

Short Subjects

Dressing Downton

Traveling exhibition on changing fashion for changing times from the BBC series.

A new traveling exhibit, “Dressing Downton: Changing Fashion for Changing Times” features more than 35 costumes from the popular British television series *Downton Abbey*. The award-winning costumes were produced by the London costume house Cosprop Ltd.



Many use original fabrics and embellishments from the early 20th century, while others are re-created from old photographs, paintings, patterns, and magazine pictures.

The exhibit offers an new perspective on the show’s most memorable characters, both upstairs and down, while chronicling the great changes taking place in Britain and clothing during the early 20th century.

Downton Abbey introduces viewers to the Crawley family and the servants who inhabit the fictional country estate of Downton Abbey in 1912, just after the sinking of Titanic. The series follows them

through events that uprooted British society on the eve of World War I and ushered in the Roaring Twenties, the Jazz Age, and a new way of life. Lord and Lady Grantham; their daughters Mary, Edith, and Sibyl; their retinue of servants; and suitors, relatives, and neighbors represent the full spectrum of life during this period as they struggle to adapt to a rapidly transforming world.



Much of their time and attention are taken up with their wardrobe, and their clothing reflects the changing times. From country tweeds to footmen’s livery, lavish evening attire, and daring Bohemian fashions, the fashions of Downton Abbey illuminate a world torn between tradition and progress.

The exhibit is at the Taft Museum of Art in Cincinnati Ohio from July-September 2016. It travels to the History Museum in South Bend Indiana from October 2016 – January 2017, then moves to Museo Museum and Cultural Center in Anaheim California from February-May 2017. For more information, visit the [exhibit website](#).

New Translation of 18th C. Dyeing Handbook

English language translation of rare book gives glimpse into wool dyeing practices

Dr. Dominique Cardon is Directrice de Recherche, CNRS Laboratoire d'Histoire et d'Archéologie, Lyons, France. Her research is directed on the history of dyeing and ancient textile techniques. This April she was awarded the Legion d'honneur for her scientific work on the history and archaeology of textiles and natural dyes.

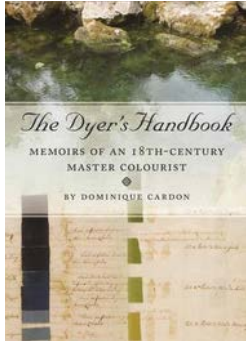


The Dyers Handbook: Memoirs of an 18th Century Master Colourist is an English language translation of her previously published work, *Mémoires de Teinture*. That anonymous French manuscript, which is held in a private collection, consists of four essays produced around 1763. They may possibly have been written by Paul Gout, director of the Royal Manufacture of Bize, France in the Languedoc Region.

Considered the first technical treatise on dyeing of wool broadcloth, the book was written by an active entrepreneur about cloth for exportation to the Levant, and originally consisted of about 100 manuscript pages.

Included with the writing were 177 samples of dyed broadcloth and the dye recipes for their coloring.

In the French version, all the pages with samples are published as color plates.



Publication also included colorimetric measurements in the CIE*L*a*b system of all the samples by Iris Brémaud, and dye analyses by Witold Nowik. The English translation of the text also has the facsimile pages

reproduced in color from the original manuscript. In addition there are essays to place the original work in its historical, economic and technological contexts.

For anyone fascinated by the change in scale and the amount of innovation that occurred in woolen cloth production in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, *The Dyer's Handbook* brings first-hand insight into the daily preoccupations and tasks of a key player in the success story of the Languedocian broadcloth production specially devised for export. Even non-specialists may be interested in understanding the clever management and technical organization that made it possible for the original author to produce, dye, finish, pack and export up to 1,375 pieces of superfine broadcloth per year, representing nearly 51 km of cloth.

The author's previously translated book, *Natural Dyes* (2007), was noted for its completeness and utility for those interested in long-term study of dyestuffs and techniques. Most of her longer works are in French, but she has published articles in English. The hardcover book is available from [Oxbow Books](#) for about \$65 (48 pounds + shipping).

Fashions Worn by Queen Elizabeth II On Exhibit

Exhibition celebrates clothing worn by Britain's longest-ruling monarch.

In celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday, three special exhibitions will be staged across each of her official residences during 2016. *Fashioning a Reign: 90 Years of Style from The Queen's Wardrobe* charts significant events in The Queen's life and the nation's history through an unique collection of dress and accessories designed for all occasions, from childhood to the present day.

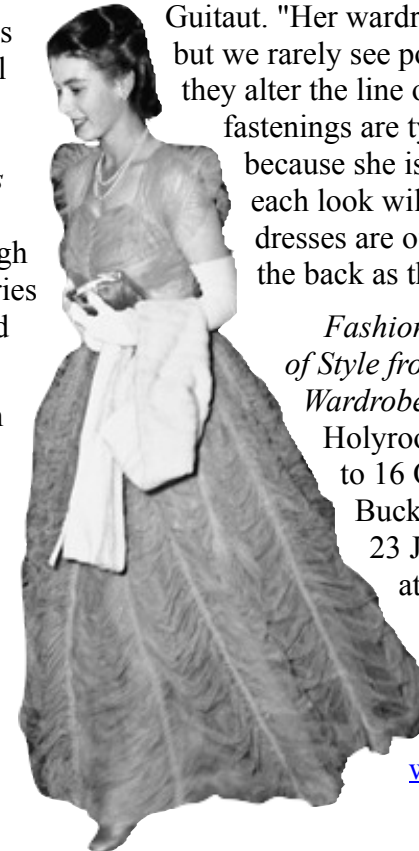
Over 150 outfits worn by The Queen are presented across the three Palaces, with each special exhibition displaying a selection of outfits chosen because of their close association with the location.

The Queen's support of British couture and millinery will be highlighted through important pieces created for a world stage by designers, including Sir Norman Hartnell, Sir Hardy Amies, and Ian Thomas.

"The Queen transcends fashion, but her clothes continue to reflect it," said Caroline De Guitaut, curator of the exhibition. "She is completely involved in her wardrobe and works with leading British couturiers of the day but will reject designer's sketches if she doesn't like them. Consistently elegant, she dresses in bright, visible block colours, often with a complementary hat but note that we rarely see her in a pattern."

"Embellishment and embroidery is an important aspect of her wardrobe and she frequently returns to duchesse satin and silks because they take beading so well," said De Guitaut. "Her wardrobe must be practical but we rarely see pockets or belts because they alter the line of an outfit. Zips and fastenings are typically concealed because she is very aware of how each look will be seen, so her dresses are often just as beautiful at the back as they are at the front."

Fashioning a Reign: 90 Years of Style from The Queen's Wardrobe is at the Palace of Holyroodhouse from 21 April to 16 October 2016, at Buckingham Palace from 23 July to 2 October, and at Windsor Castle from 17 September 2016 to 8 January 2017. For more information, visit the [exhibition website](#).



Award Winning Costume Designer Takes Final Bow

Legendary set and costume designer won three Tony awards for his work.

Desmond Heeley, who designed sets and costumes for theatre, opera and ballet died on 10 June 2016 at age 85 in Manhattan.



He was celebrated for his ability to create visual magic out of simple materials. His work relied on its theatrical, painterly qualities rather than its verisimilitude. “It’s a wonderful chance to make artifice happen, as opposed to just downright realism,” he said in 2011. Heeley preferred audiences not to closely inspect his work, but to remain in their seats, where they’re “meant to” sit. “Distance lends enchantment,” he said. “It’s like a magician, you know. ‘I’ve got nothing up my sleeve; watch this.’”

Heeley created sets and costumes for many of the great theatre and opera troupes of the world, including the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Royal National Theatre, the Metropolitan Opera, American Ballet Theater, Vienna State Opera, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and La Scala in Milan. He also taught design as a professor at the Tisch School for the Arts at NYU, as well as other universities in the United States, England and Canada.

Heeley won two Tony Awards in 1968 for the set and costume design of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and a third Tony in 2011 for the costume design of *The Importance Of Being Ernest* (revival), for which he also won a Drama Desk Award. His other Broadway credits include: *Cyrano*, and revivals of *Camelot* and *The Circle*. In 1994 he was the first recipient of the prestigious Irene Sharaff Lifetime Achievement Award.



Pendant disguised as Vincentio from *The Taming of the Shrew*. Design by Desmond Heeley, 1975.

2000 Year Old Roman Shoe Found in a Well

New discovery shows that ancient Rome valued fashionable footwear.

It is widely recognized that the Romans originated shoes that encased the entire foot, and that they spread a love of fashionable footwear across the empire to the territories that they occupied. According to an article on Roman footwear on the website [Romans Across Europe](#), “Most were constructed like military caligae, with a one-piece upper nailed between layers of the sole. Many had large open-work areas made by cutting or punching circles, triangles, squares, ovals, etc. in rows or grid-like patterns.

As the Romans began to move into and occupy territories of what is now Germany around 90AD, they built a fort call the *Saalburg* to defend their settlements against Germanic tribal forces. The Roman fort and an attached village was flourishing community until around 260 AD, and housed nearly 2000 troops and their families, as well as tradesmen. Among the tradesmen, the *sutor* (shoe-maker) was a highly valued member of the community

The settlement eventually vanished and was only rediscovered during the 19th century, It has now been excavated and fully reconstructed, and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Saalburg Museum houses many of the items discovered during the excavation.

Among the relics on display is an amazingly well-preserved 2,000 year old shoe that was found in a well. According to the sign on the display, the shoe has an open upper and nailed soles. The image below displays all of the Roman's shoe-making skills. The upper includes the intricate punched work that was often found on more fashionable shoes of the period. The shoes fasten by tying with leather laces that pass through eyelets.

Modern Italians may have mastered the craft of making shoes, but their ancestors in ancient Rome also knew a thing or two about style. The shoes appear so similar to today's fashions, that they would attract little attention if it was worn on the streets of modern Rome.

For more information on the Saalburg Museum in Germany and its collection of Roman artifacts, visit their [website](#).



A 2000 year old Roman shoe on display in the Saalburg museum shows Roman's shoe-making art.

LACMA Patterns from Collection Available Online

Patterns created from costumes in LACMA costume collection available free online.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Los Angeles, California has undertaken an ambitious project to “pull” patterns from costumes in its collection and make them freely available online in PDF format.

In 2011, the costume and textiles department collaborated with theatrical costume designer and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo professor, Thomas Bernard, to recreate selected garment patterns of historic dress displayed in an earlier LACMA costume

exhibition, [Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail, 1700–1915](#) (2010–2011).

The aim of this online project, “Undertaking the Making: LACMA Costume and Textiles Pattern Project,” was to offer free downloadable patterns of fashions in the permanent collection. Not only could these patterns be used to understand how historic silhouettes were created, but they could also offer a glimpse into the evolution of dress.



Thomas Bernard and assistant curator Clarissa Esguerra pulling a pattern from an 18th century waistcoat. All of the patterns included in the Costume and Textile Pattern Project come from LACMA's collection.

Now, five years later, LACMA is continuing this object-based costume resource project. In addition to the release of six more patterns from garments in Fashioning Fashion that were originally drawn by Thomas Bernard (including an 18th-century woman's redingote, a 19th-century boy's frock, and an early 20th-century woman's evening pajama by Callot Sœurs), they have also published three patterns of fashionable men's clothing on the

occasion of its recent exhibition [Reigning Men: Fashion in Menswear, 1715–2015](#).

In this latest iteration of the LACMA pattern project, the patterns were hand-drawn in a process of reverse engineering where a three-dimensional object is “de-constructed” back to

its original two-dimensional form. These scaled and printable patterns not only required great care in handling the historic and rare works of art, but also a knowledge of garment construction, textile structure, fashion history, and—above all—patience.

To access the patterns in this collection, visit the “Undertaking the Making: LACMA Costume and Textiles Pattern Project” [webpage](#).