THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES PRESENTS

THE 18TH CENTURY BACK IN FASHION

GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION AND THE GRAND TRIANON

8 JULY – 9 OCTOBER
ORGANISED WITH THE Galliera
18th century back in fashion

Couturiers and fashion designers at the Grand Trianon

The Grand Trianon and the Musée Galliera, the fashion museum of the City of Paris, present in a poetic confrontation costumes from the 18th century and masterpieces of haute couture and fashion design from the 20th and 21st centuries.

The 18th century with its floating dresses, its voluminous skirts, flounces and furbelows, its silhouettes of minor marquis in three-piece suits and its immense hairstyles have never ceased to inspire the world of haute couture. The Enlightenment, the age of French Europe according to the famous saying, continues to fascinate. The political and cultural prestige of France was at its highest, when wit, lightness and elegance metamorphosed into a veritable art of fine living. Since 1800, the fashion world has continued to refer back to the 18th century for both women’s and men’s clothing as well as for its textiles and accessories.

Like mirrors reflecting each other, the garments exhibited, from haute couture to ready-to-wear, propose a modern reading of that extravagant century. Each designer adapts the period to his/her sensibility. Some quote the 18th century shapes almost literally, while others deconstruct them, expand their dimensions and interpret them in a riot of shimmering silks, embroidery and lace. The dresses of the queens and princesses of the Enlightenment dialogue down the years with these masterpieces of luxury and creativity.
WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF 18TH CENTURY WOMEN’S FASHION, IMAGES OF FIGURES WITH WIDE HIPS AND NARROW BUSTS IMMEDIATELY SPRING TO MIND. PANNIERS – PETTICOATS STIFFENED WITH EVENLY-SPACED WHALEBONE STAYS – RESHAPED THE LOWER PART OF THE BODY. WHALEBONE CORSETS TURNED WOMEN’S BUSTS INTO UPSIDE-DOWN TRIANGLES COMING TO A POINT IN THE CENTRE OF THE IMMENSE OVAL OF THE HIPS.


IN THE LATE 1770’S SIMPLICITY STARTED REPLACING THE PANNIER’S EXAGGERATED SHAPES. ADJUSTED DRESSES WITH PLEATED OR HITCHED-UP SKIRTS ECLIPSED THE FRENCH COURT GOWN. STRAIGHT LINEN OR COTTON CHIFFON GOWNS, AN EVOCATION OF LINGERIE AND ITS INTIMATE CHARACTER, TURNED INTO MORNING OR AFTERNOON WEAR. THE QUEEN OF FRANCE DARED TO WEAR PERCALE FOR HER AFTERNOON OUTFITS. TUCKERS AND ANKLE-LENGTH SKIRTS COMPRISED NEGILGÉES FOR NOBLEWOMEN AND ELEGANT OUTFITS FOR THE WOMEN OF HUMBLER MEANS.

MEN WORE “FRENCH” SUITS, WHICH BECAME SO POPULAR THEY WERE SOON KNOWN AS “EUROPEAN” SUITS, MADE UP OF COATS, LONG-SLEEVED WAISTCOATS AND BREECHES, WHICH FORMED THE BASIC COMBINATION FOR CENTURIES TO COME. EARLY IN THE CENTURY THE COATS HAD WIDE UNDERSKIRTED COAT-TAILS, THE PANNIER’S MASCULINE COUNTERPART, BEFORE MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS WOMEN’S CLOTHING TOWARDS A MORE SLENDER LOOK. FRONTS WERE WAISTED AND BECAME LONGER WITH STRAIGHT COLLARS. A RIOT OF REFINED POLYCHROME SILK THREAD EMBROIDERY BLOSSOMED ON THESE COATS BUT THE SPORTY, SIMPLE ENGLISH LOOK’S INFLUENCE TEMPERED THAT FANCIFULNESS IN THE 1780’S. SOLID COATS, MILITARY LAPELS AND DARK COLOURS COUNTERBALANCED 18TH CENTURY EXUBERANCE AND HERALDED THE FOLLOWING CENTURY’S SERIOUSNESS.

Text based on Pascale Gorguet-Ballesteros’ article in the exhibition catalogue.
English designer Vivienne Westwood is often considered quirky and provocative, especially since her punk collections caused a scandal in the 1980’s. In the 1990’s she turned to the charms of the 18th century. Passionate about cut and technique, she has used ribbons and safety pins, become a master of subversive historical assemblages and brought frivolity and powdery colours back to the forefront after years when Japanese and Belgian designers’ intense black dominated magazine pages and wardrobes. Vivienne Westwood gave the Age of Enlightenment fresh impetus.

You can also see her models in the Aides-de-Camp Room (1), Topographical Room (15) and Garden Room (17).

People have always been amazed by the sophistication of 18th century men’s clothes, which our contemporaries perceive as feminine. Alexander McQueen, then Givenchy’s artistic director, revisited the men’s wardrobe of the Age of Enlightenment to dress women in precious evening gowns. The lavishly ornamented model on display is a literal quotation of men’s French court suit but here McQueen ironically appropriates it for women. Silk was the most commonly used material for court dresses. Here, thick faille replaces taffeta; satin or velvet and antique silver lace replaces silver thread. Like in the 18th century, embroidery patterns adorn the front, collar and wrists.

At first, the boudoir communicated with the neighbouring room through the door on the right. Louis-Philippe had the door left of the fireplace opened to connect it to the apartment he had built for himself in Louis XIV’s former kitchens.

DON’T MISS
The mahogany tapestry loom ornamented with gilt bronze (1810), attributed to Alexandre MAIGRET, comes from this room.
Louis XIV’s former Great Study, where the king met with his privy council. From that period the room has kept its cornice and mirrors embedded in panelling carved with flower garlands.

DON’T MISS
Set of mahogany tables delivered to Empress Marie-Louise in 1810: needlework table, “letterbox” table, game table, tidy table and drawing table.
**THE EMPRESS’S BEDCHAMBER (4)**

The Empress's Bedchamber still has the décor of Louis XIV’s bedchamber, which it had formerly been: Corinthian columns dividing the room and panelling admirably carved into a mosaic. During the Empire it was divided to form a smaller bedroom and a sitting room used by Empress Marie-Louise, who commissioned the furniture you see today.

**DON’T MISS**

The bed, which was Napoleon’s at the Tuileries Palace and where his successor Louis XVIII, the brother of Louis XVI, died in 1825.

**BALENCIAGA BY NICOLAS GHEQUIÈRE**

**WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE READY-TO-WEAR COLL. S/S 2006**

Flesh-coloured embroidered organza jacket, flowery ecru lace jacket, off-white organza satin jacket, ecru lace corset and undergarments, embroidered satin crêpe trousers.

*Maison Balenciaga Collection*

Cristòbal Balenciaga often quoted Goya’s 18th century: his use of lace – usually black – and pink satin ribbons recalls portraits of the Duchess of Alba. Nicolas Ghesquière pays tribute to that legacy by turning values and colour codes upside-down: men’s clothing where ruffly eggshell and cream lace is omnipresent and transparency stresses the martial look of young women dressed as men.

The waistcoats fit tightly around the bust. The underskirted coat-tails take the form of the coat; the wrists adopt the flounced pagoda sleeves’ shape characteristic of mid-18th century French court dresses; cropped trousers replace breeches.

**AZZEDINE ALAÏA**

**DRESS READY-TO-WEAR COLL. S/S 1992**

Lace-up bustier dress with white English embroidery on petticoat

*Azzedine Alaïa Archives Collection*

Azzedine Alaïa’s sensuous fashions stress the womanly curves that inspire him. All the designer keeps of the libertine spirit in his streamlined version of the 18th century are tight waists and full bosoms combined with the false rigour of an army jacket or the freshness of English embroidery too prim and proper to really be believable. This dress is squeezed, laced-up top evokes whalebone corsets, while the wide hips bring panniers to mind. The waisted jacket featuring big pockets with flaps recalls a men’s coat.

White cotton and English embroidery recall the “negligée” women wore, which became walking or afternoon dress by the late 18th century.
"ANTONIA" EVENING GOWN
HAUTE COUTURE COLL.
S/S 1954

Orlon satin embroidered with a panel of gold scrolls, pearly beads, red chiffon appliqué patterns, embroidered leaves and two petticoats: horse-hair and double ottoman.

Galliera Collections

The Age of Enlightenment had a strong influence on Pierre Balmain. The New Look Christian Dior launched in 1947 featured narrow waists and a voluminous skirts supported by thick petticoats; elegant women wore girdles and corsets that reshaped their bodies. For evening wear, lavish fabrics and embroidery preciously dressed 20th century figures echoing Age of Enlightenment fashion.

"INFANTE" BALL GOWN
READY-TO-WEAR COLL.
F/W 1992-1993

Barathea and pleated black tulle.
Maison Thierry Mugler Collection

Thierry Mugler’s glamorous world swings back and forth between 1950’s Hollywood and Paris. The designer goes to great demonstrative lengths to intensify the feminine shapes associated with dominating women: ostentation, the theatrical display of the female body and cruelty, notions particular to the 18th century of Dangerous Liaisons. His collections feature outfits the Marquise de Merteuil would have loved. Thierry Mugler’s collections offer gowns with volumes recalling the panniers of formal Court dress.

DRESS, CIRCA 1898-1900

Figured black satin, black chantilly bobbin lace, black silk chiffon; gold-printed ivory label:
"DOUCET/21 RUE DE LA PAIX/PARIS"

Galliera Collections

Jacques Doucet (1853-1929) was born into a family that had been making and selling clothes since 1816. From 1898 to 1927 he headed one of the biggest couture houses in Paris. Doucet dressed the early 20th century’s most notable women but did not consider himself as a designer and never joined the Chambre syndicale de la couture. In 1875 he began amassing a large collection of 18th century French furniture and artworks that had a lasting influence on his own designs. In 1912 he sold it in order to focus on contemporary art.

READY-TO-WEAR COLL.
A/W 2010-2011

Coat and pants ensemble: cotton cloth and mixed black fibres, shoulder pads, hips and sleeves fastened to the inside by zips; shaped trousers, black chenille braiding on the sides.

Galliera Collections

From the Middle Ages to the Age of the Enlightenment, extensions, reductions and other inventions attired and transformed the body in the West. Rei Kawakubo explores the relationship between that historical and contemporary fashion, from the removable – and moveable – bum rolls in his famous Spring/Summer 1997 collection, where the outfits emphasized the figure, to his Autumn/Winter 2010-2011 collection, from which the outfit on display is taken. With their zippered hoops and removable quilting, his clothes evoke a late 18th century "Amazon" director Tim Burton would have dreamed up. The black coat is an improbable combination of a woman’s pannier and the buttoned-up lapels of certain military coats from the second half of the 18th century.

CHAPEL ROOM (5)

Originally built as a chapel, this room became an antechamber in 1691 but many of the original features were kept. The back door opens onto an altar, the cornice decoration has bunches of grapes and ears of wheat evoking the Eucharistic wine and bread and paintings depict the Evangelists Saint Mark and Saint Luke.

THE LORD’S ROOM (6)

The former Lord’s room became the King’s and later the Empress’s First Antechamber. It still has its 1691-1692 décor, including the military trophy on the mantelpiece.
THE GRAND TRIANON

In 1687 Jules Hardouin-Mansart built the Grand Trianon on the site of the "Porcelain Trianon", which Louis XIV had had built in 1670 to flee the stiff formality Court etiquette and spend time in private with his mistress, Madame de Montespan. The king was especially fond of the Trianon, where he also came for short stays with his family: the Grand Dauphin, Duchess of Burgundy and Madame de Maintenon. He successively occupied three apartments, in the right wing (1688-1691), the left wing (1691-1703) and again in the right wing (1703-1715). The rooms still have most of their 17th century wall decoration: finely carved panelling painted white, with no gilding.

Marie Leszczinska also liked the Grand Trianon, where she lived in the summer, but Marie-Antoinette preferred the Petit Trianon, offered to her by Louis XVI. All of the Grand Trianon's furniture was sold during the French Revolution. Napoleon I restored and remodelled the palace, where he stayed many times with his wife, Empress Marie-Louise. Louis-Philippe went there with his family. General de Gaulle brought the Grand Trianon back to life in 1962-1965, when he had major work done to turn the north wing, called "Trianon-sous-bois", into apartments for the French president and foreign heads of State on official visits.

THE COTELLE GALLERY (16)

This gallery, which shielded the upper parterre’s flowers from cold weather, is named after the artist Jean Cotelle, who painted the views of the gardens of Versailles and Trianon as they looked in Louis XIV’s day: they are precious documents because most of the groves they depict have disappeared or been changed.

THE ROUND ROOM (8)

This vestibule gave access to the first apartment, which Louis XIV occupied just three years, from 1688 to 1691. The Corinthian columns, marble paving and paintings date from that period. A wooden drum to the right of the fireplace conceals the staircase musicians climbed to reach the gallery in the room next door, where the king's souper took place.

THE PERISTYLE (7)

The innovative "loggia" piercing the Grand Trianon's centre gives the building its transparency and connects the courtyard and gardens. French doors on the courtyard side originally closed this gallery, wrongly called a peristyle ever since Louis XIV had it built. A few years later they were eliminated to emphasize the building's transparency. In 1810 Napoleon had the peristyle glazed to facilitate communication between his apartment and that of the Empress.

THE TRIANON GARDENS

Trianon is the "Palais de Flore": every room has a view of the gardens, which are entirely devoted to flowers here. Many varieties were chosen for their colours and smells. "The tuberoses make us flee Trianon every evening," Madame de Maintenon wrote in a letter on 8 August 1689. "The smell is so strong it makes men and women alike feel ill.” All the décor, paintings and woodwork sculptures are based on the gardens.
**MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA**

**WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE S/S 1993 COLL.**

Re-use of a waistcoat from a theatre costume: black velvet, black cotton cloth lining, braiding applications of gilded metallic threads; long straight skirt in striped black and white chiné wool.

Galliera Collections

Martin Margiela’s 1991 and 1993 Spring/Summer collections offer a contemporary take on the 18th century by re-employing a 1950’s dress he found at the flea market and old stage costumes. The designer, using their patina and worn-out look as raw materials, intelligently deconstructed the pieces and transformed them from stage costumes into clothes.

**FASHION ACCESSOIRES**

In the 18th century accessories, like clothes, fulfilled two purposes: they were vectors of fashion and conspicuous displays of luxury. Jewels and jewellery were inseparable from women’s formal court dress.

The panoply of accessories was much richer than it is today: removable lace sleeves, fans, gloves, mittens, purses, clutch bags and precious shoes, often made with embroidered silk, rounded out women’s outfits. In the 1770’s-1780’s powdered hair was topped by hats, poufs or big bonnets ornamented with feathers, gauze, birds and other fanciful decoration abundantly illustrated in the nascent fashion press.

Eighteenth-century accessories have not inspired contemporary designers as much as clothes, but today’s beads, bows and brilliants reflect a certain amount of continuity, as the contemporary items in these showcases alongside 18th century objects suggest.

**THE EMPEROR’S FAMILY ROOM (9)**

At first this room housed a theatre that was replaced by Louis XIV’s last apartment, which Louis XV transformed into reception rooms in 1750. Napoleon turned them into a room for meetings of the imperial family and important guests. The furniture dates from that period.

**DON’T MISS**

The purple breccia fireplace dating from Louis XV.
This room, formerly the bedchamber and drawing room of Louis XIV’s third apartment, was used as a dining room under Louis XV and the First Empire. Louis-Philippe turned it into reception rooms and an apartment for his son-in-law and his daughter, the queen of the Belgians.

DON'T MISS
The gilded wooden bed JACOB-DESMALTER delivered in 1809 for Empress Josephine at the Tuileries Palace. Enlarged and modified for this room in 1845.
The panelling is among the palace's oldest. Above the doors, notice the shutters of the gallery where musicians played during the meal.

**MUSIC ROOM (11)**

Former antechamber of Louis XIV’s apartment, where the king’s souper took place. Napoleon turned it into the Officers’ Room and Louis-Philippe into the Billiard Room.

Yohji Yamamoto based his Spring/Summer 2011 menswear fashion show entirely on the late 18th century men’s wardrobe. The rigour and simplicity of bewigged men’s outfits recall the 1780’s, when Anglomania, synonymous with comfort and naturalness, reigned supreme. In contrast, black and white houndstooth wool and sensuous beige leather turn pannier dresses into half-tamed contemporary city wear.

Yohji Yamamoto (1943–) is an internationally renowned Japanese fashion designer. He is the founder of the eponymous label Yohji Yamamoto, which he established in 1973. Among his many achievements is the creation of the “yamamoto cut,” a distinctive silhouette characterized by loose-fitting garments and the use of sharp, angular lines. His designs are known for their boldness and avant-garde approach, often incorporating dramatic elements and unconventional silhouettes. 

**YOHJI YAMAMOTO**

**MEN’S ENSEMBLE, READY-TO-WEAR, S/S 2011**

4 pieces: 1 shirt + 1 waistcoat + 1 pair of breeches + 1 jabot; grey and white. Yohji Yamamoto Archives Collection.

You can also see a Yohji Yamamoto model in the **Lord’s Room (6).**

**ROCHAS BY OLIVIER THEYSKENS**

**WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE A/W 2006**

Jacket and skirt made for the release of Sofia Coppola’s film Marie-Antoinette; grey tulle, fake hair, crinoline. Galliera Collections

When Olivier Theyskens was art director at Rochas he offered a recomposed version of an 18th century woman’s outfit, turning the dress into a short jacket and a skirt. The collared jacket takes the form of the redingote dress, a masculine version of the “robe à l’anglaise”; the skirt rests on an early 18th century bell-shaped pannier. The flounces at the wrists evoke the lace that was sewn onto court dresses’ sleeves. American actress Kirsten Dunst wore this dress during a Vogue photo shoot.

**DON’T MISS**

The chairs covered in Beauvais upholstery made for this room.
LOUIS-PHILIPPE’S FAMILY ROOM (12)

Louis-Philippe had two smaller rooms combined to create this large one, where the king and his family, who enjoyed staying at Trianon, gathered in the evenings. Brion furnished it in the spirit of the times: game and needlework tables, padded chairs and sofas upholstered in yellow figured fabric with blue patterns.

JEAN PAUL GAULTIER

WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE HAUTE COUTURE S/S 1998, “LES MARQUIS TOUAREGS” COLL.

Jean Paul Gaultier takes delight in mixing up men’s and women’s wardrobes. In his spring/summer 1994 collection the iconoclastic couturier put men’s French denim jackets on women. The spring/summer 1998 “Les Marquis Touaregs” collection combined a new vision of Marie-Antoinette’s century with a relaxed, casual, contemporary attitude.

MALACHITE ROOM (13)

Louis XIV’s former room of the Setting Sun, was turned into a bedchamber for the Duchess of Burgundy. Under Napoleon, it became the Emperor’s Room, where Tsar Alexander I’s gifts of malachite were displayed, hence its name, the Malachite room.

Dress displayed:
Christian Dior Maison
Autumn/winter 2004/2005 haute couture dress.

THE COOL ROOM (14)

The Cool Room owes its name to its northern exposure. This is where Napoleon held his cabinet meetings and Charles X bid farewell to his ministers on 31 July 1830.

Models displayed:
Semi-linen French court dress and "robe à l’anglaise".

TOPOGRAPHICAL ROOM (15)

The Duchess of Burgundy used this room, which was designed in the perspective of the gallery next door, called the Cool Room in the 17th century, as her main drawing room. Under the Empire it was known as the Emperor’s Main Drawing Room and used to hold cabinet meetings until the Restoration.

Dress displayed:
Vivienne Westwood
The Garden Room’s six windows open out onto the little staggered rows and the perspective of the Grand Canal. This was a game room under Louis XIV and a billiard room under Napoleon. The door left of the fireplace leads to the Trianon-sous-Bois wing.
AROUND THE EXHIBITION

USEFUL INFORMATION

Exhibition from 8 July to 9 October 2011. Open every day except Monday from noon to 6:30pm (last admission at 6pm).

Exhibition accessible with the Passeport ticket or the ticket for the Trianon Palaces and Marie-Antoinette's Estate.

Free for European Union residents under 26.

GAME-BOOKLET

Free for children four to 12. Available at information points and the exhibition entrance. With a game-contest to win a real tailor-made princess's dress or a "palace kit".

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Bilingual (French-English) 96-page work published by Éditions Artlys Available at the Palace of Versailles RMN shops and www.boutique-chateauversailles.fr

VOGUE AT VERSAILLES

Setting up the exhibition, commissioner's guided tour, interviews with designers: extend your visit to the exhibition at www.vogue.fr/vogue-a-versailles

VOGUE FR

DESIGN COMPETITION

AND YOU, WHAT'S YOUR 18TH CENTURY STYLE?

The Palace of Versailles, together with l'Express Styles and Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche, is organising a design competition: by showing just a detail or the full outfit, you too can revisit the Age of Enlightenment by posting a photo of your clothes, hairstyles or accessories inspired by this era. A panel of judges, made up of fashion professionals and The Cherry Blossom Girl and Miss Pandora bloggers, will decide on the three best styles.

TO TAKE PART, POST A PHOTO OF YOUR STYLE ON: www.concoursdestyle.chateauversailles.fr

WIN:

> A photo session with the magazine l’Express Styles
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