

Marie Antoinette Style Conference

12 -13 February 2026

Hochhauser Auditorium, Learning Centre, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Day 1, Thursday 12 February 2026. Marie Antoinette Style in her Own Time

Registration, 10.00-10.30

Session 1, 10.30-12.30.

10.30-10.45

Welcome and opening remarks By Dr Melissa Buron, Director of Collections and Chief Curator, V&A

Session 1 Marie Antoinette – new research

10.45- 11.15 Hélène Delalex, Château de Versailles. The restoration of the Queen's private apartments at Palace of Versailles. The queen's taste and the question of a “Style”.

11.15-11.45 Prof. Catriona Seth, All Souls College, Oxford. ‘I have not a moment to myself, what with the people I must see, letters and the time I spend with my children’. Marie Antoinette’s correspondence: an ongoing project

11:45 -12.10 Alice Minter, Snuff Boxes and Nicole d’Oliva: Luxury, Deception, and the Diamond Necklace

Questions 12.10-12.30, chaired by Dr Spike Sweeting

Lunch Break, 12.30-13.30

Session 2, 13.30-15.30 The fashion world and style of Marie Antoinette

11.45-12.10 Sarah Grant, V&A. Marie Antoinette's lost diamond necklace and a V&A portrait

13.50-14.15 Dr Silvija Banić, V&A. The embroidery and trimmings of Marie Antoinette's court dress, as depicted in her portrait by François Hubert Drouais

14.15- 14.35 Zara Kesterton, PhD candidate, Queen of Roses: Marie-Antoinette's influence on the artificial flower industry

14.35-14.55 Helena Cox, The Befeathered Queen: Plumes, Fashion and Fantasy

Questions 14.55-15.15

Break 15.15-16.00

Session 3, 16.00-17.30 Global perspectives on Marie Antoinette

16.20-16.40 Prof. David McCallam, Sheffield University. Jean Amilcar, Marie-Antoinette's Adopted Black Boy: Childhood and Race in Revolutionary France

TBC

Questions 17.00-17.15

Drinks reception 17.30-19.45

CLOSE 19.45

Day 2 Friday 13 February 2026

Registration, 10.00-10.30

Session 1, 10.30-12.30 Fashion Reinventions and Revivals

10.30-10.45

Opening remarks by Dr Spike Sweeting, RCA/V&A

10.45- 11.20 Susan North, V&A, Marie Antoinette and Victorian Fancy Dress

11.20-11.45 Ruby Hodgson, V&A, Romantic Revivals: Marie Antoinette in the 19th Century

11.45-12.10 Amber Butchart

Lunch Break, 12.30-13.30

Session 2, 13.30-15.30 Marie Antoinette today

13.30 – 13.50 Oriole Cullen, V&A, Marie Antoinette the eternal muse for French luxury/heritage brands (focussing on Chanel and Dior)

13.50 – 14.15 TBC

14.15 – 15.05 Hannah Sutherland and Lauren Quinn, V&A, Secrets of the Studio: Preparing fashion and textiles for Marie Antoinette Style

Break 15.30-16.00

Session 3, 16.00-17.30 Media, celebrity, influence

16.00-16.20: Prof. Agnes Rocomora, Digitisation and change in the field of fashion media

16.20-16.40 TBC

16.40-17.00 Spike Sweeting, 'Politicians as fashion icons: Some historical reflections'.

Questions 17.00- 17.30, chaired by Amber Kim

Jo Norman, Head of VARI, CLOSING REMARKS