

Communications

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Exhibition Dates:
October 29, 2020–February 7,
2021 (rescheduled from May 7,
2020)

Member Previews:
October 26, 2020
11am–5pm
October 29, 2020
9am–12pm

Exhibition Location:
The Met Fifth Avenue –
Iris and B. Gerald Cantor
Exhibition Hall, Floor 2

www.metmuseum.org/AboutTime
#MetAboutTime
@metcostumeinstitute

For Immediate Release

Costume Institute Exhibition Presents a Disrupted Timeline of Fashion History

The Costume Institute’s exhibition *About Time: Fashion and Duration* (on view October 29, 2020 to February 7, 2021) traces 150 years of fashion, from 1870 to the present, along a disrupted timeline, in honor of the Museum’s 150th anniversary. Employing philosopher Henri Bergson’s concept of *la durée*—the continuity of time—the exhibition explores how clothes generate temporal associations that conflate the past, present, and future. The concept is also examined through the writings of Virginia Woolf, who serves as the exhibition’s “ghost narrator.”

The exhibition is made possible by Louis Vuitton.

Corporate sponsorship is also provided by Condé Nast.

Additional support is provided by Michael Braun, John and Amy Griffin, Nancy C. and Richard R. Rogers, the Natasha and Adar Poonawalla Foundation, and the Laura and Raymond Johnson Fund.

“*About Time: Fashion and Duration* considers the ephemeral nature of fashion, employing flashbacks and fast-forwards to reveal how it can be both linear and cyclical,” said Max Hollein, Director of The Met. “The result is a show that presents a nuanced continuum of fashion over the Museum’s 150-year history.”

Andrew Bolton, the Wendy Yu Curator in Charge of The Costume Institute, said: “Fashion is indelibly connected to time. It not only reflects and represents the spirit of the times, but it also changes and develops with the times, serving as an especially sensitive and accurate timepiece.

Through a series of chronologies, the exhibition uses the concept of duration to analyze the temporal twists and turns of fashion history.”

The 2020 Costume Institute Benefit, also known as The Met Gala, originally scheduled for Monday, May 4, 2020, will not take place this year due to the global health crisis. The event serves as The Costume Institute’s main source of annual funding for exhibitions, publications, acquisitions, and capital improvements.

Exhibition Overview

Presented in The Met Fifth Avenue’s Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Exhibition Hall, the exhibition features a timeline of 125 fashions dating from 1870—the year of The Met’s founding and the start of a decade that witnessed major developments in the global standardization of time—to the present. The majority of objects on view are drawn from The Costume Institute’s collection, including major gifts from designers as part of The Met’s 2020 Collections Initiative, and related to the Museum’s 150th anniversary activities.

The timeline unfolds in two adjacent galleries fabricated as enormous clock faces and organized around the principle of 60 minutes of fashion. Each “minute” features a pair of garments, with the primary work representing the linear nature of fashion and the secondary work its cyclical character. To illustrate Bergson’s concept of duration—of the past co-existing with the present—the works in each pair are connected through shape, motif, material, pattern, technique, or decoration. For example, a black silk faille princess-line dress from the late 1870s is paired with an Alexander McQueen “Bumster” skirt from 1995. A black silk satin dress with enormous leg-o’-mutton sleeves from the mid-1890s is juxtaposed with a Comme des Garçons deconstructed ensemble from 2004.

All of the garments are black to emphasize changes in silhouette, except at the conclusion of the show, where a white dress from Viktor & Rolf’s spring/summer 2020 haute couture collection, made from upcycled swatches in a patchwork design, serves as a symbol for the future of fashion with its emphasis on community, collaboration, and sustainability.

Designers whose work is on view in the exhibition include Virgil Abloh (for Off-White), Azzedine Alaïa, Jonathan Anderson (for JW Anderson and Loewe), Cristóbal Balenciaga, Boué Soeurs, Thom Browne, Stephen Burrows, Sarah Burton (for Alexander McQueen), Gabrielle Chanel, Christian Dior, House of Drecoll, Tom Ford (for Gucci), Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo, John Galliano (for Maison Margiela and John Galliano), Jean Paul Gaultier, Rudi Gernreich, Nicolas Ghesquière (for Louis Vuitton), Hubert de Givenchy, Georgina Godley, Madame Grès, Jacques Griffe, Halston, Johnson Hartig (for Libertine), Iris van Herpen, Marc Jacobs (for Perry Ellis, Marc Jacobs, and Louis Vuitton), Charles James, Victor Joris, Norma Kamali, Donna Karan, Rei Kawakubo (for Comme des Garçons), Patrick Kelly,

Lamine Kouyaté (for Xuly.Bët), Christian Lacroix, Helmut Lang, Karl Lagerfeld (for Chanel), Jeanne Lanvin, Martin Margiela, Claire McCardell, Malcolm McLaren, Alexander McQueen, Issey Miyake, Kei Ninomiya (for Noir Kei Ninomiya), Norman Norell, Shayne Oliver (for Hood by Air), Rick Owens, Jean Patou, Elsa Peretti, Emile Pingat, Miuccia Prada, Paco Rabanne, Zandra Rhodes, Olivier Rousteing (for Balmain), Yves Saint Laurent (for Dior and Yves Saint Laurent), Elsa Schiaparelli, Raf Simons (for Dior and Jil Sander), Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren (for Viktor & Rolf), Jun Takahashi (for Undercover), Gianni Versace, Madeleine Vionnet, Junya Watanabe, Weeks, Vivienne Westwood, and Yohji Yamamoto.

Visit

Per government regulations, timed tickets are required for entrance to the Museum, and are available at metmuseum.org. Timed tickets are also needed for the *About Time* and *Making The Met* exhibitions, which are available online and on site. Entry to *About Time* on Mondays is for Museum Members only.

Credits

The exhibition is organized by Andrew Bolton with support from Amanda Garfinkel, Assistant Curator, and Jan Reeder, Curatorial Consultant. Visual artist and stage designer Es Devlin, known for creating large-scale performative sculptures and environments that fuse light, music, and language, created the exhibition design with The Met's Design Department.

Related Content

A publication by Andrew Bolton accompanies the exhibition and is on sale now. It features a new short story by Michael Cunningham, who won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for his novel *The Hours*. Inspired by Virginia Woolf's novels *Orlando* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, the story recounts a day in the life of a woman that unfolds over 150 years, a timespan understood through changes of clothes and circumstances. Scholar Theodore Martin analyzes theoretical approaches to temporality, underscoring the idea that time is not simply a sequence of historical events. The publication, designed by Joseph Logan and Anamaria Morris, includes new black-and-white photography by Nicholas Alan Cope. It is published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press, and available for purchase at [The Met Store](http://TheMetStore).

A special feature on the Museum's website, www.metmuseum.org/AboutTime, provides further information about the exhibition. Follow us on [Facebook.com/metmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/metmuseum), [Instagram.com/metmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/metmuseum), and [Twitter.com/metmuseum](https://twitter.com/metmuseum) to join the conversation. Use #MetAboutTime, #CostumeInstitute, @MetCostumeInstitute, and #MetGala on Instagram and Twitter.

About The Met's 150th Anniversary

In 2020, The Metropolitan Museum of Art recognizes the 150th anniversary of its founding with a range of exhibitions and programs. Highlights include the exhibition *Making The Met, 1870–2020*; the opening of the newly renovated and reimagined galleries devoted to British decorative arts and design in March; the display of new gifts throughout the Museum; and a story-collecting initiative. More information is available at www.metmuseum.org/150.

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October 26, 2020

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