

V&A Academy

COUTURE HAND SEWING: MAKE A DRESS IN QUARTER SCALE

V&A

Introduction



Couture Hand Sewing: Make A Dress In Quarter Scale

Small scale garments have a unique role in couture dressmaking. Used by designers to showcase their collections, they are also great teaching tools. Throughout this course, tutor Rowena Luke-King, will teach you the key stitches and finishing techniques to create your own miniature dress, complete with a decorative border of tucks, pin tucks and shell tucks. Rowena will also show you step by step how to mark dart points with tailor's tacks, 'bag-out' and add gathers at the waist, creating a complete dress, by hand.

Rowena Luke-King has had an extremely diverse career in design and design education. She has worked as a textile designer, a trend forecaster, colour consultant and vintage swatch researcher for leading design studios in both London and New York. She has produced her own garment collections, accessories, hand printed fabrics, greetings cards and wrapping papers for several stores including the legendary Fiorucci. She has worked as a stylist to the music industry creating bespoke stage clothes and props featured in magazines such as The Face. Tour clothes that she made for Adam Ant were exhibited in the Victoria & Albert Museum. Alongside her career in design Rowena has taught at foundation and degree level for several art colleges and universities, and for the United Nations Development Program at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in India.

Information

Saturdays, 17 January – 21 February 2026

or

Tuesdays, 20 January – 24 February 2026

10:00 – 12:00

Spotlight Sessions will be held on Fridays between 12:00 – 13:00.

Please note that one spotlight session will be on Thursday evening (further information about this date is included further down the programme).

This course will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams. You will be issued with a V&A Academy Teams account and log in information prior to the start of the course.

Rowena will deliver one 2 hour live session per week. There will be additional live weekly Spotlight Sessions with invited speaker. To get the most from this course, we recommend allocating around 5 hours a week to complete the live sessions and weekly tasks.

Materials are not provided; a list of materials will be sent prior to the course.

There will be a maximum of 24 participants in the session.

Recordings of the sessions will be available for 6 weeks after the end of the course.

Suitable for complete beginners or those with some experience of hand sewing.
Suitable for participants aged 18 and over.

Week One: Saturday 17 or Tuesday 20 January

Skirt – cutting out, seams and hems

Friday 23 January: Spotlight Session

12:00 – 13:00

Introduction to 20th Century Couture with Dr Clare Rose, Dress Historian

Week Two: Saturday 24 or Tuesday 27 January

Skirt – pin and shell tucks; shell hem

Friday 30 January: Spotlight Session

12:00 – 13:00

Diorama – Dior in Miniature with Connie Karol Burks, Curator of Textiles and Dress since 1900 at the V&A

Week Three: Saturday 31 January or Tuesday 03 February

Bodice – cutting out, darts, interlining and seams

Thursday 05 February: Spotlight Session

18:00 – 19:00

Introduction to Theatre de la Mode with Steven L. Grafe, Curator of Art at Maryhill Museum of Art

Week Four: Saturday 07 or Tuesday 10 February

Bodice – seams and bagging out

Friday 13 February: Spotlight Session

12:00 – 13:00

Couture Embellishments with Connie Karol Burks, Curator of Textiles and Dress since 1900 at the V&A

Week Five: Saturday 14 or Tuesday 17 February

Joining – skirt, bodice and lining

Friday 20 February: Spotlight Session

12:00 – 13:00

Hand Sewing in Tailoring with Kimberley Lawton, Lawton Ltd.

Week Six: Saturday 21 or Tuesday 24 February

Finishing – fixings, buttons and bows

Friday 27 February: Spotlight Session

12:00 – 13:00

Couture Underpinnings, Connie Karol Burks Curator of Textiles and Dress since 1900 at the V&A