



## The V&A will host the UK's first-ever Schiaparelli exhibition next spring

'Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art' will run from 21 March to 1 November 2026 at the museum's Sainsbury Gallery.

By Elektra Kotsoni



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"We are like kids at Christmas today. We have been holding these news in for months now and we are so excited to share it with you," said Schiaparelli CEO Delphine Bellini at a press conference taking place at the house's historic HQ at 21 Place Vendôme in Paris this morning. The conference was called on the occasion of 'Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art' — a new retrospective set to open at the V&A South Kensington, in March 2026. It will be the first exhibition ever staged in the UK that is devoted to the surrealist house.

"One of the intentions of this exhibition is to highlight the relationship between the house of Schiaparelli and London — Elsa Schiaparelli was highly involved in the location," continued Bellini. "We have been at Harrods since January 2023 but we recently moved to another space, within the prestigious store - one that really speaks to Daniel Roseberry's vision. So this really is the time for us to take over the city of London."

Founded in 1927 by Elsa Schiaparelli, the brand became synonymous with innovation and famous for its metaphysical and artistic themes. Schiaparelli, who had no formal couture training and constructed clothes by draping the fabric directly onto the body, was one of the first designers to introduce the concept of the wrap dress, as well as zippers. She is, perhaps, most famous for her involvement with the surrealist and Dada movements, and collaborations with artists Salvador Dalí, Man Ray, Jean-Michel Frank and Giacometti, among others.

The couture house shut after struggling financially following WWII, before being revived in 2007, when it was bought by Tod's chair Diego Della Valle. However, the first modern couture collection,





comprising 18 outfits designed by Cristian Lacroix, was not presented until June 2013. That was a one-off, with Marco Zanini taking over the following season, only to be replaced by Bertrand Guyon in 2015. Zanini and Guyon's collections received positive reviews, however real commercial success came only after current creative director Daniel Roseberry took to the helm in 2019.

Two hundred objects spanning the house's history will make up the exhibition. These will include the famous Skeleton and Tears dresses that already belong to the V&A, along with a hat shaped to look like an upside-down shoe, all conceived in collaboration with Dalí. Artworks by Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau and Man Ray will also be on display.

"The response from collectors and other museums has been unprecedented. We have been able to secure some of the best loans in terms of fine arts that we have ever had in a fashion exhibition before," noted V&A head of exhibitions Daniel Slater. "That speaks to the level of respect the house of Schiaparelli has within the art community and Elsa Schiaparelli's impact on the arts."

One could argue there has never been a more relevant time for a Schiaparelli retrospective. Roseberry dedicated the Winter 2025/2026 couture collection he presented on Monday, "to [the] period when life and art were on the precipice: to the sunset of elegance and to the end of the world as we knew it", hence drawing parallels between pre-WWII Paris and the state of our world today. Worth a visit this spring — hopefully nothing changes too much until then.

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