



News Release

V&A opens first ever Schiaparelli exhibition in the UK

Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art

The Sainsbury Gallery

28 March – 8 November 2026

vam.ac.uk

“For me, dress designing is not a profession but an art.” – Elsa Schiaparelli

This Saturday, 28 March 2026, the V&A will open the first exhibition ever staged in the UK devoted to Maison Schiaparelli. Spanning the 1920s to the present day, the exhibition charts the history and impact of one of the 20th century's most innovative fashion designers, Elsa Schiaparelli. The show traces the origins of the House, from its first, paradigm-shifting garments, to its present-day incarnation in the hands of its creative director, Daniel Roseberry.

Featuring new research undertaken by art and fashion curators, the exhibition establishes Elsa Schiaparelli as a key innovator in the fields of fashion, art and performance across Paris, London, and New York in the years between the two world wars. It highlights the history of a female entrepreneur and showcase her celebrated, yet rarely seen creations. The exhibition is the first to spotlight the London branch of Schiaparelli, its dynamic and independent clients and the founder's involvement in the satellite location.

Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art comprises over 400 objects, including 100 ensembles and 50 artworks, as well as accessories, jewellery, paintings, photographs, furniture, perfumes and archive material. Highlights on display include the 1938 Skeleton dress, the only known surviving example (a part of the V&A's permanent collection), as well as the 1938 Tears dress, along with a hat resembling an upside-down shoe, all conceived in collaboration with artist Salvador Dalí. Artworks by Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau, Man Ray and Eileen Agar are also on display, as well as several of Schiaparelli's designs for film and theatre productions. Daniel Roseberry's spectacular creations—including looks worn by Ariana Grande and Dua Lipa—bring the exhibition to a dramatic close.

Schiaparelli's couture house redefined standards of style and definitions of beauty of the modern age. Today, from the original Schiaparelli premises at 21 Place Vendôme, creative director Daniel Roseberry leads the storied Maison into its next chapter, establishing an oeuvre that shapes and inspires global culture.

Sir Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: "*Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* will celebrate one of the most ingenious and daring designers in fashion history. The V&A holds one of the largest and most important fashion collections in the world, and the foremost collection of Schiaparelli garments in Britain. Schiaparelli's collaboration with artists and with the world of performance make the Maison and its founder an ideal subject for a spectacular exhibition at the V&A."

Delphine Bellini, CEO of Schiaparelli, said: "Elsa Schiaparelli's fearless imagination and radical vision redefined the boundaries between fashion and art. This exhibition celebrates her enduring influence through iconic collaborations with 20th-century masters and a pioneering fusion of creativity and commerce. With its unparalleled collections, expertise in fashion and design, cultural reach, and ability to bridge tradition and innovation, the Victoria and Albert Museum offers the perfect setting to showcase her legacy alongside Daniel Roseberry's creations, which carry her surrealist spirit forward blurring lines with bold, sculptural designs that both honour and reinvent her vision for a new century."

About the exhibition

Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art showcases the exquisite skill and innovation of the House of Schiaparelli through four chapters:

Designing the Modern Wardrobe introduces Elsa Schiaparelli's career, from opening her first Paris premises in 1927 under the sign 'Schiaparelli. Pour Le Sport' to becoming, by 1934, a leading couturier for the modern urban woman. One of the earliest Schiaparelli garments - a trompe l'oeil bow-knot sweater from 1927, given to the V&A by the designer, will be featured in this introduction to Elsa's inventive creativity. This section explores her expansion into practical daywear, Pour la Ville, including trouser suits (unusual for women at the time) along with sharply tailored skirt suits, often featuring unusual buttons. Her striking eveningwear collections, Pour le Soir, include some of her most inventive creations, from a shimmering gold lamé gown to a dinner suit with appliquéd circus horses. Her accessories were equally imaginative, whether hats shaped as plaited hair or shoes featuring stripes or leopard fur.

The exhibition's second section, **Creative Constellations**, explores Elsa Schiaparelli's deep connection with art. In 1920s-30s Paris, she collaborated with surrealist painters, sculptors, and writers who shared her love of the absurd and subversive. This section spotlights Schiaparelli's relationships with these creatives, with key artworks in dialogue with some of her most daring designs. On display nearby Salvador Dalí's famous Lobster Telephone (1938) is the so-called 1937 Lobster dress that inspired it. An evening coat by Schiaparelli and Jean Cocteau with mirrored facial profiles in gold thread forming a vase filled with pink silk roses is also included in this chapter, alongside drawings Cocteau made for Schiaparelli.

Schiaparelli also commissioned artists to create works and designs for her advertisements and boutiques, and her friendships inspired many portraits reflecting her eclectic taste, including ones by Man Ray and Cecil Beaton. Also highlighted is her

collaborations with Alberto Giacometti, Leonor Fini, Meret Oppenheim, Elsa Triolet and Jean Schlumberger; collaborations which defined her legacy. While Coco Chanel dismissed her as 'that Italian artist who's making clothes,' Schiaparelli's art-inspired designs became her most celebrated creations.

Beyond Paris – A master of self-promotion, Schiaparelli attended glamorous events wearing her own creations. Beyond the media attention she generated, the exhibition's third section explores how Elsa Schiaparelli became renowned beyond the world of French haute couture. The 1933 opening of her London salon in Mayfair cemented her international presence, ushering in the British surrealist movement. A group of artworks as well as stylish and little seen garments that bear the Schiaparelli London label are displayed, including a sumptuous burgundy velvet suit with lavish golden embroidery, a dress and coat worn to the 1937 coronation of King George VI, and a portrait by Gluck of Lady Mount Temple wearing a Schiaparelli creation. Also included is the only known surviving example of an Elsa Schiaparelli wedding dress made from oyster coloured crinkled rayon with metal thread worn by Rosalinde Gilbert, an art collector and owner of her own wholesale fashion house, on her wedding day at London's Golders Green Synagogue.

Through the 1930s to 1950s, Elsa Schiaparelli designed costumes for British, French, and American stage and film productions. Highlights include a costume designed for Mae West in *Every Day's a Holiday* (1937). Schiaparelli was also the preferred designer for the personal wardrobes of the era's leading performers, including Marlene Dietrich, who favoured the designer's sharply tailored trouser suits.

A Golden Thread, the exhibition's final section, celebrates Elsa Schiaparelli's lasting influence on fashion and her outsized design legacy, now carried forward by creative director Daniel Roseberry. Since 2019, he has advanced the House's heritage through innovative, unpredictable designs, showcasing Parisian haute couture techniques like draping, embroidery, and embellishment, and making Schiaparelli once again the wardrobe of performers, artists, and today's leading creatives.

Roseberry's designs feature sculptural silhouettes and nods to American western wear, reflecting a contemporary reinterpretation of the founder's subversive spirit. Recognisable fashion moments from the house's recent history include the white vest and cargo trouser ensemble worn by model Maggie Maurer paired with a bedazzled robot baby (Haute Couture Spring Summer 2024 look 6), the glittering gown worn by Ariana Grande for her performance at the 2025 Oscars as well as a modern black and gold version of the Skeleton dress designed for Dua Lipa for the 2024 Golden Globes. This dialogue between past and present weaves a golden thread, bringing Schiaparelli's unique story and creative vision into the present day.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

- The exhibition *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* runs from 28 March – 8 November 2026.
- The exhibition has been curated for the V&A by Sonnet Stanfill, Lydia Caston and Rosalind McKeever. It will be accompanied by a new V&A publication.
- The exhibition has been created in close collaboration with Schiaparelli.
- The exhibition designer is Nebbia.
- *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* is the latest in the V&A's series of major fashion exhibitions, including *Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto*; *Naomi: In Fashion*; *Africa Fashion*; *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams*; *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*; *The Glamour of Italian Fashion: 1945-2014*; *The Golden Age of Couture: Paris and London 1947-1957*.
- The V&A's fashion collection is designated as the UK's National Collection and is one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of dress in the world.

Social Media

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For further PRESS information about *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* please contact Callum Walker on c.walker@vam.ac.uk / +44 (0)20 7942 2502 (not for publication). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk

Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art has been created in collaboration with Schiaparelli. With further support from Tia Collection, Kathryn Uhde and Revolut.

About V&A South Kensington

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity.

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.