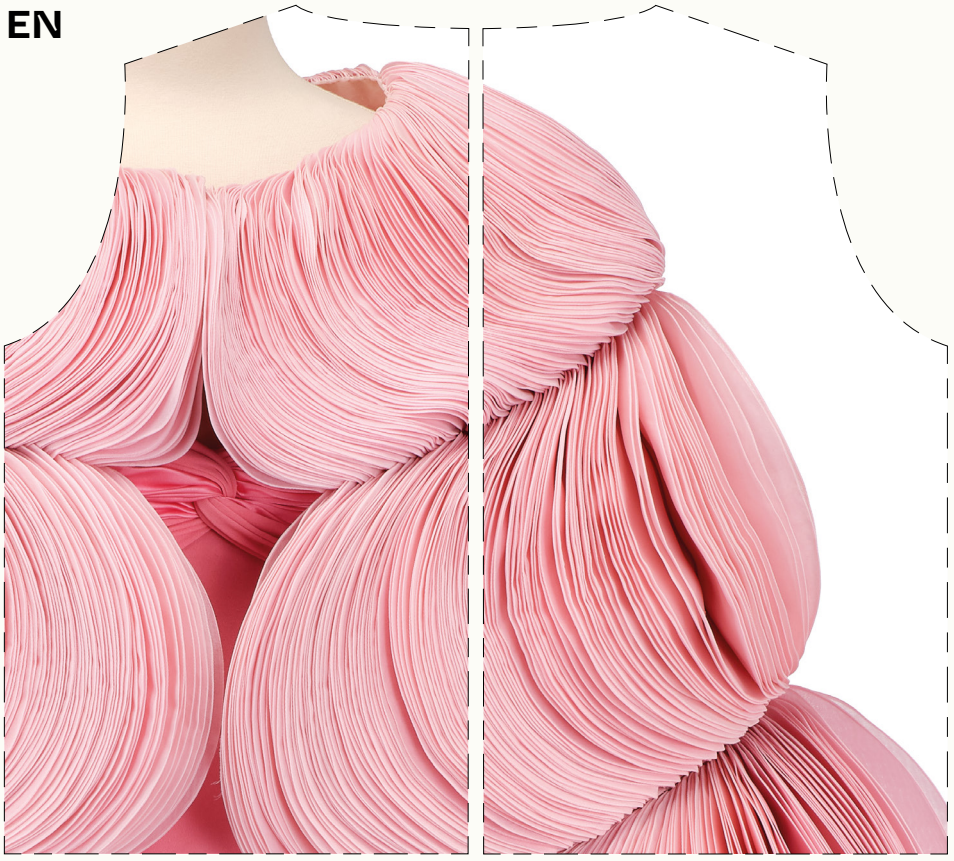
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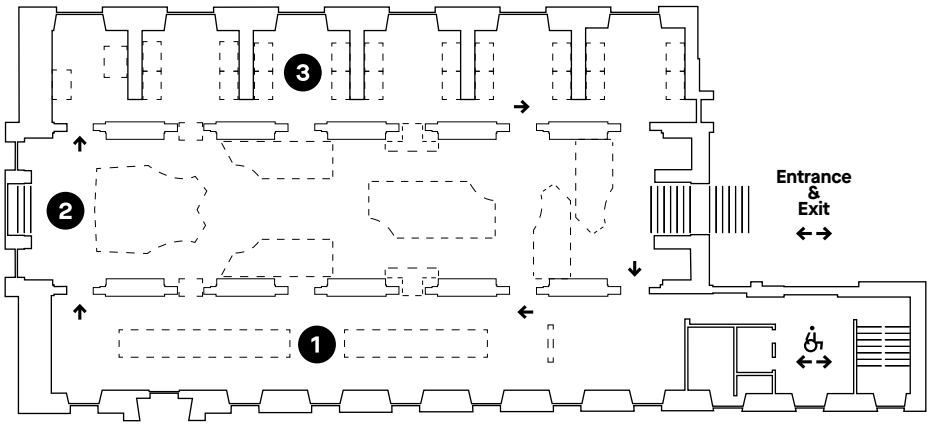
LOOK !

40 Years of Fashion at the Museum

30 SEPTEMBER 2026
— 4 APRIL 2027

MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS

Map of the Exhibition



1. Backstage:
Creating Couture
Fashion Arts?

The Designer's Mind:
First Inspirations

The Heart of the Studio:
Fabrication

Material Needs:
Ennoblement and Ornamentation

In Focus:
Fashion Photography

2. Happy Birthday! 40 Years of Exhibitions Celebrating Fashion

3. How Clothing Becomes a Work of Art: Backstage at the Museum
In Transit: Acquisition

In the Storage: Packaging

In Research: Documentation

In the Laboratory: Restoration

In the Workshop: Mannequinage

In the Press: Communication and Publication

For kids
Stitching it Together
Who is behind the scenes, from the creation of a garment to its display? These kids-friendly texts (from age 7) introduce you to some of the jobs in the sewing workshop and the museum.

You'll recognize it by the spool of thread.



Welcome to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the exhibition "Look: 40 Years of Fashion at the Museum" Enjoy your visit!

What better way to celebrate fashion at the museum than to celebrate the Museum of Fashion!
In 1986, the Musée des Arts de la Mode was inaugurated, first as a sister institution, and later as a fully integrated part of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Forty years ago, the museum's inauguration marked the official entry of fashion into the cultural and artistic domain. Home to France's national fashion collection, the museum unites the collections of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs and the Union Française des Arts de la Costume, two non-profit organizations that have contributed enormously to the recognition of the value and historical importance of fashion.
To celebrate our anniversary, we invite you for a behind the scenes tour of the fashion world. From studio to catwalk, the pieces on display show the different steps that lead to the creation of a piece of clothing and its ultimate consecration on the runway. Here at the museum, our own backstage reveals places and people whose work is unknown to the public at large yet indispensable for the care of the clothing we conserve and exhibit.
These past 40 years, the museum has organized over 70 fashion and textile exhibitions. With exceptional pieces from our collection, the Nef celebrates these shows which have helped write the history of fashion, our society, and our *savoir-faire*.

Recycle me!
If you leave your brochure at the end of the exhibition, it can be recycled or reused.

Visitor amenities
For the comfort and accessibility of all, folding seats, wheelchairs, magnetic induction loops, baby carriers, and changing tables are available on level –1 near the cloakrooms.

Backstage:
Creating Couture

An haute couture fashion show is a first garment's recognition: it is worn, staged, magnified, filmed, photographed by the press, it is transformed into an object of desire and admiration.

But before it gets there, the road is long and involves the collaboration of many different skilled professionals. The vast quantity of time needed to create certain pieces stands in stark contrast to the fleeting and ephemeral fashion show.

In addition to conserving clothing, the museum's permanent collection tells the story of this process: preparatory sketches and fashion illustrations, embroidery samples, pleating machines, photographs... A tremendous creative output that, like the clothing itself, has acquired the status of a work of art.

Fashion Arts?

When the Musée des Arts de la Mode opened in 1986, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs already owns an important textile collection, which is regularly exhibited. One of the most notable examples is "Le Théâtre de la Mode" in 1945. After war, the Paris Couture Chambre of Commerce organized "Le Théâtre de la Mode" in this very space. The exhibition was orchestrated by Christian Bérard and would mark the history of fashion. It was a means for French couture to affirm its prestige after years of German occupation. As fabric was still rationed, it was to be an exhibition on small-scale models. Fifty-three celebrated couturiers were tasked with dressing 70cm (28in) tall dolls, designed by Éliane Bonabel. Numerous hatmakers, bootmakers, decorative trim designers, furriers, hairstylists and jewellers also participated, creating the accessories. The dolls were presented in fourteen settings imagined by famous artists of the day, including Jean Cocteau, that gave the impression of fourteen different fashion shows. "Le Théâtre de la Mode" met with great success and went on to travel around Europe and the United States, where it reunited an American clientele with French fashion, a connection that had been ruptured by the war.

Happy Birthday!
40 Years of Exhibitions Celebrating Fashion

For our 40th anniversary, the museum is honouring 40 of our most noteworthy exhibitions, those that helped raise fashion to an art.

Recognized for the originality of their themes, their contribution to a greater understanding of fashion history or for their set design, these exhibitions are represented by an iconic outfit or ensemble of accessories.

Rather than present a chronological visit through fashion or exhibition history, you are invited to explore the Nef like a garden, choosing your own path. The pieces on display testify both to the singularity of the exhibitions they illustrate, and the exceptional quality of the clothing in the museum's collection.

How Clothing Becomes a Work of Art: Backstage at the Museum

An exhibition is the culmination of daily work that often goes unnoticed. These rooms allow you to discover how a museum functions, and the diversity of specialties that together allow the pieces in our collection to be shared with future generations: conservation and restoration, documentation, registration, production... By exploring the museum's "backstage," you will better understand the challenges inherent in organizing a fashion exhibition — notably the extreme sensitivity of textile fibres to light and to the environment, a fragility that excludes permanent display.

Documentation, preventive and curative conservation, graphic design... From acquisition to exhibition, each alcove in this section presents a moment in a garment's second life as part of the museum's collection.

Around the Exhibition

Exhibition catalogue
Available at the bookstore.
Published by Les Arts Décoratifs,
248 pages, 300 illustrations,
19 × 26 cm, €39.

Events
A series of lectures and a study day accompany the exhibition.
Visit madparis.fr to learn more.

Guided Tours
Adults (from age 15)

Workshops
→ In the Limelight
Ages 7-10
→ A Flair for Fashion
Ages 11-14
→ From Fold to Stitch
Adults (from age 15)

Fashion studio
Ages 11-14
Four 2.5-hour sessions offered during school breaks to explore fashion photography, centered around the exhibitions “Look: 40 Years of Fashion at the Museum” and “Rafael Pavarotti, Photographer.”

— Individuals
Activity reservations and information: madparis.fr

— Groups
Guided tours and the visit-workshop combination are available for adults as well as youths, according to profile (student groups, recreation centers, higher education, associations, companies), at the day and time of their choice and in several languages.

MAD Pro
→ Fashion: From Sketch to Runway
A program designed for students in vocational fashion, dressmaking, and garment production programs (CAP, BAC PRO, BTS).
Group activity reservations: reservation@madparis.fr
01 44 55 57 66

Your ticket gives you access to the entire museum, so make the most of it!



Robe à la française, 1760, France
© Les Arts Décoratifs / Jean Tholance

Valentino —
Evening ensemble, haute couture
automn-winter 2007-2008, Paris
© Les Arts Décoratifs / Christophe Dellière

Restoration of fashion pieces preserved at the Museum of Decorative Arts, made possible through the support of Christine and Stephen A. Schwarzman.

With the support of DEFI and the Friends of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, particularly René and Marie-France Kern.