

Self Guided Tour | For Students GRADES 9-12

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ITALIAN STYLE

FASHION SINCE 1945

Exhibition organized by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

PRESENTED BY:

NORDSTROM



Blythe Brenden-Mann
Foundation



Gallery 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Fashion under Fascism label
2. Wartime Day Suits

Tortonese, about 1939

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some famous Italian fashion brands? Where did you hear of them?
2. Fascism is characterized by a belief in the supremacy of one national or ethnic group, rejection of democracy, and obedience to a powerful leader. How did the national fashion board support fascism?
3. What are some ways that Americans use fashion or clothing to identify themselves as Americans? In what ways, if any, do you use clothing to identify yourself as American? Or to identify yourself with another nationality or culture?
4. What kinds of clothing come to mind when you think of war? In what ways, if any, do the Wartime Day Suits match your idea of wartime clothing? What did you expect? What surprised you?

This tour is designed to help teachers and chaperones guide students through the exhibition, or for students to use to explore the exhibition on their own. It includes recommended objects, panels, and discussion questions to support learning about modern history and historical inquiry in the exhibition. Questions can be tailored to what you are studying and the amount of time you have to explore.



MAJOR SPONSOR:
TOPSY SIMONSON AND
FAEGRE BAKER
DANIELS

Gallery 2

RETURN TO LUXURY

1. Return to Luxury panel
2. Lace Evening Gown
Noberasco, about 1951
3. Evening Gown
Simonetta, Autumn/Winter 1952/1953
4. Quilted Cocktail Dress
Carosa, 1958–59

QUESTIONS:

1. What surprised you most in the Return to Luxury panel? The Marshall Plan (also known as the European Recovery Program) was an American initiative meant to give financial support to European economies after World War II. How did fashion contribute to post-war recovery? What types of industry did you expect to help countries recover?
2. The designer of Evening Gown was imprisoned during World War II for being anti-fascist. What was the ultimate outcome for her career? Read the label for her gown and see whether her political opinion had an effect on her success. What words would you use to describe this gown? What do you suppose made it modern in its day?
3. Look closely at Quilted Cocktail Dress. How would you describe this dress? What makes it special? Read the label. Why do you think being wealthy made it easier to get involved in the fashion industry? What advantages did they have?

Gallery 3

DRESSMAKER AND CLIENT

1. Buyers List
January 1955
2. Dressmaker and Client panel
3. Woman's Wool Suit
Maria Grimaldi, 1950s

QUESTIONS:

1. Read the Dressmaker and the Client panel. As a percentage, how many Italian garments were still made by hand in the 1950s?
2. Considering the modern developments in technology today, would you prefer to wear a handmade garment or a garment produced in a factory? Why?
3. Look closely at Woman's Wool Suit. Which features draw your attention most? What questions do you have about it? Compare it to the suits designed for women today. It has been over 50 years since the wool suit here was created. What has changed in women's style preferences that would lead to changes in their clothing preferences?

Gallery 4

HOLLYWOOD ON THE TIBER

1. Hollywood on the Tiber panel
2. "Ornella" Evening Dress with Sequin Circles
Mila Schon, 1966
3. American Vogue
January 1967
4. Vespa 1949
5. Leather Goods label
6. Cocktail Dress of Sari Fabric
Simonetta, about 1950

QUESTIONS:

1. What movie have you seen recently in which the clothing or costumes impressed you? What about the clothing caught your attention?
2. Describe the Vespa. Are you surprised to see a motor scooter in a fashion exhibition? Why or why not? Do you think it's a good idea to include it here? Why or why not?
3. Refer to the Leather Goods label. What did leather workers do to adapt to wartime rations? Which designer eventually turned this into a trademark?
4. Look at the Cocktail Dress of Sari Fabric. What strikes you about this dress? What does it say about Italian fashion trends after the war?
5. What is your favorite object in this gallery? What makes it your favorite?

Gallery 5

TAILORING

1. Man's Jacket and Sweater
Ermenegildo Zegna, 1970
2. John F. Kennedy's Suit
Litrico, 1963
3. Textiles: Foundation of an Industry panel
4. Tropical-Print Dress
Pino Lancetti, 1976

QUESTIONS:

1. Taking a look around the gallery, what is different about these garments and those you looked at in the earlier galleries? What happened that may have changed clothing styles? What is still similar?
2. Which suit in the gallery do you want to know more about? What is it about this suit that interests you most? Do you think John F. Kennedy's Suit has any special appeal to people your age? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever worn a suit to a school dance or family function? If yes, how does the experience described in the Tailoring panel compare to your own experience?
4. Read the Textiles: Foundation of an Industry panel and think about what you learned earlier about the Marshall Plan. Do you agree with the decision to give money to the textile industry? What other industries might have needed financial aid after the war?

Gallery 6

THE STILISTA

1. Jeans, Top, Belt, and Bag
Elio Fiorucci, 1977
2. Leather Shoes
Salvatore Ferragamo, 1986
3. Knitwear panel
4. Study for Knitted Fabric
Ottavio Missoni, 1970s
5. Woman's Sweater
Benetton, Autumn/Winter 1986/1987
6. Woman's Cardigan
Albertina, 1960s

QUESTIONS:

1. Take a glance around the gallery. What words would you use to describe the fashion here? What is a major difference between these fashions and others you have looked at so far?
2. Before reading the label, take a close look at the Woman's Cardigan by Albertina. How do you think it was made by hand or by machine? What do you see that makes you think so?
3. Look closely at the Jeans, Top, Belt, and Bag. In what ways are these like fashion styles today? In what ways are they different?
4. Are you familiar with a local family-run business? What types of goods does it sell? Are they local or handmade?
5. Think about your own clothing. When you acquired your favorite shirt or pair of shoes, did you notice the "Made in _____" tag? Do you look for items that are made in America? Italy? Some- where else? Why? Why not?

Gallery 7

ITALY'S READY-TO-WEAR SYSTEM

1. Italy's Ready-to-Wear System panel
2. Leather Evening Dress
Trussardi, Autumn/Winter 1993/1994
3. Dress with Map of Italy
Moschino Couture, Spring/Summer 1991
4. Woman's Double-Breasted Coat
Max Mara, Autumn/Winter 1982/1983
5. Man's Tweed-Effect Ensemble
Giorgio Armani, 1980

QUESTIONS:

1. How do these "ready-to-wear" garments compare to the high fashion ones you have already seen? Compare the Leather Evening Dress to a gown from the second gallery. Imagine two people that might have worn these gowns. How would you describe them? Where do they come from? What are they like?
2. The Dress with Map of Italy was designed to turn the wearer into a walking marketing campaign for "Made in Italy." What types of clothing do you see today that turn the wearer into a walking advertisement or commercial?
3. What is a major difference between the tailoring of Man's Tweed-Effect Ensemble and John F. Kennedy's Suit? Which appeals more to you? Why?

Gallery 8

CULT OF THE FASHION DESIGNER

1. Cult of the Fashion Designer panel
2. Man's Ensemble
Giorgio Armani, Spring/Summer 1994
3. Man's Ensemble
Stella Jean, Spring/Summer 2014
4. Dress with Sicilian Mosaics
Dolce & Gabbana, Autumn/Winter 2013/2014
5. Embroidered Dress with PVC Decoration
Antonio
Marras, Spring/Summer 2014
6. Flower-Heeled Shoes
Prada, Spring/Summer 2008
7. "New Jackie" Bag
Gucci, 2014

QUESTIONS:

1. Take a walk around the gallery. The names you see here "are at varying stages on the journey to recognition." Is there a visible difference between the more established and the newer designers? For example, between Dolce & Gabbana and Stella Jean?
2. What kind of reaction would critics from the 1950s have towards the Embroidered Dress with PVC Decoration? Can you imagine Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, President Kennedy's wife, wearing this? Why or why not? What about Michelle Obama? Why or why not?

Gallery 1

ITALIAN FASHION'S FUTURE

1. Italian Fashion's Future panel

QUESTION:

1. Watch the videos. What do you think "Made in Italy" will mean in the future?