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The History of Fashion
A18_ 94412_ _RM4

MUSEUM OF HONORÈ BALZAC

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LaSalle College
November 2, 2018

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This museum will have a section showcasing the French author Honoré De Balzac. He came from a bourgeois family from humble beginnings and believed in the power of dressing up. Although critics would point out his clothes weren't properly fitted and that he was sloppy, he knew what it meant to be elegant as he would describe in detail in his novels how an elegant man and lady should dress. He worked his way up from the middle class in his writings, creating many famous novels as well giving himself the aristocratic title "De". The section dedicated to Balzac will resemble the way he dressed and how he lived.

For the décor of the museum the main setting will be Balzac's study room where his writing took place. The way the room will be set up as a baroque classism style as that was the trend in the 1700's inspired by Roman classism. Furniture will be proportioned with defined shapes and curved wood for the arms and legs. Plants and paintings of still art will be placed in the room. Within the building there will be wooden beams for structure. Into the 18th century France moved to a rocco style, so the room will have 3 walls for privacy when before rocco all the rooms were connected excluding them privacy. Even though the rocco style took on the shape of a rock and sea shell shape for architecture as well as furniture, Balzac's study was still mainly in baroque style as his windows were square shape and his furniture remained symmetrical. Some of those designs carry out today as we see curves of the shells are still popular in windows but also the square windows hold a dominance in most households, along with furniture still contains either style.

Once you enter the room to the back you will see a long tall stained-glass window behind a cushioned patterned fabric arm chair and a wooden desk. On top of the wooden desk is his black steel typewriter and a coffee cup filled with fake black coffee. Balzac wet through limitless amounts of coffee during his work. Also, on the desk is papers and a goose quill pen with an ink holder for his rough copies. Beside the window is a bookshelf filled with books as Balzac had a library in his home, the bookshelf will be a sample of that. On the wall beside the bookshelf will be his black marble fireplace. The wall paper in the room will be red with gold engravings as well as red curtains by the window. In the room will be a mannequin structured after Balzac with dirty fingers as his hands often went unwashed as well he often neglected the care for his clothes. The mannequin will be place by the fire place.

On the mannequin he will be dressed in the style of a dandy, which is to imitate the aristocratic society who were noblemen and women. To provide realism the mannequin will have a white dirty shirt front with jewels sewn into it, with a grey waistcoat over the shirt front and then a black redingote on top. Diamond rings will be placed on the dirty fingers, so the mannequin can reflect his neglect for hygiene. In his hand he will be holding his signature cane that is brown with a golden head and studded with turquoise. Then the bottoms he will be dressed in black pantaloons that loop under his brown pointed shoes. Then a tall black top hat on his head. Even though he didn't come from high society he believed that by imitating high society it would lead him up the social ranks. In the rest of the room will be decorated with a variety of his clothes. His dressing gown will be encased hanging by his desk as that's what he wore while he worked. All the clothing will be encased with one of them having the various styles of his gloves. Then the other with his waist coats which all had big gold buttons. One waist coat is navy, two quilted white and a black one as well with a walnut coloured redingote. In the case with the pants it will hold black cashmere trousers and steel grey pantaloons. To finish the room will be documents planted by all the items explaining the successes and failures in his novels, his plan to own 365 outfits, his coffee intake, his birth in Tours France and how he moved to Paris in his 20's. It will include his love interests including his marriage to Madame Hanska and his death in 1850.

You will be able to see the dandy style is very much similar in today's trends, but with a modern take. The look for the sophisticated man now is a button up dress shirt in any range of colour with vest similar to the waist coats and a suit jacket placed on top. While high society is still going on as well taking on the appearance of the aristocratic society. The tail coat we have today is similar in the structure in the redingote with the short waist in the front and the length of the tail coats in the back. The redingote is also structured similar to the tuxedo as it is lined longer in the front and back and the redingote wasn't always short at the waist. Both of these outfits contain vests as well. Back then they had thick collars with their shirt fronts or coats and the collars are now replaced with ties and bowties. The pointed shoes are now a trend only for women, where the men's shoes are more curved around the edges.

The museum will reflect the trends in society in showing the way Balzac dressed and the décor of his home. A lot of today's fashion is inspired from France as you see similarities in the décor and dress

with modernized details. Fashion has been going on through the decades always with a lower and higher class status. Even with being lower class you can usually find the means to appear higher class. This is something Balzac attempted as well as many of us do today to further our careers.

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