

MET GALA 2019: WHAT IS THE THEME, WHEN IS IT AND WHO IS HOSTING?

The first Monday in May is one of the most significant events in the fashion calendar.



Rihanna attends the 2015 Met Gala in New York City (Getty Images)

On this day, New York's **Metropolitan Museum of Art** hosts its annual Costume Institute Gala where **fashion designers**, artists, models, musicians and actors come together in celebration of art and the unveiling of the fashion institute's blockbuster exhibition. Over the years, the event has served as the perfect platform for the likes of **Gigi Hadid**, **Kim Kardashian** and **Zendaya** to celebrate the *mélange* of creativity.

At least year's catholicism-themed gala, **Rihanna** donned a custom, pearl and crystal-encrusted **Maison Margiela** dress with fla matching mitre hat inspired by a papal regalia. Meanwhile, **Lana Del Rey** wore a feathered headpiece and a cream cape that featured a three-dimensional heart detail pierced with mini daggers.

Aside from the glamour, the Gala has equally resulted in several controversial talking points over the years.

In 2015, the event was accused of racism and **cultural appropriation** accusations following its "China: Through the Looking Glass theme".

Two years later, the New York City Department of Health expressed their anger after footage was shared of celebrities congregating to smoke in the bathroom, violating the city's smoking laws.

And last year, the event was described as "blasphemous" by the **Catholic Church** following its "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination" theme.

In the lead up to this year's Met Gala, here's everything you need to know about the event, from where it is and its theme to who is hosting and more.

What is the Met Gala?

The Met Gala is an annual symphony of art, fashion, film, and music where the most renowned members of artistic industries come together for the museum's latest exhibition launch.

Founded by publicist Eleanor Lambert, the gala – then dubbed "The Party of the Year" – was first held in 1948 to encourage donations from New York's high society for the Costume Institute.

Fast forward to today, and the night's is best known for its theme, be it presented via fashion or interior design. Over the years, the themes have ranged from "Goddess: The Classical Mode" to "Manus x Machina".

The 2019 Met Gala marks the event's 71st anniversary.

The Gala was recreated in the 2018 hit film, *Ocean's 8*, where the likes of Anne Hathaway, Mindy Kaling, Rihanna, and Awkwafina pulled off a dramatic jewellery heist at the museum's Egyptian edifice, the Temple of Dendur.

When is the Met Gala?

This year, the annual gala party is scheduled to take place on 6 May.

As per tradition, the night begins with a cocktail hour involving the likes of **Rihanna**, **Kate Moss**, and **Kendall Jenner**, who will walk the red carpet and up the famous stairs of the museum in front of the paparazzi.

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Attendees are then invited to admire the exhibition during an exclusive first-look before it is opened to the general public. Afterwards, guests are treated to cocktails and a sit-down dinner before hitting the dancefloor.

When does it start?

The red carpet arrivals begin just before 7 pm, with the biggest names in Hollywood and from the fashion elite arriving closer to 8pm.

What is this year's theme?

The Metropolitan Museum of Art recently announced its new inspiration for the Costume Institute for 2019: **'Camp: Notes on Fashion'**.

The theme is inspired by Susan Sontag's 1964 essay 'Notes on 'Camp'', which is widely credited to have introduced the notion of 'Camp' to the mainstream.

'The essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration,' Sontag once explained in *Partisan Review*.

Andrew Bolton, the Costume Institute's curator, admitted the theme has been on his radar for years, and has "become increasingly more mainstream in its pluralities – political camp, queer camp, pop camp, the conflation of high and low, the idea that there is no such thing as originality".

He told the *NYT*: "We are going through an extreme camp moment, and it felt very relevant to the cultural conversation to look at what is often dismissed as empty frivolity but can be actually a very sophisticated and powerful political tool, especially for marginalised cultures."

From influencing fashion and politics, to music and art, Bolton added that since working on the show he has found its influence to be "everywhere, and that all fashion is on some level camp", noting the influences of designers such as Yves Saint Laurent and Marc Jacobs over the years.

"It has gained such currency it has become invisible, and part of my goal is to make it visible again." Meanwhile, Alessandro Michele, creative director of Gucci, told the publication: 'Camp really means the unique ability of combining high art and pop culture; it is not kitsch.'

Who will host the gala?

New York socialite Pat Buckley became chairwoman of the event in 1979, before Vogue US editor-in-chief, **Anna Wintour**, took over in 1995. Wintour is tasked with choosing key figures in popular culture to serve as her co-chairs.

This year, Wintour's co-chairs include **Lady Gaga**, **Harry Styles**, **Serena Williams** and **Alessandro Michele**. It is rumoured that Gaga or Styles will perform on the night.

Previous hosts have include Katy Perry, Rihanna, Amal Clooney and Beyonce.

Who will design the exhibition?

The exhibition will be designed by Belgian scenographer and lighting designer Jan Versweyveld, who is best known for creating David Bowie's "Lazarus", and underwritten by Gucci following Michele's focus celebration of the power of camp since he took the helm of the Italian brand in 2015.

It will be split in two parts. One will look at the origins of camp, which Bolton will explore through Victorian slang, the Stonewall riots, and the use of the word "as a language in the queer community", he explains.

Cara Delevingne attends 2017 Met Gala

Cara Delevingne attends 2017 Met Gala(Getty Images)

The other will focus on contemporary designers' interpretations the word "camp", looking into the creative inspirations from Balenciaga and Miuccia Prada.

Approximately 175 pieces of art including paintings, illustrations, sculpture, and both men's and women's clothes will be on display.

The exhibition will be hosted in the Met's Iris and B Gerald Cantor Exhibition Hall. The location will be of key significance to Met Gala fans as it's where previous exhibitions including "Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty" and "Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons: Art of the In-Between" have been presented.

Who is invited to this year's Met Gala?

While it is unknown who has received an invitation to the event, Wintour has made it clear that US president Donald Trump will not be scoring an invite.

During a panel discussion at journalist Tina Brown's 10th Annual Women in the World Summit on Friday 12 April, Brown questioned Wintour whether there was anything Trump could do to receive an invitation to the upcoming "Camp: Notes on Fashion"-themed event.

"Absolutely nothing," she said to rapturous applause from the audience at the Lincoln Centre in New York City.

The news came days after Wintour said it is important to "take a stand" when deciding which influential women in politics to cover in *Vogue*.

"You have to stand up for what you believe in, and you have to take a point of view," the 69-year-old said.

Wintour has long been a keen Democrat supporter, having hosted fundraisers for former president candidate Hillary Clinton and the 44th president of the US, Barack Obama in recent years.

The 66-year-old also shed light on what she expects from this year's event.

"I haven't decided yet, I have options," she said of her outfit choice. "I'm really hoping that someone will arrive in hiking boots and a backpack."