

MARIE ANTOINETTE

Costumes of an **OSCAR** Queen



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Exhibition Organization

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INTRODUCING THE QUEEN

About the Exhibition

This stunning, trendy exhibition features a selection of 26 costumes from the film, *Marie Antoinette* (2006) by American director, Sofia Coppola. The film, starring Kirsten Dunst, attracted worldwide media attention due to the contemporary interpretation of the life of the most famous queen of France who even during her lifetime, was a widely-admired and imitated icon of fashion and style in both her public and private personae.

Fashion and film are interwoven in this exhibition that combines history and costume with set design and audio-video devices. Visually, the exhibition follows the vicissitudes of Marie Antoinette's life through a parade of costumes - from her departure from the Viennese court to the final, desperate flight to avoid her tragic destiny. Adapted from the highly-successful installation of the exhibition at the Museo del Tessuto in Prato, Italy, the international traveling exhibition is organized by Contemporanea Progetti of Florence, in collaboration with the Museo del Tessuto and Sartoria, The One, of Rome which not only made the film's costumes, but today conserves this important contribution to modern, cinematic history.

About Marie Antoinette, a Fashion “Influencer”

Sofia Coppola’s account, inspired by the queen’s highly-accredited biography published in 1932 by Stefan Zweig (*Marie Antoinette - An Unintentionally Heroic Life*) illustrates a new and fresh profile of the queen, portrayed as an adolescent of our times who made the best of her existence at Versailles, despite the shadows cast by the need for strict observance of courtly conventions.

The film focuses on the aspects of life at court which conditioned and pandered to the vivacious nature of the young queen. Transplanted from the somber atmosphere of the Viennese court at 15 years of age, Marie Antoinette was thrown into the machinations of the French court whose dynamics, punctuated by severe, but also controversial protocols, contributed to the formation of both the character and personality of the young queen.

Court intrigues, personal dramas and social obligations acted as a counterpoint to the extremely sumptuous life at court which empowered her to promote her iconic image, the studied product of the meticulous and imaginative creativity of France’s finest craftsmen. Luxurious clothes, refined accessories, extravagant wigs and precious jewels, worn on every occasion, all went towards creating her public persona and a style which was imitated not only by the noble ladies of Versailles, but also by all the European courts. The grandeur of the French sovereigns, introduced by Louis XIV and sustained by shrewd political strategy, translated however, into a vacuous and vain show of ostentation by the second half of the 1700s. The embittered French people were ultimately led to revolution and the tragic events of the Reign of Terror that also engulfed the life of Marie Antoinette.





ABOUT THE COSTUMES

In the design of the costumes, well-known designer Milena Canonero took inspiration from 18th-century European painting and an extensive analysis of the fashions, jewelry, hair-styles and embroidery in vogue at that time by the ladies at court. Due to her attentive and attuned selection both of materials – silks, precious taffetas or satins and velvets – and of the colors – sweet-candy and pastel hues – the costumes themselves became a leading protagonist of the film, and, not by chance, they earned Milena Canonero her fourth academy award for Best Costume Design.

The costumes were created in collaboration with Sartoria, The One, a preeminent atelier specialized in cinematography and theater based in Rome, spearheaded by the dedication and passion of its owner, Alessandra Cinti. In the early phases of the costume production, a great number of prototypes were made in order to identify the best models, fit and fabrics for each actor. Eventually, 270 costumes were created for the film, and more than 100 were worn by just the protagonist alone, Kirsten Dunst as Marie Antoinette.

In the film, Marie Antoinette's personality, portrayed as a whimsical, but audacious young woman, is metaphorically represented by her costumes. The sweet-candy selection of colors suggestive of the protagonist's naïve, youthful, yet glamorous image, gradually gets tinged with dark and gloomy tones as the character's attitude changes and as history unfolds.

In a particularly creative juxtaposition, humorous, but meaningful resonance was created with the audiences of today: Manolo Blahnik shoes and pale blue Converse All-Stars are subtly hidden among the fashion choices of Marie Antoinette, the 18th-century adolescent, prematurely at the court of France, reflective of Sofia Coppola's unique way of interpreting historical personalities.



CONTENTS OF THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition unfolds along the binaries of two major sections. The first section is dedicated to introducing the Queen and a biographical review of her life through graphic panels and an animated video projecting historical images, paintings and etchings that narrate moments in her life and her incredible instinct and passion for fashion and for textiles. In a dramatic silhouette, one of the most suggestive costumes designed by Milena Canonero – its pink pastel tones evocative of the iconic image of the Queen – is on display. This is the same costume featured on the cover of Vogue Magazine - Kirsten Dunst photographed by Annie Liebowitz -in the September 2006 issue.

Section 1: Introducing the Queen

1 Costume - (Marie Antoinette)

3 Corset Structures

Graphic Panels, Text Files

1 Video Montage – animated historical background, images, paintings and etchings (format 16:9 (pixel 1920 x 1080), mp4, 6 minutes)

From this historical introduction the exhibition opens to second section, featuring twenty-five of the most splendid costumes from the movie positioned amidst a spacious ambience evocative of the majestic halls of Versailles and the famous Petit Trianon, one of the Queen's favorite places, forever associated with her name.

A staircase-shaped structure is arranged for the display of the costumes, according to a chronological order beginning with Marie Antoinette's first appearances at the court of France, and eventually, ending with the dark and somber costumes designed for the Queen's desperate attempt to flee Versailles and escape her destiny. In the center of the room, at the summit of the staircase, the costumes, painstakingly crafted, for the coronation of Marie Antoinette and her dauphin husband, Louis XVI, as King and Queen of France and Navarra, are dramatically and prominently positioned. Each costume, although part of a parade, also stands alone and has its own story to tell, its own role in an episode of the life of the ill-fated Queen.

The exhibition closes with video film clips, freeze-frame images from this highly-acclaimed movie, creating an intimate and direct correlation with the costumes, suggestive of the emotional impact of the cinema experience as well as the enduring and continuous relationship between fashion and film.

Section 2: The Story of Marie Antoinette Told Through Costume

26 Original Costumes Film Costumes +
26 Mannequin Supports

Design Drawings for Exhibition Platforms, Staircase

Graphic Panels, Text Files

1 Video Montage: Film clips, Freeze-frame Images 4:3 (pixel
1920 x 1080), mp4, 3 minutes

EXHIBITION PHOTOGRAPHY

FILM

MOVIE

BIOGRAFIA



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SELECTION OF COSTUMES



Costume:
Marie Antoinette
Entering France



Still from movie "Marie Antoinette" | © Sony Pictures 2006



Costume:
Marie Antoinette
in the French Style



Still from movie "Marie Antoinette" | © Sony Pictures 2006



Costume:
Marie Antoinette,
A Moment of Happiness



Still from movie "Marie Antoinette" | © Sony Pictures 2006



Costume:
The Toilette
of Marie Antoinette



Still from movie "Marie Antoinette" | © Sony Pictures 2006



Costume:
Marie Antoinette
Receives a Letter from her Mother,
Empress Maria-Teresa of Austria



Still from movie "Marie Antoinette" | © Sony Pictures 2006



Costume:
Marie Antoinette
Becomes Queen of France,
The Coronation



Still from movie "Marie Antoinette" | © Sony Pictures 2006



Costume:
Vogue Magazine,
Kirsten Dunst as Marie Antoinette,
photographed by Annie Leibowitz,
September 2006



Still from movie "Marie Antoinette" | © Sony Pictures 2006





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