

# Costume Society of America Presents: “Kardashian, the Monroe Gown, and Caring for Historic Garments”

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*The lively discussion “Kardashian, the Monroe Gown, and Caring for Historic Garments,” hosted by Costume Society of America, is available on YouTube.*

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, October 5, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Kim Kardashian appeared at the bottom of the steps at the Met Gala wearing Marilyn Monroe's famous “Happy Birthday dress” the world was shocked. Curators, conservators, and archivists, however, were appalled. In early September of 2022, over 250 viewers watched an online conversation hosted by [Costume Society of America](#): “Kardashian, the Monroe Gown, and Caring for Historic Garments.” The lively and informative discussion was led by Graham Wetzberger, CSA's Vice President of Technology, who spoke with CSA members and costume professionals Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell, Katherine Hill McIntyre, Kevin L. Jones, Deborah Miller, and Elise Yvonne Rousseau.

The panel was joined by a very special guest, Scott Fortner, well-known Marilyn Monroe historian and collector. Fortner commented, “I was thrilled to be part of the Costume Society of America’s panel to provide facts and history about the gown, and to further discuss these important topics. Before and after images dated April 21 and June 12 (52 days apart) of Marilyn Monroe’s ‘Happy Birthday Mr. President’ gown verify undeniably that the dress was damaged after having been worn to the Met Gala on May 2. Fabric is pulled and frayed around the zipper, crystals are missing, and a section of material was completely torn away from the right shoulder strap. All the while, despite photo evidence to the contrary, Ripley’s and Kim Kardashian and her family continue to claim the dress was not damaged.”

Fortner continues, “This iconic fashion artifact, originally worn by one of the world’s most beloved stars of the silver screen, was desecrated for an eight-minute walk on a red carpet for publicity. Due to various factors, including the fact the original fabric is no longer available, the gown cannot be repaired or restored. It is permanently damaged. There needed to be a serious conversation about recognizing the importance of historic garments and their historic influence and impact, along with a discussion around standards for care and preservation. Marilyn’s gown can never be repaired, yet hopefully through informing and education we can influence decisions in future discussions about important historic garments being worn.”

You can now watch “Kardashian, the Monroe Gown, and Caring for Historic Garments” on

[Costume Society of America's YouTube page](#). Click here to watch the entire conversation:

<https://youtu.be/ybyud2oXALE> and you can watch excerpts at the following links:

- Our panelists share their initial reactions to the incident: <https://youtu.be/k5FHWuhNHtk>.
- Scott Fortner gives some historical background on the garment: <https://youtu.be/6DoR1unuRMo>.
- FIDM Curator Kevin L. Jones, museum collections consultant Katherine Hill McIntyre, and historian and author Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell discuss how the nude aspect of the dress was used by Kardashian for shock value: <https://youtu.be/wuNKbKGgE3E>.
- Appraiser Deborah Miller discusses how the incident has affected the value and legacy of the dress: <https://youtu.be/33LSjSpzOPw>.
- Jones reflects on the differences in the care of museum vs. private objects: <https://youtu.be/XTNOKnwr20I>.
- Miller and Chrisman-Campbell discuss how Ripley's Believe It Or Not has used the Monroe Gown for publicity purposes: <https://youtu.be/yF9cUEM6S8c>.
- Conservator Elise Yvonne Rousseau discusses the condition issues with the Monroe Gown: <https://youtu.be/1KUqsFr1Su4>.

#### About Costume Society of America

Costume Society of America (CSA) fosters an understanding of appearance and dress practices of people across the globe through research, education, preservation, and design. Our network of members studies the past, examines the present, and anticipates the future of clothing and fashion. Learn more at [costumesocietyamerica.com](http://costumesocietyamerica.com).

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