



# Hollywood Costume

Sponsored by Harry Winston

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*“On every film, the clothes are half the battle in creating the character. I have a great deal of opinion about how my people are presented. We show a great deal by what we put on our bodies.”*

Meryl Streep

*“I don’t dress movie stars. I dress actors who are playing characters.”*

Ann Roth, Academy Award-winning costume designer

*Hollywood Costume*, the V&A’s major autumn exhibition, will gather together over one hundred of the most iconic costumes designed for unforgettable cinema characters over a century of film-making. For the first time, *Hollywood Costume* will unite classics from the Golden Age including Dorothy’s blue and white gingham pinafore dress designed by Adrian for *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Scarlett O’Hara’s green ‘curtain’ dress designed by Walter Plunkett for *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and the ‘little black dress’ designed by Hubert De Givenchy for Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961), with the latest Hollywood releases including Consolata Boyle’s costumes for Meryl Streep in *The Iron Lady* (2011).

*Hollywood Costume* will explore the central role of costume design – from the glamorous to the very subtle – as an essential tool of cinema storytelling. It will illuminate the costume designer’s creative process from script to screen and reveal the collaborative dialogue that leads to the invention of authentic people in the story. The exhibition will also examine the changing social and technological context in which costume designers have worked over the last century.

The exhibition is a three-gallery journey from early Charlie Chaplin silent pictures to the motion capture costume design for *Avatar* (Deborah L. Scott, Mayes C. Rubeo, 2010) and *John Carter* (Mayes C. Rubeo, 2012). From Joan Crawford’s blue gingham waitress uniform in *Mildred Pierce*, (Milo Anderson, 1945) to the sensational bugle-beaded ruby gown she wore in *The Bride Wore Red*, (Adrian, 1937), these costumes are united by their one purpose of serving the story. Using montages, film clips and projections, the clothes will be placed in their original context, alongside interviews with key Hollywood costume designers, directors and actors talking about the role costume plays in creating a character.

Deborah Nadoolman Landis, Hollywood costume designer and senior guest curator, said: “*This landmark exhibition will provide a once in a life-time opportunity to explore the most beloved characters in Hollywood history and gain insight on the role of the costume designer and their vital contribution to cinema storytelling.*”

Sir Christopher Frayling, guest curator, said: “*The design of costumes for films is a distinctive form of design which is often taken for granted or misunderstood. This V&A exhibition presents the ideal opportunity to set the record straight – and will do so in the most spectacular way.*”

The exhibition has involved sourcing, identifying and securing objects from all across the world over the course of five years. The collectors who have loaned to the exhibition range from major motion picture studios, costume houses, public museums and archives and private individuals.

### **Exhibition Structure**

The exhibition will be divided into three sections to tell the story of costume design.

**Act One: Deconstruction** will introduce the role of the costume designer in cinema. This section will explore the link between clothing and identity and look at how designers create the unique individuals in the script whether for modern, period or fantasy films. There will be clothes instantly recognisable as being ‘costumes’ such as the imperial robes designed by James Acheson for *The Last Emperor* (1987) alongside others like *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), where designer Marit Allen’s designs for Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) and Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) may seem invisible. The steps of the costume designer’s research process will be explored in case studies including *Fight Club* (Michael Kaplan, 1999), *Addams Family Values* (Theoni V. Aldrege, 1993), and *Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark*, (Deborah Nadoolman, 1981). The process will be revealed using designs and sketches, photographs showing costume fittings, budget breakdowns and script pages to show dialogue that discloses character defining clues. The first act will conclude with a dissection of designer Alexandra Byrne’s *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007) surrounded by a royal court of characters that will include the celebrated *The Virgin Queen* (Charles LeMaire, Mary Wills, 1955) played by Bette Davis.

**Act Two: Dialogue** will examine the intimate creative collaboration among great filmmakers, actors, and costume designers. Using archival film footage as well as specially-commissioned interviews, *Dialogue* will explore four key director/designer pairings: Alfred Hitchcock and Edith Head who worked together on 11 films including *The Birds* (1963); Tim Burton and Colleen Atwood whose nine films together have spanned *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) to *Alice in Wonderland* (2010); Martin Scorsese and Sandy Powell who have teamed on films from *Gangs of New York* (2002) to the recent *Hugo* (2011); and Mike Nichols and Ann Roth who have worked together for almost 30 years from *Silkwood* (1983) to *Closer* (2004).

Costume designers have worked within a rapidly changing social and technological landscape over the last century: from silent to sound, black and white to Technicolor and from the Golden Age studio system to multi-national corporations and art house 'indies'. Censorship, remakes and genre will be deconstructed in a section devoted to historic and social context. *Cleopatra* (1934) designed by Travis Banton will stand alongside the 1963 interpretation by Irene Sharaff starring Elizabeth Taylor. Thoroughly researched by the designers, the look of each *Cleopatra* is ultimately defined by the fashions of its own era. Archetypal cinematic genres will be explored with sword and sandal epics such as *Ben Hur* (Elizabeth Haffenden, 1959), Westerns including *True Grit* (Mary Zophres, 2010), fantasy films like *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (John Mollo, 1977) and period drama like *A Room with a View* (John Bright, Jenny Beavan, 1985). It will show how costume designers have embraced the innovations in technology and animation, such as Joanna Johnston's design for Jessica Rabbit in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), computer generated imaging (CGI) and motion-capture (mo-cap), exemplified by characters from *Avatar* (Deborah L. Scott, Mayes C. Rubeo 2009).

Dialogue will conclude with the 'Art of Becoming;' two case-studies on the award-winning Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep. In specially commissioned interviews, both actors, celebrated for their transformative skills, will discuss the importance of costume in developing and playing a range of their characters. Five costumes from each of their most famous roles will be on view.

The final section, **Act Three: Finale** will present the best known costumes in cinema history in a spectacle of Hollywood heroes and femme fatales. Some of the most glamorous sirens from Roxie Hart in *Chicago* (Colleen Atwood, 2002) to Catherine Tramell in *Basic Instinct* (Ellen Mirojnick, 1992) will be seen alongside fantasy, sci-fi and superhero characters including *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Eiko Ishioka, 1992), *Twilight: New Moon* (Tish Monaghan, 2009) and the latest high-tech suit for Batman in *The Dark Knight Rises* (Lindy Hemming, 2012). With costume designer Judianna Makovsky's Gryffindor uniform design for Harry Potter to Errol Flynn's doublet in *The Adventures of Don Juan* (Marjorie Best, 1948) and the sheer white chiffon cocktail dress worn by Marilyn Monroe as Sugar Kane Kowalczyk in *Some Like it Hot* (Orry-Kelly, 1959) to designer Jacqueline Durran's unforgettable green silk charmeuse gown worn by Keira Knightly as Cecilia Tallis in *Atonement* (2007), these examples will show the most memorable costumes, characters and stories that continue to inspire generations, fashion trends and enrich international popular culture.

**ENDS**

## Notes to Editors

- For more information, visit [www.vam.ac.uk/hollywoodcostume](http://www.vam.ac.uk/hollywoodcostume)
- *Hollywood Costume* is curated by Hollywood costume designer and senior guest curator Deborah Nadoolman Landis, guest curator Sir Christopher Frayling and V&A assistant curator Keith Lodwick
- The exhibition is being designed by Casson Mann
- The Museum is open daily 10:00 – 17:45 and until 22:00 every Friday

### *Ticket Information*

Advance booking advised. Visit [www.vam.ac.uk/hollywoodcostume](http://www.vam.ac.uk/hollywoodcostume) or call 020 7907 7073 (booking fee applies). Tickets are £14 (concessions available)

### *Exhibition Publication*

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated publication *Hollywood Costume*, edited by Deborah Nadoolman Landis. For press information about the book, contact Julie Chan on 020 7942 2701 or [j.chan@vam.ac.uk](mailto:j.chan@vam.ac.uk)

### *Exhibition Merchandise*

There will be a V&A Shop range inspired by *Hollywood Costume*. For press information on merchandise accompanying the exhibition, contact Lee Kendall on 020 7942 2681 or [l.kendall@vam.ac.uk](mailto:l.kendall@vam.ac.uk)

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**For further PRESS information about the exhibition please contact Katy Towse or Elinor Hughes in the V&A press office on 020 7942 2503 / 2500 or email [k.towse@vam.ac.uk](mailto:k.towse@vam.ac.uk) / [e.hughes@vam.ac.uk](mailto:e.hughes@vam.ac.uk)**

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