

## Media information

For immediate use



# Zandra Rhodes *Unseen*

- Celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fashion and Textile Museum
- Archive pieces exhibited for first time, including 1977 Conceptual Chic, show Rhodes' innovations from 'Princess of Punk' to her beaded textiles
- Highlights the importance of fashion as both art and design
- Exhibition dates **12 July – 31 August 2013**

Zandra Rhodes *Unseen* is a rare opportunity to explore the creativity of one of the fashion world's most dynamic personalities. For over 50 years, Zandra has experimented with colour, print and fabric, as well as with her own image. Through sketches, designs and garments, only seen before in her spectacular 1980s fashion shows, this exhibition highlights the full scope of Zandra's artistic vision and archive.

Head of the Fashion and Textile Museum, Celia Joicey says

'Zandra Rhodes *Unseen* is one of the highlights of the Museum's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Zandra's extraordinary imagination and sense of colour are instantly recognizable across 50 years of work. This exhibition reveals why she is an inspiration to young designers as well as to her contemporaries.'

Zandra Rhodes is one of the new wave of British designers who put London at the forefront of the international fashion scene in the 1970s. The exhibition demonstrates how her artistic eye, unique use of bold, feminine prints, and theatrical sense of colour have ensured that she has continued to lead the way as an innovator – both technically and artistically – ever since.

Curator of the Fashion and Textile Museum, Dennis Nothdruff says

'Arguably, Zandra is the best representative of a generation of creatives who work across disciplines and who use themselves as a canvas for their ideas and designs. By exploring the archive, we hope to reveal another dimension to the art of Zandra Rhodes.'

Exhibition highlights include the outstanding 1977 Conceptual Chic collection, the pink and black jersey pieces with holes and beaded safety pins that earned Zandra Rhodes the 'Princess of Punk' name. As the first designer to translate punk to high fashion, Conceptual Chic was Zandra's first collection without a printed design.

Also on display are garments which showcase Zandra's signature embroideries, beads, feathers and sequins, which make a dress unmistakably a Rhodes creation. Throughout the 1980s, Zandra created an important series of collections – including Egypt and Manhattan – with fully beaded dresses. She made these in India, with support from the Indian government to help sustain and support craft skills in the country. The exhibition explores this pioneering initiative.

Zandra Rhodes was born in Chatham, Kent, UK in 1940 and introduced to the world of fashion by her mother, a fitter for the Paris fashion House of Worth. Zandra studied at Medway College of Art and then the Royal College of Art. Her major area of study was printed textile design. Her early prints were considered too outrageous by traditional British manufacturers, so Zandra decided to make dresses from her own fabrics and pioneered the use of her textile design as an intrinsic part of the garments she created.

Zandra Rhodes has regularly clothed royalty and celebrities including Princess Diana, Shirley Bassey, Diana Ross, Debbie Harry and Kylie Minogue. Her vintage pieces have also long been collected by Tom Ford and Anna Sui and have been worn by Kelly Osborne, Ashley Olsen, Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell.

As design historian Christopher Frayling says:

'The influences on Zandra Rhodes' work range from the paintings of Kandinsky ... to the safety pins and bin liners of London Street Culture. Whatever the visual stimulus, the resulting garments remain unmistakably Zandra. This is recognised wherever fashion is valued as both art and design.

Zandra Rhodes says:

'It is wonderful to see my work in a new light as part of the Museum's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Many of these garments have only ever been seen on the catwalk before, so it is a joy to me that they haven't been forgotten.'

The shop at the Museum will offer a specially curated range of products during the exhibition including sketchbooks, cards and Zandra Rhodes jewellery.

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#### Notes to editors

1. Zandra Rhodes: Unseen is organised by the Fashion and Textile Museum and runs from 12 July – 31 August 2013.
2. Exhibition opening times: Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–6pm; Last admission 5.15pm. Ticket prices: £8 adults, £5.50 students and concessions, free entry for under 12s. Booking information: online or call 0844 248 5076
3. The Fashion and Textile Museum is the only museum in the UK solely dedicated to showcasing developments in contemporary fashion, as well as providing inspiration, support and training for those working in the industry. Founded by iconic British designer Zandra Rhodes, the museum is part of Newham College London – one of Europe's largest further education colleges.
4. Zandra Rhodes *Unseen* coincides with the launch of the Zandra Digital Study Collection which has been created for the education community through a collaborative project between the Zandra Rhodes Studio and the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) with funding from Jisc. [www.zandrarhodes.ucreative.ac.uk](http://www.zandrarhodes.ucreative.ac.uk)
5. The Fashion and Textile Museum is at 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF. For further information about FTM and its activities visit [www.ftmlondon.org](http://www.ftmlondon.org)

**Press Images** A selection of press images is illustrated below – exclusive images on request.

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Zandra Rhodes by Norman Parkinson, 1981  
© Norman Parkinson Ltd / Courtesy Norman Parkinson Archive



Zandra Rhodes catwalk show backstage, 1977.  
Model Nell Campbell. Photo by Clive Arrowsmith

Conceptual Chic collection  
Drawings by Zandra Rhodes c.1977.  
The clothes incorporated holes made  
and stitched to look like tears. The  
tears are caught with beaded safety  
pins and chains. The dresses have  
their seams on the outside.



Dress, 1977. Photograph by Robyn Beeche  
Punk wedding dress. The long white satin sash with white jersey panel is  
attached with beaded safety pins and chains and tied as a halter. Black  
stitched contrast edges. Long train decorated with holes, pins and chains



Dress, 1978. Photograph by Robyn Beeche  
Black jersey with holes at shoulders  
decorated with chains and beaded  
safety pins and contrast 'lettuce' edges