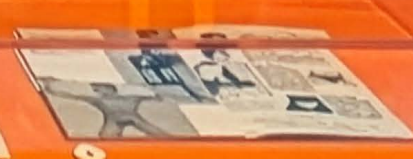
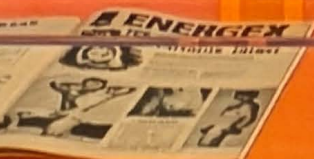


WESTMINSTER MENSWEAR ARCHIVE



ANNUAL REVIEW 2024/25



UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER



Cut from a Different Cloth , Invitation

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Garuda hat, Aitor Throup, 2013

FOREWORD



The 2024/25 academic year has been a year of consolidation and preparation for the Westminster Menswear Archive as we gear up for our tenth anniversary in 2026. Unlike last year, which saw high-profile public outcomes such as exhibitions, publications, and catalogues, much of our activity this year has taken place behind the scenes.

We welcomed over 630 in-person visitors, alongside hundreds more attending teaching sessions, talks, and events. Increasingly, these visitors represent major international fashion houses and brands — including Gucci, Alexander McQueen, Stone Island, adidas, Fred Perry, Massimo Osti Studio, and Martine Rose — reflecting the Archive's growing role as a resource for the global menswear industry.

The collection itself has expanded by over 100 garments and accessories, from early examples of Massimo Osti's design innovations for C.P. Company to contemporary work by Bianca Saunders, Aitor Throup, and Labrum London. These acquisitions sit alongside a significant donation from British designer Peter Golding, strengthening the Archive's capacity to chart the intersections of fashion, sport, subculture, and innovation.

This year has also allowed us to invest in our digital and organisational infrastructure, with the appointment of a new Digital Engagement Archivist and ongoing reviews of our collections policy, impact, and industry partnerships. Together, these activities provide the foundation for the Archive's next chapter and will underpin the programme of public events and exhibitions that will mark our tenth anniversary. In 2026 we will use this milestone to demonstrate the Archive's role as the UK's national menswear resource through exhibitions, research, and public engagement.

Andrew Groves
Director, Westminster Menswear Archive



WMA IN NUMBERS 24/25

566 enquiries received

630 in-person visitors to the Archive

290 attendees at talks and events

420 attendees at internal teaching sessions and open days

239 attendees from external universities

16 garments loaned to exhibitions in the UK and internationally

66,106 visitors to exhibitions featuring WMA garments

8435 followers on Instagram

6662 unique visitors to our website



Right: A Selection of Alexander McQueen garments





CUT FROM A DIFFERENT CLOTH: TAILORING, TRADITION, AND TRANSITION

247

Headquarters,
Via Palermo, Milan
20–22 June 2025

Cut from a Different Cloth: Tailoring, Tradition, and Transition traced Alexander McQueen's evolving relationship with tailoring, from his formative work in Milan with Romeo Gigli, through his early London-based menswear, to a new generation of Westminster-trained designers responding to that legacy.

The exhibition opened with six tailored womenswear garments from Romeo Gigli's Spring/Summer 1991 collection, produced during McQueen's time at the house. A recently discovered letter confirmed his direct involvement, marking a pivotal moment where he absorbed Italian tailoring traditions.

This was followed by ten early McQueen menswear garments from the Westminster Menswear Archive, designed in London between 1996 and 2000 but manufactured in Italy. Together, they illustrated the dynamic exchange between British cutting traditions and Italian production methods that defined McQueen's early practice.

Completing the exhibition were newly tailored garments by the 2024/25 MA Menswear graduates at the University of Westminster. Developed through archival research and engagement with the current Alexander McQueen design team, these works critically reinterpreted McQueen's legacy, situating student practice within a broader dialogue of tailoring traditions.

Curated by Andrew Groves and Danielle Sprecher, Westminster Menswear Archive.

EXHIBITION LOANS



Towelling top and bag, Burberrys, 1980s; cabana shirt, Jantzen, 1960s. Westminster Menswear Archive.

SPLASH!

DESIGN MUSEUM

28 March – 17 August 2025

23,641 visitors

The Westminster Menswear Archive lent several rare garments to the Design Museum's exhibition *Splash! A Century of Swimming and Style*, which explored the cultural and design history of swimming across the last hundred years. Among the Archive's loans was a rare pair of swimming trunks from Vince, dating to 1968, reflecting the emergence of more relaxed approaches to men's casual clothing in the 1960s. Other contributions included a striped woollen swimsuit from Bukta (1933) and a Burberrys towelling top with a matching bag from the 1980s. Together, these objects illustrated the evolution of men's swimwear from early functional woollen garments to branded luxury resort wear.

Curated by historian Amber Butchart, *Splash!* examined swimming's wider role in fashion, leisure, and society, from Britain's lido boom of the 1920s through to contemporary debates on body autonomy and environmental sustainability.



Sea-Ora Striped Wool Swimsuit, Bukta, 1933.



Centre and right, Vince swimming trunks, c.1968, Westminster Menswear Archive

RESEARCH

In 2024/25 the Westminster Menswear Archive strengthened its role as a national research infrastructure, generating outputs across exhibitions, publications, conferences, and consultancy.

A major milestone was securing Research England Higher Education Museums, Galleries and Collections Fund support, with £167,000 awarded over five years. This funding will expand access through digitisation, appoint a Digital Engagement Archivist, and allow alignment with best practice in GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) digital collections access and preservation.

The Archive delivered the AHRC-funded Locating Menswear project, secured an internal Impact Award to support REF case study development, and published in leading journals including Fashion Theory and Fashion, Style and Popular Culture.

Public engagement included international conference papers and talks at cultural venues, reinforcing the Archive's visibility across academic, industry, and cultural contexts. Together, these outputs provide the foundation for the Archive's REF 2029 impact strategy.



Massimo Osti Studio prototype, Westminster Menswear Archive

MASSIMO OSTI STUDIO

In 2022 the Westminster Menswear Archive began a project to document the development of Massimo Osti Studio, a new brand launched by Lorenzo Osti. Rather than waiting for garments to enter the market and establish their significance, we committed to accessioning examples of each product as it was created. This method challenged conventional collecting practices by treating design in progress as research material. It allowed us to capture not just final garments but the design and production processes that shaped them.

The project's radical approach to pre-creation collecting attracted academic interest and became the subject of our paper *Determining the Future: Pre-Creation Accessioning and the Documentation of Design Process*. We presented this work at the Artefacta Conference in Helsinki, situating menswear within wider debates about rapid-response collecting and evolving curatorial methodologies.



Artefacta Conference, University of Helsinki

MASSIMO OSTI STUDIO

This collection project concluded this year, with 44 garments donated to the Westminster Menswear Archive from the first year of Massimo Osti Studio. The brand released its debut collection exclusively online across eight separate drops, meaning that, without this initiative, students and visitors would have little opportunity to see the full range together.

The Archive now provides a rare and comprehensive record of this innovative launch year, offering a valuable resource for researchers to study both the garments and the design systems behind them. Students can examine details of construction, material development, and branding strategies that reflect the legacy of Massimo Osti while also demonstrating the evolution of direct-to-consumer fashion. By embedding these objects into teaching and research activity, the Archive continues to highlight contemporary shifts in production, distribution, and menswear culture.





Swing tags from Massimo Osti Studio donations



Range of face coverings, 2020.

FROM NECESSITY TO LUXURY

In 2025, Andrew Groves and Danielle Sprecher published 'From Necessity to Luxury: Menswear and the Evolution of Face Coverings during COVID-19' in *Fashion, Style and Popular Culture*. The article examined the transformation of face coverings from essential PPE to luxury fashion items, drawing on the WMA's rapid-response collecting and the 2021 online exhibition *Undercover*. It highlighted how brands including Burberry, Louis Vuitton, and Balenciaga repositioned masks as high-status accessories, while also exploring the use of NFTs to archive discarded masks and critically reflecting on value, memory, and digital preservation within fashion.



Andrew Groves, Discarded Mask #161, 10 February 2021. NFT. Manchester.

FASHION THEORY

In November 2024, Andrew Groves and Danielle Sprecher published 'Westminster Menswear Archive' in *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*. The article examined the Archive's origins, its collection strategy, and its role in shaping the study of menswear. Highlighting acquisitions from designers such as Alexander McQueen and Massimo Osti, it traced the Archive's growth into a key resource for students, researchers, and industry professionals. The article also addressed challenges of rapid expansion and digital access, underscoring the WMA's importance in redefining how menswear is collected, studied, and understood.

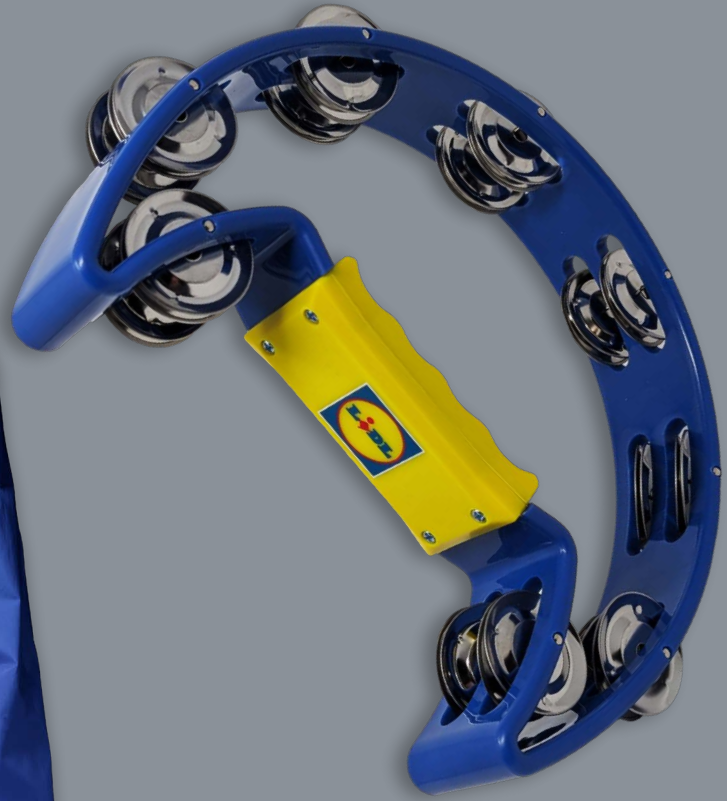




ACQUISITIONS



Lidl By Lidl Parka Jacket, Lidl, 2025



Lidl By Lidl Tambourine, Lidl, 2025



TVR x Umbro Football Boots, 2005



Urban Protection Scooter, C.P. Company, 1999



Shiva Skull Bag, Aitor Throup, 2013

ACQUISITIONS

During the 2024/25 academic year, the Westminster Menswear Archive acquired 53 garments and accessories through purchase. A particular focus this year was strengthening the Archive's representation of Black British designers, with acquisitions including a full Arsenal adidas away kit for the 2024/25 season, designed in collaboration with Labrum London, and a printed silk three-piece suit from Bianca Saunders' Autumn/Winter 2023 collection.

Other notable acquisitions include:

An outfit of six pieces from the final collection of BA Fashion Design 2024 graduate Tak Fung, supporting the Archive's commitment to preserving graduate work.

Three outerwear pieces from Purple Mountain Observatory, reflecting the continuing significance of contemporary technical design.

Five pieces from Aitor Throup's New Object Research project, acquired from the 2013 reissue of When Football Hooligans Become Hindu Gods.

Four pairs of Umbro football boots from the early 2000s, broadening the Archive's substantial Umbro holdings.



Fake Fur Duffle Coat, Soul II Soul, c.1990



Fuck The Fans Football Shirt, Hattie Crowther, 2024



MP3 Technical Jacket, Next, c.2005



Watermen's Shirt, 1827

ACQUISITIONS



Skanda Jacket, Aitor Throup, 2013



Reversible Hi-Vis Parka, Balenciaga, 2021



England T-Shirt, Admiral, c.1976



Trompe l'œil raw wool print shirt, Bianca Saunders, 2023



Arsenal FC Third kit and track suit, Labrum x adidas, 2024

DONATIONS

Alongside these acquisitions, the Archive received a number of important individual donations that highlight both historical and contemporary menswear innovation:

Stone Island: a Pure Metal Shell jacket and a Metal Cover jacket, extending the Archive's coverage of metallised fabrics.

C.P. Company: a shooting jacket from Autumn/Winter 1982–83.

Fake London: a shirt representing the rise of 1990s British streetwear.

Le Col / University of Westminster: a Dragons cycling top donated by Peter Bonfield, linking the Archive to the University's sporting history.

Peter Golding: Donation of 23 garments, including denim, tailoring, and shirts.

Other donations: a pair of Block P slippers, a shearling leather car coat, a Blak Wren sleeveless jacket, and a body armour vest.



Shield Puffer Jacket, Purple Mountain Observatory, 2024



Osprey MTP IVA Body Armour, 2012



Dragons Cycling top, Le Col, 2024



Pure Metal Shell Parka, Stone Island, 1999

DONATIONS

110 Slipper, Block P, 2024



Metal Cover Jacket, Stone Island, 2024



Floral England Shirt, Fake London, 2002



Denim Jeans, Peter Golding

TEACHING

Teaching remained central to the activities of the Westminster Menswear Archive in 2024/25, with 326 University of Westminster students visiting the Archive and a further 420 students attending WMA-led teaching sessions and open days. In addition, 130 students were taught directly with Archive garments in classroom teaching.

The Archive continued its close collaboration with Alexander McQueen, now in its third year, giving students the opportunity to engage directly with the house's design team and archival holdings. This year also saw the Archive support the MA Menswear showcase in Milan, where students presented their graduate collections in *Cut from a Different Cloth* at La Pelota.

Student employability and skills development were supported through a programme of paid work placements and internships. Student workers from the MA Museums & Galleries and BA Fashion Design courses contributed throughout the year, alongside work placement students from MA Visual Cultures and MA Museums, Galleries and Contemporary Culture.

Through teaching, collaboration, and student employment, the Archive continues to embed its collection into the learning environment, ensuring that students gain first-hand experience of menswear as both material culture and design resource.

VISITORS

In 2024/25 the Westminster Menswear Archive recorded 630 in-person visits, an increase from 514 the previous year. These included students, academics, and professionals from around the world, confirming the Archive's role as an international centre for menswear research. Teaching sessions and open days brought a further 420 attendees, while 239 students and staff from overseas universities participated in Archive-led group visits and sessions.

Visitors included leading fashion houses such as adidas, Alexander McQueen, Fred Perry, Gucci, Massimo Osti Studio, Martine Rose, Nigel Cabourn, Ranra, and Stone Island, alongside representatives from the Design Museum. International groups came from California State University (Fullerton), Kolding School of Design, Parsons, New York University, and HEAD – Geneva, as well as a US high school counsellors' delegation. UK groups included University of the Arts London, the Royal College of Art, and other regional universities, along with external organisations such as Discovering London, the London Appreciation Society, Nordic Pattern Cutters, and international researchers from the China Academy of Art and Boston University. These figures highlight the Archive's growing reach and cement its position as the UK's national menswear archive.

ENGAGING OUR AUDIENCES

In 2024/25 the Westminster Menswear Archive extended its influence across cultural, academic, and industry spheres. Talks at SEVENSTORE in Liverpool, SHOWstudio in London, and panels in Brussels and Manchester connected garment research to wider debates on design and identity. Exhibitions such as *Cut from a Different Cloth* at La Pelota in Milan and the Design Museum's *Splash!* positioned menswear within both international fashion calendars and mainstream museum narratives.

This activity was amplified by extensive media coverage. The Guardian explored the Archive's relevance to terrace style and Stone Island, Esquire profiled collaborations linked to its teaching, ODDA devoted an extended feature to its role in reshaping the study of menswear, The New York Times examined the global status of the football sash, and Ming Pao News in Hong Kong highlighted its garment-based pedagogy. Together, these engagements confirmed the Archive's standing as more than a repository—establishing it as a research hub and cultural reference point shaping how menswear is studied, understood, and publicly discussed. Taken together, they demonstrate the Archive's reach across academic research, cultural debate, and the international fashion industry, confirming its position as a unique resource within higher education.





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