

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 Tea/Coffee will be served

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 -12.15 Alice Minter, Senior Curator, Gilbert Collection, V&A. Snuff Boxes and Nicole d’Oliva: Luxury, Deception, and the Diamond Necklace

Questions 12.15-12.30, chaired by Dr Spike Sweeting

Lunch Break, 12.30-14.00

Session 2, 14.00-16.20 The fashion world and style of Marie Antoinette

14.00-14.30 Dr Sarah Grant, Senior Curator, Prints, V&A. Marie Antoinette's lost diamond necklace and a V&A portrait

14.30-15.00 Dr Silvija Banić, Curator of Textiles and Dress, V&A. 'More is more': Marie Antoinette's court dress depicted in her portrait by François Hubert Drouais

15.00- 15.30 Zara Kesterton, PhD candidate, Queen of Roses: Marie-Antoinette's influence on the artificial flower industry

15.30-16.00 Helena Cox, Exhibition Research Assistant, V&A. The Befeathered Queen: Plumes, Fashion and Fantasy

Questions 16.00-16.20 Chaired by Amber Kim

Break 16.20-16.50

Session 3, 16.50-18.00

KEYNOTE: Global perspective on Marie Antoinette

16.50-17.40 Prof. David McCallam, Sheffield University. Jean Amilcar, Marie-Antoinette's Adopted Black Boy: Childhood and Race in Revolutionary France

Questions 17.40-18.00 Chaired by Sarah Grant

Closing remarks, Dr Spike Sweeting 18.00-18.15

Drinks reception at Hintze Gallery 18.30-19.45

CLOSE 19.45

Day 2 Friday 13 February 2026

Registration, 10.00-10.30 Tea/Coffee will be served

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 - 11.15 Dr Susan North, Curator of Textiles and Dress, V&A. Marie Antoinette and Victorian Fancy Dress

11.15 -11.45 Ruby Hodgson, Curatorial Operations Co-ordinator, V&A, Romantic Revivals: Marie Antoinette in the 19th Century

11.45 -12.15 Amber Butchart, London College of Fashion. Queens on Screen: History as Spectacle in the Costuming of Marie Antoinette

12:15 - 12:30 Q&A chaired by Dr Spike Sweeting

Lunch Break, 12.30-13.30

Session 2, 13.30-15.30 Marie Antoinette today

13.30 – 14.00 Oriole Cullen, Senior Curator, Textiles and Dress, V&A. Fashion's muse: Marie Antoinette in haute couture

14.00 – 14.30 Dr Serena Dyer, De Montford University. The Makers' Hand: Recreating the Practices of the Eighteenth-Century Mantua Maker

14.30 – 15.15 Hannah Sutherland, Senior Conservator, Textiles, and Lauren Quinn, Senior Costume Display Conservator, V&A. Secrets of the Studio: Preparing fashion and textiles for Marie Antoinette Style

15:15 – 15:30 Q&A chaired by Helena Cox

Break 15.30-15.45

Session 3, 15.45-17.00 Media, celebrity, influence

15.45-16.15: Prof. Agnès Rocamora, University of the Arts, London. Digitisation and change in the field of fashion media

16.15-16.45 Dr Spike Sweeting, V&A/RCA. 'Politicians as fashion icons: Some historical reflections'.

16.45 - 17.05 Dr Liz Tregenza, London College of Fashion. TBC

17.05 - 17.20 Questions chaired by Amber Kim

17:20 - 17:30 CLOSING REMARKS Joanna Norman, Head of V&A Research Institute

CLOSE 17.30