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Melania's hat, shorts in winter and other eye-catching looks

20 January 2025

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Reuters

Hats have long been a staple of First Lady inauguration dressing
Inauguration Day is all about pomp, pageantry - and pictures.

The clothes worn on this world stage - the colour, cut and details - take the spotlight.
From Melania's striking hat to Usha's fashion forward overcoat, here's a roundup of
some of the day's most memorable looks.

Melania Trump



The first lady's serious look was in stark contrast to her 2017 inauguration outfit

Melania Trump kicked off Inauguration Day with an outfit that has all the hallmarks of her favoured first lady style: sharply cut, with spiked heels and a dramatic flourish via the headgear. It is simultaneously serious and chic.

The designer chosen by the 54-year-old first lady for the inauguration is the subject of fascination – and, again, an opportunity to transmit a message. That the former model chose New York designer Adam Lippes and a coordinating hat by Eric Javits, was a marked shift of gear.

She may have worn the American fashion designer Ralph Lauren to her husband's last inauguration, but much more frequently turns to the big European houses. Plus, unlike Lauren, neither Lippes nor Javits are such household, starry names.

In a statement, Lippes said the look had been hand-stitched in New York "by some of America's finest craftsmen." Fittingly, Lippes recently opened a new boutique in Palm Beach, close to the Trump's home, Mar-a-Lago, or the "southern White House".

Very much on-brand is the price tag: Melania Trump is known for her extravagant tastes – many of her outfits while previously first lady had price tags running well into the thousands – and Lippes' dresses, for example, go from £1,000 up to over £7,500.

- Melania Trump, enigmatic first lady who might do it differently this time
- What lies ahead for Trump family now?

It also speaks to her love of hats. The brim is wide enough and the contrast between the cream ribbon and navy hat big enough that it draws the eyes upwards – even if it obscures the eyes of the wearer.

There was a loadedness to its incongruity. As celebrity stylist and fashion expert Lauren Rothman points out, "a boater is traditionally a summer hat. It's traditionally worn by, you know, in Venice, right?" Not in a freezing cold DC.

"This was just such a spectacular use of signalling and blending Palm Beach and DC with international global fashion aesthetic, while understanding the traditional and political power that is also necessary for your look to communicate," she said.



Melania Trump's ball gown had striking similarities to the vanilla silk dress she wore at Trump's first inauguration. The first lady made an equally dramatic appearance at the first inaugural ball wearing a full-length gown with a thick black ribbon-like strip, echoed in a choker-style necklace.

From a distance, the inky squiggle could easily remind viewers of the signature that Melania's husband had earlier signed on a flurry of executive orders.

Her black-and-white look was echoed in the classic tux worn by her husband, 24 years her senior.

Ivanka Trump



Reuters

First daughter Ivanka Trump, 43, matched Melania's serious colour palette with an emerald green skirt suit with a matching hat.

The hourglass silhouette – the cinched in waist and fuller skirt – felt pointed and intentional. It was reminiscent of Dior's glamorous New Look, which ushered in a new era in fashion after World War Two.

The asymmetry of the cut, however, sounded a note of continuation: Ivanka wore a white Oscar de la Renta jacket with an asymmetric handkerchief hem for inauguration day in 2017.

The first daughter's outfit feels like it could be harking back to the work of Adolfo Sardiña, a Cuban-born American fashion designer who started out as an apprentice milliner at Bergdorf Goodman in the late 1940s and went on to be known for his spectacular hats, which were worn by Nancy Reagan to both of her husband's inaugurations.

For Lauren Rothman, the look had a very international flavour. "We're seeing a little bit of Princess Kate style," she said.

It speaks to the idea of a Trump dynasty, in a way more akin to royalty than a democracy. "Her look is really a signal that indicates her strong understanding of the political kingdom," she said.

Yet for all of its regality, Rothman also identifies an accessibility. She has clients already texting her asking, 'how can I get that outfit in another color?' And I've already sent a few links."

Jill and Joe Biden



Reuters/Getty

Former first lady Jill Biden, 73, yet again wore a purplish blue from head to toe - a colour that has come to represent the administration of the last four years.

At her husband's swearing-in ceremony in 2021, Jill wore a blue coat created by designer/founder Alexandra O'Neill for the New York-based luxury womenswear label Markarian. It reportedly quintupled sales for the designer. It was custom made and embroidered with Swarovski crystals, plus had a pandemic-era matching face mask.

Both Bidens have chosen to dress in clothes again by Ralph Lauren, whose designs and back story are often seen as synonymous with the American dream.

It comes as no surprise: Jill has worn his clothes throughout the last four years and was at his fashion show in the Hamptons last September.

Her husband recently awarded Lauren the Presidential Medal of Freedom - the nation's highest civilian honour - and in the process made him the first fashion designer to receive the distinction.

Lauren suits have been a fitting uniform of choice for the outgoing president. On the White House website as he leaves office, it sums up his presidency: "for all Americans, a country for all Americans, a future for all Americans."

You could argue his Lauren suits are also designed to not leave any Americans out – never straying too far from classic blue and classic lines.

Usha Vance



The lawyer and wife of Vice President-elect JD Vance, Usha Vance's most high profile appearance to date was speaking the 2024 Republican National Convention. For the occasion, the 39-year-old chose a cobalt blue off-the-shoulder Badgley Mischka dress,

which retails for \$495 (£400). According to a spokesperson speaking to industry website WWD, Vance must have bought the garment herself as the brand wasn't consulted.

But, there were clear signs of a pivot to more high-fashion choices. She chose an Oscar de la Renta overcoat with a strikingly fashion-forward detail: a scarf intentionally tucked into her waist-height belt. Is it a sign of a more stylised image to come as Vance takes her place as the second lady?

I would absolutely label her as one to watch," said Lauren Rothman, "because she is the newest member into the spotlight, she is receiving help – and it's working." Plus: "her energy indicates a comfort in it. Like, I was ready for this."

She sees an authenticity too: "It doesn't look like a costume. It looks like she's having fun." She cited an optimism in the choice of pink, where many of the other figures in Trump's universe went for more sombre colours.

- [How 'spirit guide' Usha Vance supported JD Vance's meteoric rise](#)





AP

The second lady stunned in a sequined blue evening dress at the first inaugural ball

John Fetterman



Getty Images

Senator John Fetterman wore shorts and a hoodie to the inauguration

Suits, ties, shoulder pads, pearls; these are the traditional attire of inauguration day. But John Fetterman, the 55-year-old US senator from Pennsylvania since 2023, has never been one to stick to traditional dress codes – he wore a Carhartt hoodie with a picture of a bow-tie printed onto it for the White House Correspondents' Dinner last year.

Still, if tradition didn't mean Fetterman opted for a pair of trousers, you would have thought the weather might – temperatures in Washington were so low that the ceremony was moved inside for the first time since 1985. Yet Fetterman showed up coatless, in only a hoodie, and wearing shorts.

It is fitting – Fetterman is all about bucking convention – he was, after all, the first Senate Democrat to meet with Trump since the election.

The Tech executives and their partners



The "tech bros" have been undergoing some interesting style shifts of late. Most recently in Elon Musk's case, a Belstaff jacket drew the internet's eyes, while Mark Zuckerberg's style makeover has seen him transform from "normcore" grey T-shirts and inconspicuous jeans to luxury labels, his own brand of slogan T-shirts with Greek and Latin phrases and million pound watches.

For Lauren Rothman, there was "a sleekness" about the way they looked, "and they also sort of showed up as a squad, sunglasses and suits."

But, she said, "the most significant part of how the tech giants showed up was in their significant others. Mark Zuckerberg's wife Priscilla Chan wore "the classic DC look: a short statement necklace and a buttoned up coat".

The author and fiancée to Jeff Bezos, Lauren Sanchez, by contrast to both the darkly suited tech entrepreneurs surrounding her, as well as to Chan, wore a startling white Alexander McQueen suit with pointed, padded shoulders. Underneath was a lingerie-inspired look that has already drawn some criticism online for a perceived lack of appropriateness on a state occasion.

Hillary Clinton



Getty Images

At Bill Clinton's 1997 inauguration, Hillary Clinton wore a candy floss-pink outfit by Oscar de la Renta. And to her husband's first swearing-in ceremony in 1993 she went for an unusually busy look - a checked suit and a blue velour hat.

In 2017 at Trump's first inauguration, she wore a white and cream Lauren pantsuit - the outfit that clearly makes her feel most battle-ready and professional.

In marked contrast to her previous palette, the 77-year-old went for a grave navy this time round. On her coat there was a single brooch.

Its details remain unclear but brooches are often the site of sartorial messaging and Clinton knows it. She recently wore a bald eagle brooch - a national symbol - with the US flag on it for the funeral of Jimmy Carter.

The look was by British sustainable designer Stella McCartney, a move that feels like it could be aimed at the incoming administration's climate plans.

Trump has confirmed plans to once again pull the US out of the Paris agreement, which tries to mitigate the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

Donald Trump



What the incoming president chose to wear was never going to stray too far from his norm of navy suits.

According to Lauren Rothman, "we're still seeing, you know, a pretty simple suit" but she said the big difference and a "huge signal that is different, is in his tie."

"It's really ultimately a mix of red and blue, which creates a purple effect.

"The more muted tie kind of signals in my world, I don't need to scream. I don't need to project. I have arrived."

Another big point of interest, particularly on Inauguration Day, is where the president gets his suits.

It is unclear where the 78-year-old's suit came from, but as he used his inauguration speech to talk about increasing American industry, it would be fitting from him to wear an American suit, menswear expert Derek Guy pointed out.

"American manufacturing is on the decline, especially in clothing. Some of the factories that made clothes for previous inaugurations have since shuttered. It would be nice to see more support for American manufacturing, even if it's only symbolic," he said.



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