



The 2024 Met Gala will take place on Monday 6th May in New York, celebrating the opening of the Costume Institute's annual exhibition 'Sleeping Beauties: Re-Awakening Fashion'. The dress code for this year's event will be 'The Garden in Time', inspired by JG Ballard's short story of the same name.

Formally known as the Costume Institute Gala or the Met Ball, The Met Gala is an annual fundraising event for the benefit of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in New York City. The event traces its origins back to 1948 when publicist Eleanor Lambert organised the first-ever Costume Institute Benefit at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to encourage donations to the newly founded Costume Institute.

Over the years, the Met Gala has evolved into one of the most prominent and star-studded events in the fashion calendar,

attracting celebrities, designers and influential figures from various industries. Each year, the Gala revolves around a specific theme corresponding to

the Costume Institute's exhibition, inviting attendees to interpret it creatively through their fashion choices.

Ticket prices for the Gala are reportedly sky-high, with individual tickets costing tens of thousands of dollars and tables costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Additionally, many guests make substantial donations during the event. While it's difficult to pinpoint an exact figure for how much the Met Gala is worth, Vogue Business reported that the 2023 Gala "raised almost \$22 million — another record for the event", with WWD reporting that "The Met Gala generated nearly \$1 billion in media impact value".

With an event of such a scale, a little controversy is to be expected. The Gala provides a platform for an endless sleuth of media content including global news coverage and X (Twitter) memes.

Perhaps the most controversial moment in Met Gala history goes to Kim Kardashian, who wore Marilyn Monroe's "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" dress from 1962 to the 2022 event. After speculation online, Kardashian stepped onto the carpet in the extremely delicate piece pulled from Ripley's Museum.

Kim wore the real dress for just a few minutes on the red carpet and changed into a replica before entering the actual event. Her laborious efforts to wear the dress for less than 15 minutes certainly didn't go unnoticed, with the internet questioning whether it was even necessary. To fit into Marilyn's dress Kim went through some questionable weight loss measures, which she nonchalantly boasted about on the carpet.

The true impact of the Met Gala is multifaceted and subjective. While it serves as a powerful platform for celebrating creativity and showcasing the artistry of fashion, it can perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards and consumerism, potentially contributing to societal pressures and inequalities.

The Gala's extravagant displays of wealth and glamour can reinforce exclusivity and elitism, alienating those who don't conform to traditional beauty norms. The event's emphasis on opulence and celebrity culture can also fuel materialistic values, promoting a distorted perception of success and self-worth.

Ultimately, the true impact of the Met Gala is nuanced and open to interpretation. While it undoubtedly serves as a beacon of creativity, it's essential to critically examine its implications and strive for inclusivity, diversity and authenticity within the fashion industry and society at large.

words by: Olivia Griffin

design by: Alanya Smith