

A history and celebration of one of the most famous fashion schools in the world, told by its alumni and staff

Fashion Central Saint Martins

Cally Blackman and Hywel Davies

700 illustrations

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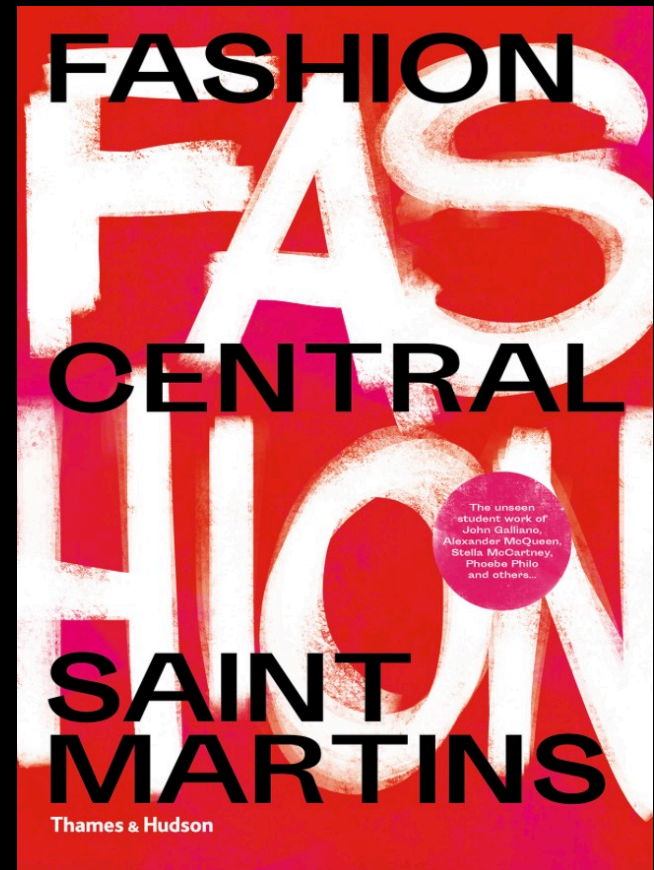
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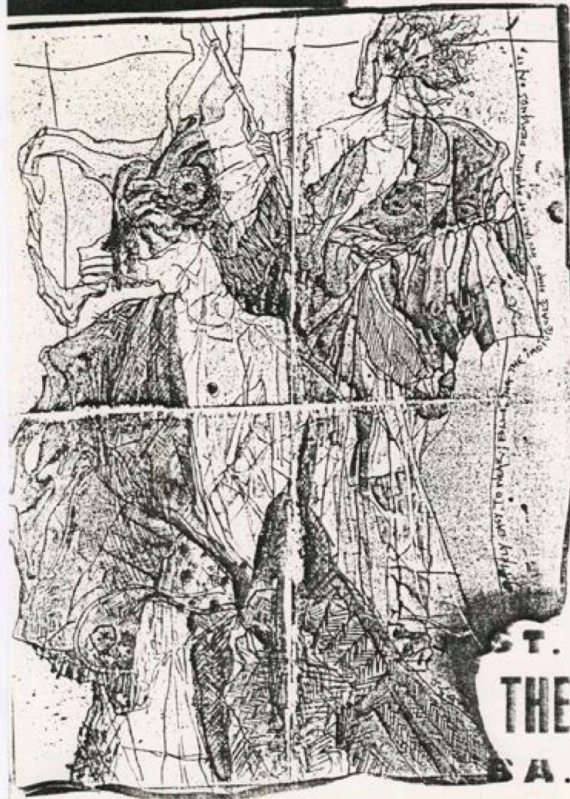
Key Sales Points

- Presents previously unseen student work by the school's star graduates, including designers John Galliano, Christopher Kane, Alexander McQueen, Phoebe Philo and Riccardo Tisci, and journalists and stylists such as Hamish Bowles and Katie Grand
- Includes exclusive interviews and words of wisdom on making it in the fashion world, both from the alumni who have gone on to become household names and from the teaching staff who helped to recognize and nourish their talent
- Edited by two people at the heart of Central Saint Martins, who have had exclusive access to the fashion school's rich archives
- Surveys the history of this world-renowned fashion school since its founding in 1931, including the methods and courses that make Central Saint Martins so influential



JOHN GALLIANO

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'A return to Romanticism...
but also Androgynous.
'This is a conscious rejection
of continental tailoring.
It is interchangeable,
seasonless and infinitely
easy to wear.'

* John has worked for
Stephen Marks and Tommy
Nutter.

He has also done some
Fashion Illustration in
New York, London and
Milan.

ST. MARTINS
THE GRADUATES
BA. FASHION



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HAMISH BOWLES

Fashion Journalist and Editor

1984 Fashion Director Harper's Bazaar Harpers & Queen

1992 joins American Vogue

1995 Editor at Large American Vogue

Why, in your opinion, is the Fashion school at Central Saint Martins so successful?

I think that it encourages independent creative thinking and nurtures the imagination, and certainly during my time at Saint Martins there was a stimulating dialogue between students studying other disciplines, notably the Fine Art department.



What is it that sets CSM apart from other fashion schools?

In my experience it was the cross pollination between the various art disciplines and the very strong (and empowering) sense of collective self-belief amongst the fashion students, many of whom were deeply inspiring.

What brought you to St Martins?

Frankly, I was lured by the endless magazine stories about recent alum - the publicity hungry New Romantic stars including Stephen Jones and Kim Bowen - and of students including Stephen Linard, who were still studying there. It seemed to me to be a hotbed of innovation and high style. I visited all the other leading fashion and costume design departments (at the time I was torn between the two disciplines), but felt that Saint Martins was the campus that had the real creative energy.

Do you have a defining memory from your time at the school?

My first Fashion Communications assignment - facilitated by the tutor Felicity Green - was to interview the Honourable Neil 'Bunny' Roger, truly the last great British dandy, an experience which was to prove an epiphany on many levels. His lively and unfiltered memories of gay life between the wars, his recollection of designing for many of the great fashion plate actresses of the day, and his immense taste in his own clothing choices and in his décor have remained barometers in my life ever since.

Was there a member of staff or a fellow student who was particularly influential on your time at Saint Martins?

We all looked up to John Galliano, two years' ahead of my year, who was already very much a star. His Incroyables degree collection was one of the most electrifying fashion shows that I have ever experienced, perfect in every detail from music to casting to make-up to accessories. I have vivid memories of



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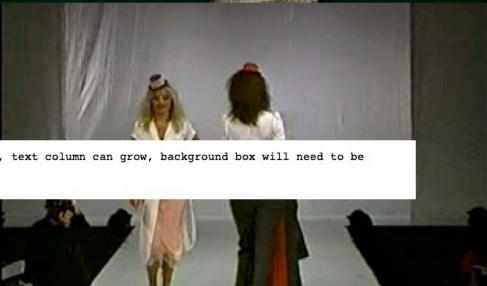
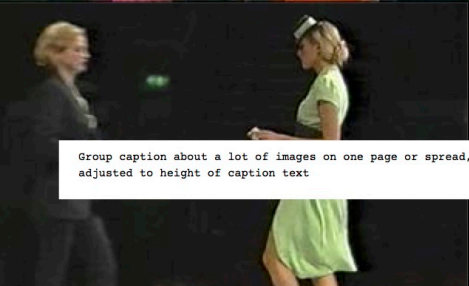
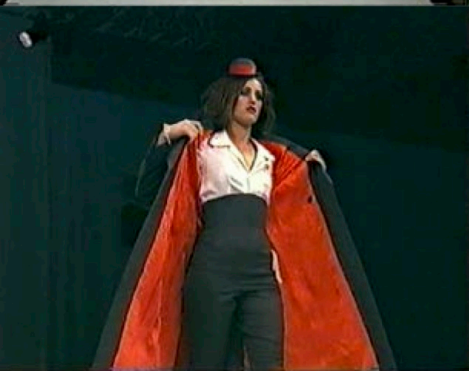
John working on his remarkable designs and inspiration sketchbooks for this show in the Saint Martins library, his work deliberately hidden from prying eyes behind barricades of books.

What are the three most important things you learnt in your time here?

1. The importance of research and an understanding of fashion, art and design history.
2. That fashion is fed by so many influences - by music and nightclubbing, by politics, art, contemporary culture and history - and how important it is to be attuned to all these influences and the zeitgeist that they help to shape.
3. To believe in myself.

What piece of advice, if any, would you give to aspiring or current fashion students?

I think that after graduation it is very important to work with an established designer or brand before considering starting out on your own. So many designers, throbbing with talent and ambition, leave Saint Martins and immediately establish eponymous brands - and are subsequently plagued by the layers of complications inherent in building and sustaining a fashion house. I think that a greater working depth of knowledge about the realities of the industry would help build more sustainable brands. In design terms, I think it is essential to stay true to yourself and to create an authentic world of your own.



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STELLA MCCARTNEY

1990s

In many ways, Stella McCartney's 1995 St Martins graduation show was much like any other. She worked day and night in the weeks running up to show day, her parents sat in the audience and her friends modelled her collection, but that's where the similarities end. Her parents, the former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney and his late wife Linda (a photographer, musician, animal rights activist and entrepreneur) were one of the most famous couples on the planet and were joined on the front row by iconic sixties face Twiggy. As for her model friends, Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell and Yasmin LeBon were on graduation catwalk duty. With that kind of star power, Stella McCartney's St Martins' show was not a regular passing out ritual. It was front-page news.

McCartney knew she wanted to be a fashion designer from an early age. She made her first jacket at 13, interned for Christian Lacroix at 16 and later spent time working for Edward Sexton, her father's Savile Row tailor. After completing a foundation course at Ravensbourne McCartney contemplated her next step. Being half-American she considered applying to study fashion design at Parsons and FIT but says, "I pretty quickly figured out St Martins was the best in the world,"

What swung it she says was, "that energy of being in Soho at the time and the history, the heritage of the place and the other designers that I knew and were friends with, that had been there. It was the school. It was the place to go."

She remembers the nerves she felt at her interview "I wanted to get in on my own merit," she says so called herself Stella Martin. "I'd used a different name applying for the interview... They might have figured out who I was and I was pretending to not be me so it was awkward and weird."

She joined the BA fashion course in 1992 (please check date). During her student years, McCartney lived in a basement flat in West London and would drive into Soho every day to attend lessons at Charring Cross Road. She spent her spare time hanging out in Dave's cafe or gravitating towards the sculpture rooms "because all the boys were there." Mostly though, St Martins was an intense learning experience marked by making clothes with friends. "When I see Naomi Campbell, to this day she says, "Do you remember taking leaves off the street late at night?" We were up at 2 o'clock in the morning pressing them into plastic sleeves and making them into jackets?"



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RICCARDO TISCI

Fashion Designer

2005 debuted first Riccardo Tisci Collection
2005 Creative Director at Givenchy
2018 Creative Director at Burberry

Why, in your opinion, is the Fashion school at Central Saint Martins so successful?

The Fashion school at Central Saint Martins is hugely successful because they basically don't teach you in the traditional sense. They allow you to be yourself and don't impose their ideas on you. They give you the skills you need to come out of school and face the tough fashion world, technically and spiritually.

What is it that sets CSM apart from other fashion schools?

Central Saint Martins is about freedom, they teach you to believe and express yourself.

What brought you to St Martins?

It was my dream to come to London and study at Central Saint Martins, but I could not finance it myself. CSM and the British government recognised my talent and offered me a scholarship. They made my dream become a reality and I will always be thankful to them.

Do you have a defining memory from your time at the school?

Yes I do - I remember the stress of critiques when working on various projects! I also remember the emotion I felt, from having the same teachers in front of me that taught the people that I was inspired by growing up.

Was there a member of staff or a fellow student who was particularly influential on your time at Saint Martins? It would have to be Wille Walters, my magnificent tutor, who was always so generous with her time. As a past CSM student herself, she understood the journey like nobody else. With Willie, it was a two-way relationship - she taught us but she also allowed us to teach her - her collaborative work ethic is something I carry with me every day.

What are the three most important things you learnt in your time here? Independence, bravery, dedication and drive

What piece of advice, if any, would you give to aspiring or current fashion



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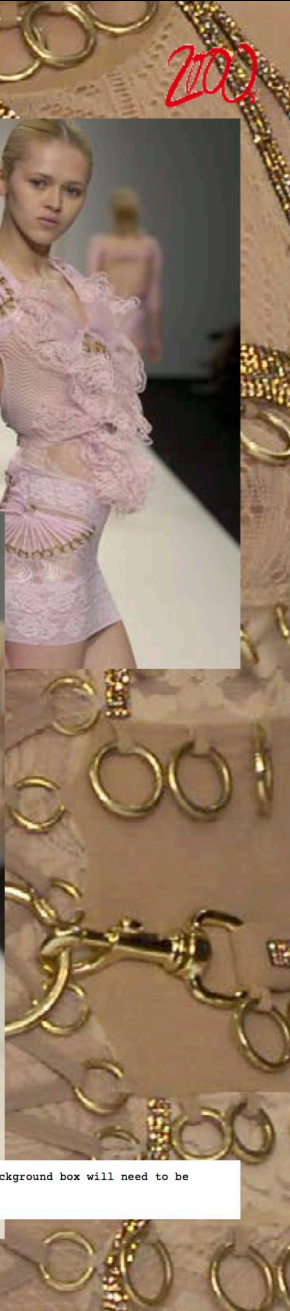
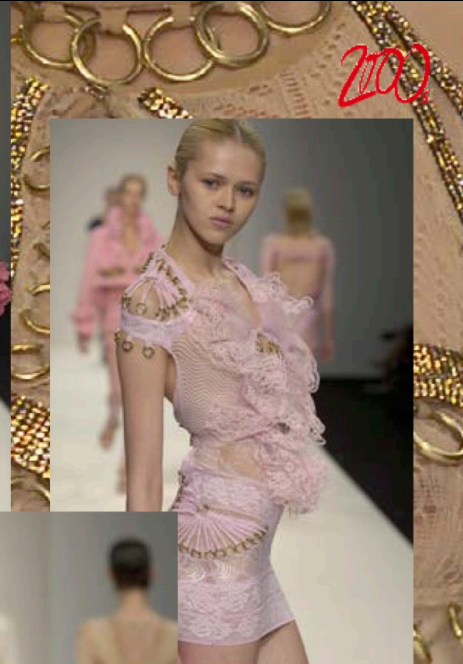
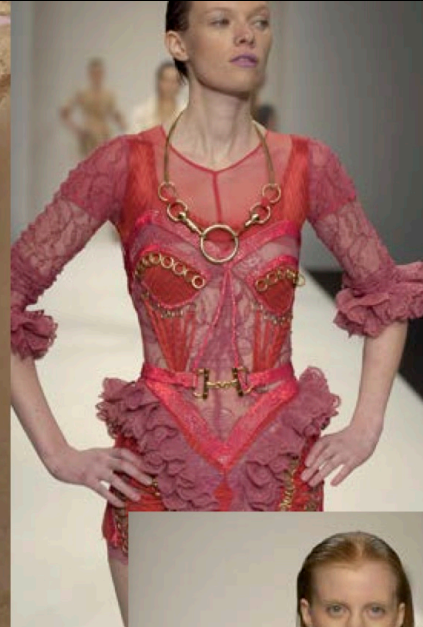
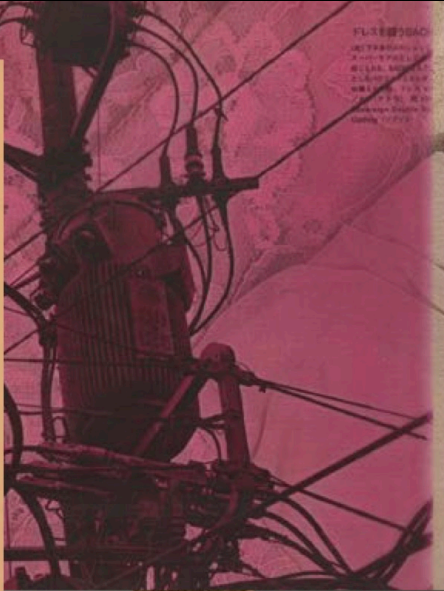
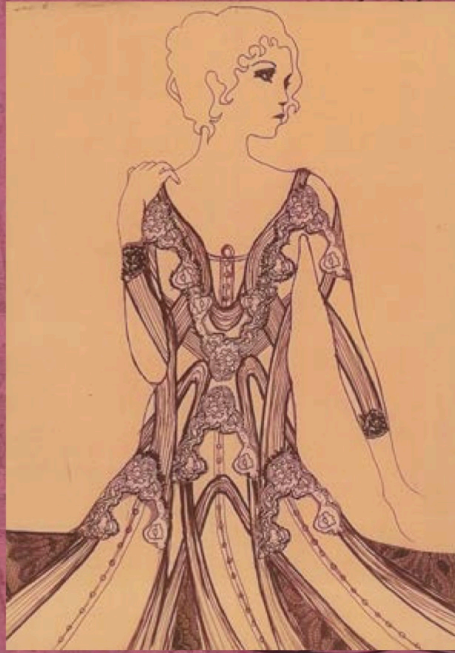
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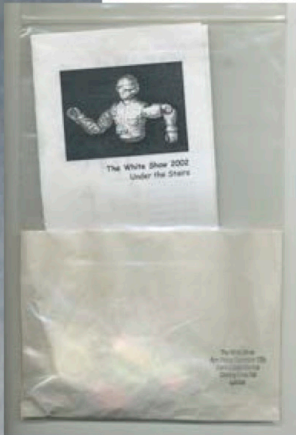
THE WHITE SHOW

Every year just before the Christmas break the White Show in which all first year Fashion students take part, wraps up the Autumn Term in spectacular style.

It is a showcase for the outcome of their first term-long project: the brief is to design, cut and make an all-white, fully styled outfit out of inexpensive cotton or felt. High above The Street, the busy central avenue of the Granary Building, their garments are paraded along the upper galleries and across the two bridges, a giant catwalk for the enfilade of hundred or so co-opted friends, staff and fellow students who model.

The concept and design of the show are the responsibility of FCP: invitations might have arrived on mugs or cushions. As dusk falls outside the business of the college is suspended for the afternoon and the

scene is set, the studios bursting with students, helpers and models in various states of undress having their hair and makeup done, while the audience crams itself into all available nooks and crannies around the galleries and stairwells that Health & Safety will allow. Dramatic lighting, atmospheric smoke effects and pounding music as the parade of beautiful and extraordinary clothes passes by the onlookers whip up excitement and anticipation for the final flourish – huge banners unfurl from the bridges showering scraps of paper, silver foil, a flurry of feathers, a cascade of glitter, like snow onto The Street below, in time for Christmas.



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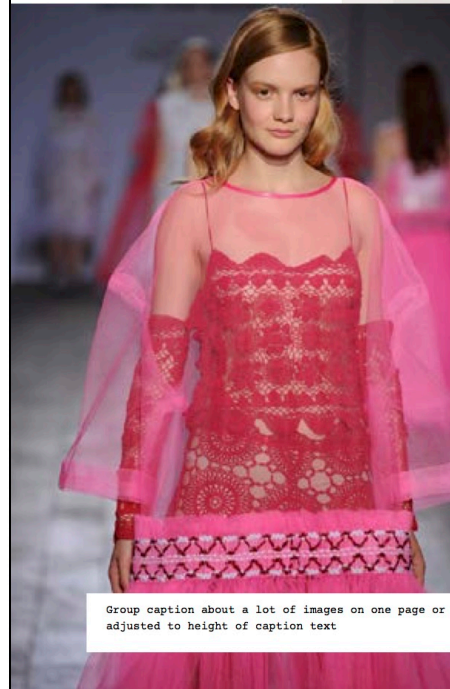
MOLLY GODDARD

Own label

I really loved the BA because I remember you (Sarah Gresty) especially saying just go bigger, explore. It was very much fun to really explore and that's how I realised how much fabric you can put in one piece of clothing. You know I had like 40 meters of fabric in everything I made and I remember thinking that there was no kind of limit to what I could actually do - so that was a really great lesson to learn.



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RICHARD QUINN

Would like to be buried underneath the print room at Central Saint Martins

Own label

What's your strongest memory of your time at CSM?

I look back with such fond memories, even when it was so stressful as I'm one of the lucky few to have had the chance to be a part of the of the school. Even the day to day in the print studio was a pleasure with the print technicians Imogen, Rita and June. I learnt so much technically about printing from them and they were there with me in the thick of it.

I think in all there is so much support from everyone that I now consider friends, I would not be able to just choose one.

What are the three most important things you learnt in your time here?

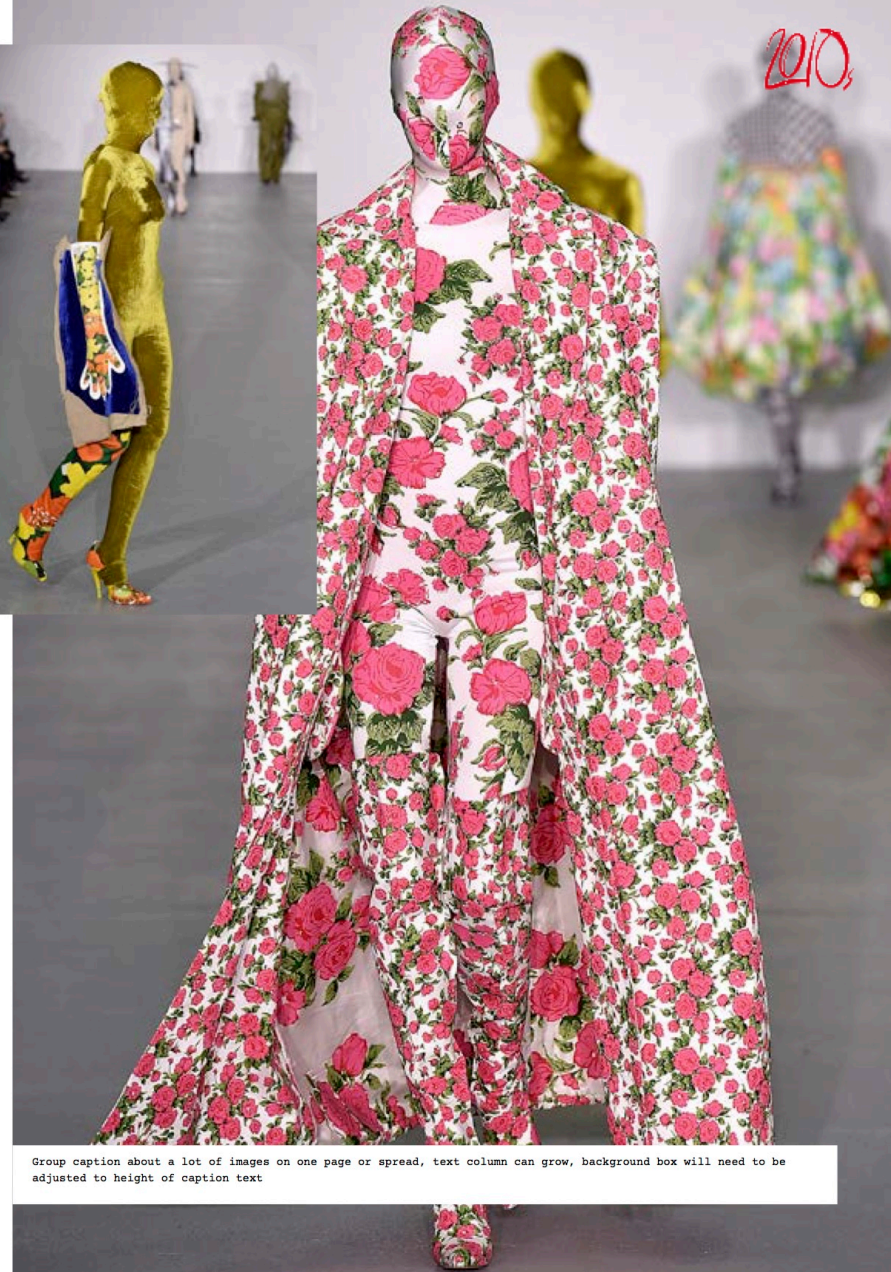


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1. Get on with it.
2. Have a vision.
3. Have a fucking opinion.

What piece of advice, if any, would you give to aspiring or current fashion students?

Go for it, if you have a real passion and desire to create a vision then do it. There's nothing holding you back but yourself!



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