

DA VINCI MODE

Modes européennes à la Renaissance

Discover Renaissance fashion through outfits and accessories created by students from the Centre-Val de Loire region !

The Da Vinci Mode exhibition is the fruit of an educational project that took part throughout the 2021-2022 academic year in Centre-Val de Loire region, which brought together pupils, students, and (young) researchers from diverse backgrounds.

Around 60 students, from CAP (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle/Vocational qualification) to Masters, enrolled in 5 training establishments in Centre-Val de Loire region worked with their teachers to create 10 outfits and accessories inspired by 16th century European fashion.

At the crossroads of research, teaching, and creation, this project was driven by the Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance (Centre for Higher Renaissance Studies) as part of the PatMAT Campus (Patrimoines, Métiers d'Art et Tourisme/Heritage, Craft Professions and Tourism). It was able to draw on support from numerous partners such as Maison Roze and the R2V2 association, which promotes Leonardo da Vinci's ideas. It also received financial support from the Centre-Val de Loire DRAC (Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs) and the Centre-Val de Loire

Partenaires / Partners

Organismes

Association R2V2
Château de La Ferté-Imbault
Château royal d'Amboise
Maison Roze

Établissements de formation

Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR) – Tours
Lycée Balzac d'Alembert – Issoudun
Lycée Choiseul – Tours
Lycée François Clouet – Tours
Lycée Paul Gauguin – Orléans

In conjunction with:



Direction régionale
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Fashion between 1450-1600

In terms of fashion, there was a seismic shift between the 15th and 16th centuries. In fact, during this period there appeared a new relationship with physical appearance that influenced the inspirations for clothing and the cut of garments.

Dressing in the Renaissance

During the Renaissance the idealisation and repression of the human body coexisted. Clothing hid the figure while also suggesting it. From the 16th century, clothes became more close-fitting to hug the body and show it off. Certain tricks, like slashes (slits), allowed the garments underneath to be seen. The cut of clothing evolved according to gender. For men, clothing became shorter to show off the legs. Conversely, the female body found itself hidden and constrained by complex means.

For the working class, who spent their days outside, clothing had a functional use. It needed to protect them from the cold and rain. Therefore, outfits were made up of several layers, which were added in winter or removed in high temperatures. Men wore long shirts made from hemp fabric, 'braies' (wide trousers) or stockings made from woollen fabric or serge, overlaid with short robes cinched with a belt like a blouse, 'cotte' (a sort of tunic) or doublet (a sort of jerkin). Sometimes, a woollen coat would complete the ensemble. On their feet they wore 'sabots' (simple wooden shoes), sandals, gaiters, or ankle boots. Women wore a shirt, a 'cotte' and an overdress. However, this description represents an ideal, sometimes the poorest wore rags.

Clothing at court, a real tool of social distinction, became more sophisticated. Henceforth, there was a play on the effects of texture and colours between the different layers of clothing. The colour palette became more subtle while the range of fabrics diversified. For men, the doublet, the stockings, and the over-stockings (a garment that went from the belt to the knee) superseded the Medieval 'houppelande' (an ample and long garment). A hat completed the outfit. As for women, their clothing was characterised by a subtle layering. Over the long tunic shirt, they put on a farthingale (a petticoat made rigid by hoops) on which was worn a first dress or a skirt. The chest was constrained by a corset (cinched undergarment that slimmed the waist) reinforced by whalebones (rods). The sleeves were overlaid onto the chest with aglets (cords with metallic ends). Over this ensemble there came the "real" dress. Finally, among other accessories, ladies at court wore elaborate hairstyles.

European trends

During the Renaissance, European fashions in the first half of the 16th century were influenced by Italy. As a matter of fact, the cultural cross-fertilisation that followed the Italian expeditions of Charles VIII (1483-1498) and François Ier (1515-1547) extended to clothing habits. Sleeves with slits made their appearance in France, which led to a certain appetite for rich fabrics and bright colours. Men's shirts and stockings were often made of silk, whereas the coats were often lined with fur. Doublets showed a prominent codpiece (an article of clothing that covered the genitals), padded and tied to the breeches.

In addition, these first decades were marked by a rivalry between 'French' and 'English' fashion that culminated at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the meeting between the rival courts of Henry VIII (1509-1547) and François Ier. In England, the fashion was then oversized and heavy garments. Before 1550, wool was the principal fabric used. After that, during the Elizabethan era (1558-1603), clothing was much more brightly coloured, elaborate and flamboyant. The female figure was more clearly outlined thanks to the corset. Under the Spanish influence, the 'fraise', a sort of small ruff, experienced a significant surge in popularity.

From the middle of the 16th century, Spanish fashion dictated clothing tastes throughout Europe. With the Catholic Counter Reformation, clothing became more austere and the silhouette more rigid. Edicts were issued that regulated the use of luxury fabrics in women's outfits. Sombre colours gained a foothold, enhanced with golden embroidery for the better-off.

The fabrics

Wool cloth, very commonly used in the Middle Ages, was replaced among the wealthiest by costlier fabrics like velvet, satin, coloured taffetas, furs and lace.

However, the Renaissance was above all the age of gold and silk. Previously imported from Italy, it was henceforth produced in France for economic reasons. In the 15th century, Louis XI encouraged the installation of silk manufacturers in certain towns, first Lyon, then Tours. The first royal silk manufacturer was installed here in 1470. In Touraine, this activity experienced its heyday between 1545 and 1550. Almost half the inhabitants of Tours made a living from the silk business: weavers, dyers, trimmings manufacturers, ribbon makers, embroiderers, merchants. In 1546, there were 8,000 weaving looms in Tours. It must be said that the market flourished thanks to the presence of the Court in the Loire Valley. At the end of the century, when the court distanced itself, and the Wars of Religion raged, this eventually doomed, at least temporarily, the Touraine silk manufacturers. Today, Maison Roze, the last Tours silk manufacturer, continues this heritage.

The art of the tailor

The art of the tailor requires a wide range of know-how based on arithmetic calculations and the rules governing the adjustment of sizes. It was in fact mathematical knowledge that made it possible to fit to the body's proportions. Before the appearance and generalisation of the metric system, the calculations were made systematically using fractions to measure the fabric's width and length. From a base unit, the 'ell', the Castillian yard or the Florentine arm, the lengths of which differed from one region to the next, the practitioner used divisions in half, thirds, sixths, eighths or more. Without a homogenous unit of measurement, the acceleration of fashions and the circulation of goods required a mastery of conversion tables.

The creation of patterns, technical designs of a garment, required the ability to create artistic abstractions to scale. The art of measurement and tracing was a prefiguration to the fabric cutting, putting together and the assembly of the pieces.

Recreating historic outfits

Since the 1970s in France, numerous historians have established the legitimacy of research into the history of fashion and its importance in Renaissance material culture. In other countries, for example England, specialists have worked from diverse iconographic sources to recreate models for the period. Associations such as the Tudor Tailor or the Globe theatre, produce extremely high quality reconstructions, which contribute to the success of certain historic series such as *Wolf Hall* (BBC Two, 2015). In France, the recreation of historically sourced Renaissance outfits is less well developed and there are still few specialist associations.

The recreation of 'Renaissance' outfits is a delicate undertaking that involves a certain amount of guesswork. It requires drawing on varied sources: paintings, miniatures, engravings, sculptures, ceramics, archive texts from the 16th century, museum pieces and couture textbooks. The patterns that served as a basis for the *Da Vinci Mode* project outfits were thus created from rigorous scientific research undertaken jointly by historians and costume designers.

Training establishments in Centre-Val de Loire

University of Tours – Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance (Centre for Higher Renaissance Studies) (Tours) **Renaissance Culture and Heritage Masters**

Created in 1956, the Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR) (Centre for Higher Renaissance Studies) is a training and research centre dedicated to the study of the Renaissance in Europe. Several research programmes have been established around digital humanities, scientific humanities and heritage. Today, this specialisation enables the CESR to offer six routes to Masters level.

The Renaissance Culture and Heritage Masters enables students to work with a diversity of approaches to, and knowledge about the Renaissance period. Multi-disciplinary, it is closely aligned with the CESR's international level axes and scientific programmes.

Lycée Général et Technologique Choiseul (Tours) **DN MADE Mode (National Diploma in Fashion), research and creation speciality: fashion collection, materials and communications**

The Lycée Choiseul in Tours has 1,454 students from 15-16 years old to National Diploma level. It also houses a Centre-Val de Loire adult education centre.

The National Diploma in Fine Arts, Crafts and Design (DN MADE) enables students to gain a global understanding of the entire creation, development and communications process in fashion design. The 3-year pathway results in a diploma equivalent to a bachelor's degree. It aims to train designers, artisan designers and professionals working in the wider field of fashion. The diploma is open to all degree students who have followed or developed skills and knowledge in the fields of fashion and design.

Lycée Polyvalent Balzac d'Alembert (Issoudun) **Bac Professionnel Métiers du Cuir - maroquinerie (Vocational Baccalaureate Leather Craft – Leatherwork)**

The Lycée Balzac d'Alembert has around 750 students from 15-16 years old to Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (Advanced Vocational Diploma). In addition to a general and technical section, the establishment offers several vocational courses. It also houses the Berry adult education centre.

The Bac Professionnel Métiers du cuir – maroquinerie (Vocational Baccalaureate Leather Craft – Leatherwork) runs over 3 years and includes work experience in a business. Also open for apprenticeships, this course enables students to learn how to create leatherwork pieces (handbags, satchels, purses...) from fashion sketches or trends. It leads to professions such as prototypist or fitter. From Autumn 2023, the Lycée Balzac d'Alembert will offer a Brevet de Technicien Supérieur Métiers de la Mode (Advanced Vocational Diploma in Fashion) in footwear and leatherwork.

Lycée Professionnel François Clouet (Tours)

Bac Professionnel Métiers de la Mode – vêtements (Vocational Baccalaureate Fashion Careers) - clothing

The Lycée François Clouet has around 700 students from 15-16 years old to 18 years old. The establishment offers several vocational course options in customer relations, health, entertainment, administration management and fashion. It also houses a Centre-Val de Loire adult education centre.

The Bac Professionnel Métiers de la Mode runs over 3 years and includes periods of training in a business (22 weeks). This course enables students to learn how to create 'professionally manufactured' garments (investment, pattern making, cutting and production). It leads to careers such as working in a studio or a design office. It is possible to continue with the Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (Advanced Vocational Diploma) in Métiers de la Mode (Fashion Careers).

Lycée Professionnel Paul Gauguin (Tours)

Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (CAP) Métiers de la Mode - vêtement fluu (Vocational Fashion qualification - deconstructed fashion) | Bac Professionnel Métiers de la Mode – vêtements (Vocational Baccalaureate Fashion Careers) - clothing

The Lycée Paul Gauguin trains around 900 students in 6 course areas, with 5 CAP, 9 vocational Baccalaureates and 3 post-Bac courses.

In 2 years, the CAP Métiers de la Mode - vêtement fluu (Vocational Fashion qualification – deconstructed fashion) prepares students to an expert level in the 'fluid' technique to create supple, deconstructed garments, as opposed to tailored clothing, which is more structured and closer fitting.

Bac Professionnel Métiers de la Mode – Vêtement graduates work in small batch fashion productions and supervise large-scale production runs. They work in studios and design offices. They are in charge of producing garment prototypes and operate at each stage of the manufacturing chain.