

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

MoMA details fashion items through history and their impact

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A series of black dresses from MoMA. Image credit: MoMA

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

New York's Museum of Modern Art is making its return to fashion this fall with a special exhibit that discovers how apparel represents much more than style.

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"Items: Is Fashion Modern?" will be MoMA's first fashion exhibit since its "Are Clothes Modern?" in 1944. The exhibit will touch on how famous fashion items through history reflect the culture and politics of the time.

"There is no design history without fashion as part of it, and so this exhibition is important for MoMA as it acknowledges what has been quite a gap in our practice, as well as important for the ways in which MoMA, an institution that has historically been at the forefront of bringing design into contact with everyday life and those who live it, can open fashion design up for new audiences," said Paola Antonelli, senior curator at the Museum of Modern Art.

History and fashion

MoMA's upcoming exhibit will feature 111 items believed to have made an impact on the world and reflect the time periods they came from.

Each item will be represented with a history of its origins and how it has impacted the world over the last 100 years. While the 111 items represent the typology of the products, there will be 350 total, as the exhibit will feature more than one example.

Numerous examples of each item are meant to represent the full impact the item has had on history.

New items, or prototypes, will be featured alongside 30 products in regards to advancements in technology, social dynamics, aesthetics or political awareness.

The gallery will be organized through various categories, having items grouped together that have something in common.

For instance, one grouping focuses on fashion items that alter the human body and highlight gender roles such as

the Wonderbra, the sari, the Little Black Dress and Rudi Gernreich's Unisex Project.



MoMA's 1944 exhibit, "Are Clothes Modern?"

From there, Issey Miyake's A-POC, Pierre Cardin's Cosmos Collection, Gore-Tex, the leotard and the Moon Boot highlight a category that looks to the future and technology in fashion.

Another grouping will showcase the unlikely similarities between contrasting styles such as modesty alongside rebellion. Leather pants, the slip dress, the bikini, the hijab, kente, the hoodie and the turtleneck exhibit this.

Athletic wear and trendy fashion will combine for a gallery that shows off how these are intertwined with items such as the Converse All Star sneaker. Another display looking to professional attire, where loafers and the pencil skirt take the stage, follows the athletic exhibit.

Items: Is Fashion Modern? will conclude with a look to the future in which a data visualization will showcase hidden connections and patterns between all featured typologies.

Hermès and Stella McCartney are among the many luxury designers who are making an appearance in the exhibit at the MoMA ([see story](#)).

Fashion exhibits

Fashion and art are closely intertwined, with many believing fashion is an art of itself.

For instance, as fashion and technology continue to merge, Google has launched a new platform to tell the stories behind the clothes we wear.

Google Arts & Culture, the technology company's nonprofit cultural institute designed to share arts and culture in a curated online space, launched "We Wear Culture" to explore wearable culture in detail. The effort tackles trends such as the hoodie to larger picture topics such as the collaboration between art and fashion, craftsmanship and the impact of the fashion industry, among others ([see more](#)).

While the MoMA has stepped away from any fashion exhibits in the past few decades, fashion has not ignored the MoMA.

The Fondation Louis Vuitton will host an exhibition this coming October in celebration of New York's Museum of Modern Art.

The co-organized exhibition, "Etre Moderne: Le MoMA Paris," will open Oct. 11 and will recount the New York museum's history of modern and contemporary art collection. Luxury goods conglomerate LVMH opened the Frank Gehry-designed building just outside of Paris' city center to support the arts through exhibitions, performances and events ([see more](#)).

"It is unique as MoMA does not really create shows on fashion design, so this is a new frontier for us—and at the same time, territory we feel confident and excited about in terms of bringing diverse audiences into contact with questions and ideas in contemporary design," Ms. Antonelli said.

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