

## Venetian masks' Research

Masks are used to disguise, confuse, protect, characterize, and give status. They're simple or elaborate made from all range of materials from common items to precious jewels. Masks are used in all aspects of art related areas such as drama, dance, or as an exhibit of art. Venetian masks in particular vary widely in their realism or abstraction, their use of symbols and their ornamentation.

Historically, masquerading was a shared practice amongst Venetians, regardless of whether they were wealthy, destitute bold or even shy. Gamblers, prostitutes and aristocrats wore masks to remain anonymous. The Venice environment, because of its crowded city conditions, didn't really allow for much seclusion, privacy or individual anonymity. Therefore the 'mask' became something for many to depart from the mainstream life. By wearing a mask the person could act like a stranger, revealing their real persona, which they normally keep to themselves to avoid being judged by others.

Although the use of masks was ultimately banned completely at certain times throughout the year, there were two periods in which wearing a mask was encouraged. One of those periods began on Ascension Day (40 days after Easter) and lasted until June 10<sup>th</sup>. The second period was between October-December. This was the time when the 'domino' clothing was also allowed. It was in those years, when the Venetian Carnivals planted its roots. The annual start date was December 26<sup>th</sup> and to this present day, it closes on Shrove Tuesday.