# Met Museum plans groundbreaking exhibition on Black dandyism



The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute has unveiled plans for its spring 2025 exhibition, Superfine: Tailoring Black Style. This groundbreaking exhibition is set to examine the evolution of Black dandyism, a sartorial tradition known for its elegance and exaggerated style, tracing its historical journey from its origins in the 18th century through the Harlem Renaissance and into today's luxury fashion. The event promises to shine a spotlight on the enduring impact of Black cultural influences on global fashion trends.

Superfine: Tailoring Black Style is particularly significant as it marks the first time the Costume Institute will focus exclusively on Black design. The exhibition draws inspiration from historian Monica L. Miller's book, Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity, and will see Miller collaborating with Andrew Bolton, the institute's curator in charge. This partnership also marks the first time a Black curator will be organizing a fashion exhibition at the Met.

The exhibition will delve into the hallmarks of dandyism, a style known for its opulent and extravagant dress, which originated in the late 18th century in London and Paris. This fashion trend was notably adopted by Black men, even during periods of enslavement, as a form of sartorial rebellion and self-expression, offering an early form of resistance and self-determination. Exploring the intricate ties between fashion, race, identity, and power, the exhibition will underscore how Black dandyism redefined notions of style and status, transitioning from a period where Black individuals were paralleled to luxury commodities to becoming pioneers in global fashion trends.

In parallel with the exhibition, the annual Met Gala set for the same year will draw on this theme. The event will feature a distinguished panel of co-chairs, including notable style influencers such as actor Colman Domingo, British racing driver Lewis Hamilton, rapper A$AP Rocky, and producer Pharrell Williams. Anna Wintour, Vogue's editor-in-chief, will also collaborate alongside honorary co-chair, basketball icon LeBron James.

This roster of co-chairs signifies a deliberate nod to individuals who have made indelible marks on the fashion scene through their innovative style choices. Domingo is remembered for his striking white cape suit embedded with black Calla lilies at a previous gala, a creation by designer Willy Chavarria. Meanwhile, A$AP Rocky's appearance in a quilted ensemble that drew comparisons to a grandmother's comforter has remained a memorable Met Gala moment. Pharrell Williams currently serves as the men's creative director at Louis Vuitton, a brand co-sponsoring the exhibition, emphasising the ongoing relationship between high fashion and Black cultural aesthetics.

In placing the spotlight on Black dandyism, the Met exhibition and Gala are poised to not only offer a historical perspective but also reflect on contemporary fashion's reliance on and celebration of this influential tradition. Bolton emphasizes that current menswear advancements owe much to Black designers who cleverly interweave traditional dandyism into their modern creations, challenging conventional standards of identity within the fashion industry.

Miller's anticipation for this exhibition paints it as a deep exploration of aesthetic playfulness and transformation. It aims to capture the dual nature of sartorial choices that simultaneously seek both assimilation and distinctiveness, sculpting narratives about individuality and societal roles. She underlines that the history of Black dandyism is a story about metamorphosing from objects of status to trailblazers in self-fashioning, leading contemporary global trends.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.metmuseum.org/press/exhibitions/2025/superfine> - Corroborates the announcement of the 'Superfine: Tailoring Black Style' exhibition, its focus on Black dandyism, and the involvement of Monica L. Miller and Andrew Bolton.
* <https://10magazine.com/theme-2025-met-gala-superfine-tailoring-black-style/> - Supports the theme of the 2025 Met Gala, the historical context of Black dandyism, and the co-chairs of the event.
* <https://www.thenationalnews.com/lifestyle/fashion-beauty/2024/10/10/met-gala-theme-explained-superfine-tailoring-black-style/> - Confirms the exhibition's focus on Black fashion, its historical significance, and the first-time focus on menswear since 2003.
* <https://www.vogue.com/article/superfine-tailoring-black-style-costume-institute-spring-2025-exhibition> - Details the exhibition's inspiration from Monica L. Miller's book, the characteristics of Black dandyism, and the involvement of various collaborators.
* <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/celebrity/latest/a62557419/met-gala-2025-theme-exhibition-chairs-dress-code-streaming/> - Provides information on the co-chairs of the Met Gala, the significance of the exhibition, and the historical context of Black dandyism.
* <https://www.metmuseum.org/press/exhibitions/2025/superfine> - Explains the exhibition's organization around characteristics of Black dandyism and its impact on Black identities in the Atlantic diaspora.
* <https://10magazine.com/theme-2025-met-gala-superfine-tailoring-black-style/> - Highlights the role of fashion as a tool for self-expression and resistance during periods of enslavement.
* <https://www.thenationalnews.com/lifestyle/fashion-beauty/2024/10/10/met-gala-theme-explained-superfine-tailoring-black-style/> - Discusses the transition of Black individuals from being seen as luxury commodities to becoming pioneers in global fashion trends.
* <https://www.vogue.com/article/superfine-tailoring-black-style-costume-institute-spring-2025-exhibition> - Mentions the contemporary designers involved and their integration of historical Black dandyism into their design philosophies.
* <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/celebrity/latest/a62557419/met-gala-2025-theme-exhibition-chairs-dress-code-streaming/> - Details the co-chairs' influence on the fashion scene and their roles in the 2025 Met Gala.