

Met Gala 2021: first Monday in September?

Mary Atkinson reflects on her favourite looks from this year's Met Gala

On 13th September fashion's biggest event, The Met Gala, finally made its long-awaited return following cancellation in 2020 and postponement in 2021. The Met Gala is famously known for falling upon the first Monday in May but, instead, in this disrupted timeline, it fell in September. This year's Gala was a much smaller, intimate affair, the guest list a third of its usual size.

The Gala is one of the most exclusive events in the world

The annual gala is held to raise money for New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. Tickets are rumoured to be around \$30,000 apiece, with a table costing around \$270,000. A large markup from the \$1,000 per ticket price tag from the mid-1990s, when *Vogue's* formidable Editor-in-Chief Anna Wintour took over the event as chairman. The Gala is widely regarded as one of the most exclusive events in the world, with Wintour approving each guest.

The 2021 theme was "In America: A Lexicon of

Fashion" with Wintour, Timothee Chalamet, Billie Eilish, Amanda Gorman and Naomi Osaka acting as this year's hosts.

However, despite the open-ended theme, it was one many guests didn't conform to, perhaps the most American act possible. Despite this, there were still many looks which impressed alongside important acts and statements, all made through the mode of fashion.

Here are a few of my favourite moments from fashion's biggest event of the year.

Nikkie Tutorials pays tribute to Marsha P Johnson

In perhaps one of the most underrated looks of the night, make-up artist and influencer Nikkie Tutorials, also known as Nikkie de Jager, paid a beautiful tribute to trans activist Marsha P. Johnson, a prominent figure from Stonewall in 1969. De Jager paid homage to Johnson on her Met debut through a beautiful ocean green tulle mer-

maid gown. She referenced an image of Johnson herself by accessorising with a floral headpiece. At the bottom of de Jager's stunning gown, a sash was attached reading the words "pay it no mind", said to be Johnson's response to those against the LGBTQ+ liberation movement. Her look fit the American theme perfectly, paying tribute to a trans-American icon, prominent not only to de Jager herself who came out as transgender in January 2020 but to American and LGBTQ+ history as a whole. De Jager's look was a fitting example of impactful high fashion couture, designed by Amsterdam based designer Edwin Oudshoorn.

Lewis Hamilton platforms young, black designers

Formula 1 driver Lewis Hamilton and Met Gala regular brought more than just looks to this year's event. The seven-time world champion buying a table to showcase and support young and emerging black designers, demonstrating his commitment to diversity and inclusivity in all areas of his life, just months after

founding The Hamilton Commission and Mission 44 in F1. Hamilton brought along designers Kenneth Nicholson (whom he was dressed by), Edwin Thompson and Jason Rembert; as well as his stylist Law Roach, (an icon within the industry, most famously known for styling Zendaya), Kehlani, Miles Chamley-Watson and Sha'Carri Richardson. Hamilton told *Vogue*, "for this theme I wanted to create something that was meaningful and would spark a conversation".

A perfect ode to American fashion

CL and Blackpink's Rose become the first K-Pop stars to attend the Met Gala

With the rise of K-Pop globally, it was perhaps surprising that 2021 was the first Met Gala to host a K-Pop artist. The former leader of 2NE1 and fashion darling CL attended dressed in Moschino and Alexander Wang; while Rose, a YSL ambassador, attended as the guest of their image director Anthony Vaccarello. CL's look commanded particular attention online, becoming the 5th most tweeted about all night. The star was dressed in a Moschino denim cape, a typically American textile. The piece drew comparisons to the traditional Korean Hanbok, especially in the knot, paired with a pair of Alexander Wang 'tighty whities' underneath. A perfect ode to American fashion, which reminded many of 90s Calvin Klein adverts.

CL's look, however, had further intricacies, as seen in her sculptural hair, inspired by a headpiece worn traditionally by Queens such as Empress Myeongseong. The K-Pop icon's look perfectly encapsulated the American theme while showcasing her own culture.

