

CHIC! Fashion in the 17th Century

Treasures from the history of costumes in a spectacular exhibition!

15 July to 16 October 2016

Ladies and gentlemen of the press,

pictures are almost our sole source of information if we want to discover what was “chic” in the 17th century or how fashionable – or unfashionable – members of the upper middle classes in particular dressed themselves. Original items of clothing from that time are extremely rare. One of the world’s most prominent and extensive collections is located in the Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt. The eighteen outer garments once worn by prosperous men and women of Cologne society and manufactured between 1610 and 1675 are among the greatest rarities in the history of costumes and clothing. After over seventy years and the completion of extensive restoration work carried out by the Abegg Foundation in Riggisberg, Switzerland, the exceedingly rare and in part unique items will again be on show in an in-depth special exhibition.

The high-quality show focus on the doublets, bodices, and frock-coats from the HLMD that provide exceptional insights into the development of fashion in the 17th century. The viewer is not only fascinated by their materials – silk and velvet, lace and ribbons – but also by their workmanship. The exhibition moreover features such accessories as collar stays, ruffs, embroidered receptacle, jewellery, and an equally rare stock of shoes. The objects are combined with paintings and prints. The works by portraitists and genre painters like Thomas de Kayser, Gerard ter Borch, Anthonie Palamedesz, John Michael Wright, Pieter Codde, Gottfried von Wedig, Jacques Callot, and many others show how the preserved items of clothing were originally worn. Numerous prominent museums contributed loans to the exhibition. Pictures from the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (Edinburgh), the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum Cologne, the Kölnisches Stadtmuseum, the Städel Museum Frankfurt, the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister Kassel, and the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum Munich supplement the HLMD’s own collection of paintings.

A catalogue will be published on the occasion of the exhibition and accompanied by an extensive accompanying programme.

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