

V&A Academy

MARIE ANTOINETTE STYLE



Introduction

This course explores the distinctive style she cultivated during her lifetime, culminating in an examination of the reawakening of her style spell and its lasting influence—from the 19th century and the Art Deco heyday (1920–1930) to 21st-century fashion.

Step into Marie Antoinette's world, beginning with her fateful carriage ride from Vienna to Versailles as a young princess bride plunged into life at the French court. We will trace her style evolution from Dauphine to Queen, uncovering the creators who shaped her iconic image and examining the decorative legacy she left behind in her private bucolic realm, the Petit Trianon.

Discover a bygone era of 18th century splendour as we learn about paintings, her surviving belongings including sparkling jewels and decorative arts—together with exquisite period pieces from the V&A and museum collections. We will uncover fashion during the Revolution and Marie Antoinette's declining reputation—the vilification of a scapegoat Queen whose path was quickly hastened towards the guillotine, marking the end of an extraordinary chapter in history.

Tuesdays, 28 October - 25 November, 14.00–16.30. Online.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 30 December 2025

Your course leader

Helena Cox is the Research Assistant for Marie Antoinette Style. With expertise in 18th-century court culture and fashion history, she contributed essays to the accompanying exhibition publication and has experience working on past V&A exhibitions such as Mary Quant. Before joining the V&A Helena worked for the Impressionist and Modern Art department at Christie's, King Street. She graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a First-Class MA in History of Art.

Notes:

All lectures will be delivered by Helena unless otherwise stated.

Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.

Week 1 – 28 October

- 13.50 Welcome
- 14.00 From Vienna to Versailles – Dauphine Style
- 15.30 Queen of Fashion

Week 2 – 4 November

- 14.00 Fan Fantasies and Royal Footsteps
- 15.30 All That Glitters: The Queen of Sparkle

Week 3 – 11 November

- 14.00 Anglomania – Everything is à l'anglaise
- 15.30 Petit Trianon: A Private Realm

Week 4 – 18 November

- 14.00 Revolutionary Masquerade: Fashion in Turbulent Times
- 15.30 The Empress Revives the Past: Tracing the 19th-Century Marie Antoinette Revival

Week 5 – 25 November

- 14.00 Art Deco Dreams: Marie Antoinette's Legacy in 20th-Century Design
- 15.30 From Versailles to Catwalk: Marie Antoinette Reimagined by Contemporary Creators