

**Marie Antoinette: Enchantment and Illusion** – the exhibition's third section looks at the late 19th Century when the Marie Antoinette style entered a new phase of fantasy, magic and fairy tales. The queen's image came to embody escapism and beauty, as well as decadence and debauchery. Objects and artworks will illustrate this shifting narrative through the Art Nouveau and Art Deco periods, including the evening dress designs of couturiers such as Jeanne Lanvin and the Boué Soeurs, alongside luminous watercolour illustrations by Golden Age illustrators Erté, George Barbier and Edmund Dulac.

Finally, in **Marie Antoinette Re-Styled** the final section will consider the modern and contemporary legacy of the Marie Antoinette style from the 20th century to the present day, in fashion, performance and pop culture. Couture pieces by designers such as Moschino, Dior, Chanel, Erdem, Vivienne Westwood and Valentino alongside photographs by Tim Walker and Robert Polidori will highlight Marie Antoinette's continued influence on fashion globally. Costumes, accessories, film and stills will bring to life the queen's enduring legacy in film, stage and even music videos, including looks and Manolo Blahnik designed shoes from Sofia Coppola's Academy Award-winning Marie Antoinette film, Marie Antoinette-inspired looks from other artists which draw influence from the queen's distinctive style. Artist Beth Katleman and designer Victor Glemaud will also showcase contemporary works inspired by elements of Marie Antoinette's timeless style and period.

**Support for the V&A is more vital than ever. Marie Antoinette Style is sponsored by Manolo Blahnik, with support from Kathryn Uhde.**

#### **Notes to Editors**

- The exhibition *Marie Antoinette Style* runs at V&A South Kensington from 20 September 2025 – 22 March 2026
- Tickets are available at [vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/marie-antoinette](https://vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/marie-antoinette)

## **Social Media**

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## **About the V&A**

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity. Our mission is to champion design and creativity in all its forms, advance cultural knowledge, and inspire makers, creators and innovators everywhere.

V&A South Kensington is a world of extraordinary global creativity, with unmissable exhibitions, experiences and educational programmes for all. One of London's most iconic buildings, it is home to national collections of art, design, fashion, photography and furniture to theatre, performance, architecture, and ceramics, as well as the UK's National Art Library. It is a place where everyone can experience a story of creativity that spans 5,000 years and every creative discipline, which brings that story to life through programmes and activities for all ages and specialisms, and world-leading research and conservation. [vam.ac.uk](http://vam.ac.uk)

## **About Manolo Blahnik**

With a career spanning more than 50 years, Manolo Blahnik is one of the world's most influential footwear and accessories designers. His shoes and craftsmanship have spellbound an international audience of adoring and loyal devotees. In 2019, Blahnik acquired its own atelier and production facility in Vigevano, Pavia, Italy.

Manolo Blahnik has an established global retail presence across 30 countries, including a flagship boutique on the iconic Madison Avenue in New York City. The brand is available in over 270 of the world's leading luxury retailers, spanning Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia. In addition to its international retail footprint, Manolo Blahnik operates a global e-commerce platform at [www.manoloblahnik.com](http://www.manoloblahnik.com), offering customers worldwide access to its collections.

