

F A L L

# THREAD

INTO

PLACE

#6



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& THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING THIS YEAR.

# MAKERS & BROTHERS

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One Guise Fits All

COVER IMAGE  
MODEL: GEORGIA MAY  
PHOTO: RICH GILLIGAN

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



## INTO

As much as we try to control things in our work or in life, the curve balls will keep coming. Producing each issue of **THREAD** we have a mini obstacle course to maneuver, but eventually things fall into place.

What I really wanted to explore in this issue was the good times, what brings us joy and those times in our life that we constantly reference: clothes we wore, music we listened to, places, spaces and friends. The nostalgia of youth culture that continues to provide inspiration but also the new things we find ourselves drawn to. We start out in one direction but inevitably discover something else that begins to inspire and give us satisfaction.

The key perhaps then is to sometimes let loose the reins and chuck the plan. Leave a little room for happy accidents. The best outcome is often the one you hadn't quite imagined and there is nothing quite as exciting as not knowing the ending or where you are going to end up.

In that vein we are still rolling along with **THREAD** and have gathered some amazing new contributors for issue six, started new conversations, revisited old stomping grounds and trespassed to bring you the issue. Once again I'm surprised by what we have achieved and so very happy with the way it's all fallen into place.

Aisling Farinella  
— Editor

## PLACE



WHERE

WEAR



HOUSE OF HACKNEY

Created by husband and wife team Frieda Gormley and Javvy M Royle in 2010 from their home in Hackney, this interiors based brand has made a big bold mark on the world of contemporary furnishings. Their mastery of print comes from an inspired mission to remove the beige and bland from interiors. With the pared back aesthetics of minimalism and its sometimes over concern with the modernist mantra of less is more, it's energising to see a brand take design to the maximum and bring something that comes from a traditional history and subvert it to such effect. Take two of their signature prints as examples; Hackney Empire's cocktail drinking badgers and mandolin playing squirrels and the Dalston Rose, a grungy dip dyed floral print. This makes House of Hackney a bold choice, a non-conformist statement in the face of the beige and bare.

Standing out from the get go by collaborating with models and stylists to present their collection, House of Hackney has always had fashion in its fabric setting itself at a distance from how interiors are typically considered. It wasn't long before Opening Ceremony sought a collaboration which would take the house's prints into the fashion realm. That's the beauty of House of Hackney; their prints are transferable and have a transformative effect that is contemporary and bold, playing with the culture of East London and responding to the mood of the times. Today House of Hackney can be found at their grand store in Shoreditch. Here you can find their signature prints applied to a complete interiors range, fashion and accessories range. As the team have proved to date, House of Hackney don't do things by halves they go to the max.

WE ARE ISLANDERS

Design collective We Are Islanders have worked with the issues of land and locale in their new carefully created eight-piece collection, Tidal. The Dublin based label, from the heads and hearts of Rosie O'Reilly, Kate Nolan and Deirdre Hynes, is the latest project from Re-dress, focusing on sustainable, conscientious clothing and trans-seasonal pieces that counteract the concept of superfluent mass production.

The starting point for the new collection was fabric. Luxurious Irish wool, Wexford tweeds, beetle linen from Donegal and organic salmon leather sourced from a fish farm in Galway, showcase some of the finest fabrics from our island and epitomise the group's ethical practice.

The centrepieces of the Tidal collection are the silk dresses with markings from the ocean. They were made as part of the 4.704 installation earlier this year on Sandymount Strand, which brought attention to rising Irish sea levels. The installation consisted of 3x3 meter high, self-contained dying units, each with a garment inside. Through a clever buoyancy system, designed for the project by Designgoat, the mark of the tide's undulation was transferred onto the clothing creating a textural time lapse.

We can't turn back the tide but we can still watch the video of this beautiful experiential project at [weareislanders.com](http://weareislanders.com)



Image: STEPHEN GALLAGHER

Image: DAVID DUNAN, Photographer & CELESTINE COONEY, stylist



LAURA  
MAY  
HEGARTY



WATCH

Sky blue and candyfloss pink form the palette of Laura May's graduate collection for NCAD. While on the surface they provoke ideals of saccharine femininity, the core of her work 'On Wednesday We Wear Pink' delves into a disconcerting world of bygone domesticity.

With research centring on colour theory she combines colour with the socially constructed restrictions placed on women throughout our history. The soft knit textiles heighten pale lilac and Virgin Mary blues. These carefully chosen colours contrast with restrictive elements designed into each outfit; an oversized knit jumper with confining shoulder shackles and sleeves, a dress with hand knit 'oven mitt' pockets or an amazing tandem jumper worn by two people, and at the same time binding them together — referencing the house wife, marriage and the social barriers placed upon women in Ireland.

While the concept delves into troubled waters, the results of her designs are visually arresting and inviting pieces.

Since leaving NCAD Laura May is employed with the esteemed knitwear house Cabinet by Tomoko Yamanaka in London and in the future hopes to focus on children's wear design.

Image: SARAH DOYLE

THE PLANT

READ

A love of plants and publishing come together to create a refreshing take on a wonderful world of greenery.

Established in 2010 and now on its fifth issue The Plant is a contemporary celebration of all things flora. A considered and elegant journal each issue features stories about and experiences of plants from illustrators, photographers, writers, actors, artists and musicians from all over the world. This makes for interesting reading particularly when you consider contributions from Wolfgang Tillmans, plant inspired poetry from Tilda Swinton, monographs from Jordy van den Nieuwendijk and Cat Steven's account of Derek Jarman's garden as features.

Not strictly for plant lovers though you can easily be drawn into this subject and come away feeling enlightened and indeed inspired by something natural for a change. From the humble houseplant to the elegance of topiary and carnivorous specimens, The Plant takes us all over the world with features from Japan, Sweden, Mexico, Birmingham and New York. With subject matter as varied as the green scenes in Godard movies to observations from the forests of Fukushima you soon come to realise the far reaching presence of plants in our lives. The Plant makes it easy to appreciate the natural by celebrating plants in all their glory from their aesthetic beauty, their resilience and strength to their importance as sustenance and nourishment. A fitting antidote to materialism that addresses our innate interest in the natural world makes The Plant so alluring.

After reading The Plant you might just discover a new appreciation for the natural and grow a whole new perspective away from glaring screens and throw-away culture.



Image: SCHELTENS & ABBENES for THE PLANT



LISTEN

NEW JACKSON



Image: SARAH DOYLE

A tipping point is understood to have been reached when a significant and often unstoppable effect or change takes place, or as author Malcolm Gladwell states, “the moment of critical mass”. For New Jackson, it happened late last year playing alongside John Talabot at the Button Factory in Dublin. He said: “That was one of my favourite shows I ever played. The crowd really got it. It was a ‘we have lift-off’ moment”.

This instance of critical mass didn’t occur by some fly-by-night fluke, New Jackson is a project that has been brewing since childhood, albeit as one branch of a greater musical family tree. Having penned diverse tracks under multiple monikers, New Jackson is, as the producer succinctly puts it, “another port of call on what I hope will be a long journey”.

If you’ve taken to a dance floor of late, there is a good chance his recent opus Of A Thousand Leaves was the soundtrack. When he reveals that this epic vocoder led ten minute disco workout “just kind of happened”, it makes you wonder what other musical masterstrokes are percolating in this multifaceted maestro’s mind.

WHAT

AESOP



Image: AESOP

The two siblings behind Makers & Brothers, Jonathan and Mark, had long admired the Aesop approach: a beautifully designed range of care products for the skin, hair and body through extensive research, a combination of plant and lab technology, attention to detail and pragmatic, adapted design. Plus, their dad is a big fan. Is there a better endorsement than dad’s?

When the brothers’ tiny seasonal department store for Dublin was becoming a reality they approached Aesop with their plan to introduce them to the Irish market — proposing a special concession in Makers & Brothers & Others. All good partnerships require compatibility and commonality and both parties believe in quality and functionality, and that well-considered design improves lives. The result is undoubtedly a match made in a beautifully scented retail heaven.

The brand has long been a coveted favourite with uniquely constructed, intimate stores in cosmopolitan capitals such as London, Paris and Tokyo. Makers & Brothers are Aesop’s exclusive and first ever supplier in Ireland. Visiting an Aesop counter involves the incredibly pleasant experience of meticulously trained staff and the ceremony of trying products with delicate hand massage and washing techniques. It’s a treat and one that should tempt you to try it out for yourself. The pop up is in town for a limited run until December 24th.

Makers & Brothers & Others,  
5 Dame Lane, Dublin 2





Image: JOHN ROCHA SS14

There is nothing quite like a moment shared between friends and in this very special interview photographer Perry Ogden talks with designer John Rocha, creating for us an intimate portrait of a humble and vivacious man. Both figures contribute so much to fashion in Ireland and here they generously contribute their thoughts and experiences to THREAD.

When you were a child growing up in Hong Kong what were you dreaming about?

The dream really was just to get out of Hong Kong because we came from a very humble beginning and you could see things beyond Hong Kong and you just dreamed that one day you would be part of that. And I think that's really from when I started watching television and seeing the new movement, especially in England with the 60s: Mary Quant, The Beatles and all that. And the dream was to live there and be part of the movement.

What was it like growing up in a colony?

Well, I had a wonderful childhood. We lived on the streets because we only had a small apartment. We used to make a football out of newspaper and tie it together with twine. That's how I first played football. It was always a big thing in Hong Kong to play football – and even still now.

How did you engineer your exit from Hong Kong?

When I finished school I was destined to follow in my father's footsteps, to basically start off as an office boy, to hopefully become a clerk and make a life out of that – like my brother does. But I wanted to do something beyond that and I was told by somebody in the neighbourhood that there was an opportunity to go to England to train as a nurse. You could actually train there and live there without it costing any money. So I was quite lucky, because we didn't have any money and after about 18 applications I got accepted by one.

Was it that simple? I remember a story you told at your birthday party...

... (Laughing) Well, yes, I was useless in school and by the time I found this opportunity I realised that you needed five O-levels, which I didn't have. So the local employment agency guy said that for \$500 they could get me a brand new Leaving Certificate, which they invented. Looking back it was totally illegal but at the time I couldn't care less, as by hook or by crook, I was going to get there.



So you had your training as a nurse lined up. What happened when you arrived?

I lived in Surrey for the first year and then in the second year I met a girl who happened to be a fashion designer who had just finished college in Paris. So then I moved to London and continued training in Surrey.

Was this girl your introduction to fashion?

Yes, because of her I got into fashion. After training for three years, which I enjoyed tremendously, I didn't think I would like to be a nurse for the rest of my life. She helped me put together a portfolio and I applied to about 20 colleges and I was only accepted by one: Croydon College of Art. It's funny, I went back there only two weeks ago to open a new wing in my name. But when I was there I wasn't that great. I was having a great time, but I never thought that I would be where I am today.

When you left Croydon what were the prospects?

When I was in college I used to come over to Ireland for summer holidays. I got to discover Irish fabric. I found a company, Emblem Weavers that specialised in Irish fabric. And there was Avoca Handweavers. They were making all the hand woven fabrics for home furnishings and I decided it would be great to use them for clothing. My diploma show was done on Irish fabric and that's really how my career started. Irish fabric connected with me and then the Telegraph Magazine did a feature on it and they really liked what I did and that was it really.

Is that when you started fishing?

No, I used to play football — or try to play football — and when I was 40 a good friend, Austen, who was working for me at the time suggested to Odette she buy me a fishing rod for a present because he thought I would be a good fisherman because of my temperament and Odette thought I was getting a bit old to play football and I should be doing something different.

How do you link fishing with your work? I know you take it seriously.

First of all I go fishing for relaxation, to do something beyond fashion because fashion's quite intense, but then I discovered that fishing brings me to places like Patagonia and Iceland, that I wouldn't usually go, and subconsciously it always seems to effect me. So very often when I start working on a collection things come back into my head.



Portrait: PERRY OGDEN





Images: JOHN ROCHA SS14

For example, a couple of seasons back I was working on a collection and I remembered the gauchos I had seen in Argentina and it came back to me. All my work as a designer is really about my travelling and that influences me more than anything else.

I'm always impressed by designers because there is such a huge workload. You've got two major collections a year — that's like a musician making two albums a year — and then other lines, plus menswear and other projects. Do you now have a regular working pattern?

Well, my life is dictated by Fashion Week. I am determined some day I will change it but when I don't know. For example, I have never spent a Chinese New Year in Hong Kong, since I left home in 1971, because Chinese New Year is in February. So it is really dictated by this machine: Fashion Week... The thing is fashion is so intense and all about the instant — the there and then — but unfortunately after six months you always have to start over again. In my case it's not so extreme because I have to continue on like a building block.

I always try to have what I call a part-time job to keep me in check with things beyond fashion. Recently it's been the chapel at Château La Coste which I finished in the summer. I love fashion but I am not 100% a fashion person. Maybe that's why people think I'm a better designer now than I was because I'm able to stop, clear the head then start again.

But your work has become your life in the sense that your family is very much involved and that seems quite a powerful thing...

Yes, but the funny thing is it was never planned that way. I never thought Simone would start her own thing or even go to fashion college. And I never thought Max would be involved doing the music for the show. It all kind of happened. I just do a thing and go along and somewhere along the way it has all fallen into place. Like when I first met you that time in 1994 I never knew we would be sitting here talking away — it just happens.

Yes, I remember coming to do the shoot with you for The Sunday Times and then a few weeks later almost running over you...

Yes, in Paris...



On the Rue de Rivoli.

That's right, with your bicycle!

Yes!

That's it. One thing about fashion is that I've been able to make a wonderful life out of what I do and the people I know and it's great. Long may it continue.

Beyond fashion and family what are the things that have brought you the most joy and inspiration?

I have a lot of wonderful friends who all do interesting things. They always bring me joy. I'm very grateful for the people I've met in Ireland. But after all these years I'm beginning to be quite concerned about the planet. I go to Russia for the last ten years in the same week every year. The first time I was there it was minus four degrees. This year we were wearing t-shirts. Now something has seriously gone wrong somewhere. I'm sure it's going to affect us in the long term. So I think the next few years I will do something more beneficial not just for me.

And what about Ireland? How's that changed since you've been here?

I'm disappointed at what happened. I feel the boom time created a monster and unfortunately took lots of nice people away with it. What scares me most of all is to see my children's generation — most of them have to go away to be able to express themselves and be able to flourish in what they do. My dream will be that — looking back at the history of Ireland and the many tragic situations — hopefully this younger generation can come back and bring something with them. But if they don't return it will leave a big gap that will be quite hard to fill.

Ireland has always been a great source of inspiration for you. Is it still?

I do love the Irish people. There's something magical about Irish people. And the young people — there's great energy there. All my children grew up here — they're all Irish. My wife is Irish, my children are all Irish but unfortunately unless you're actually born here you can't call yourself Irish. Ireland is my home. Am I Irish or not? I'll never be Irish, that's a fact, but it's still very much a part of me for sure.





# Georgia

Model: GEORGIA MAY at Distinct Model Management Styling: Assitant: Kieran Kilgallon



Tartan jacket: STELLA MCCARTNEY at BROWN THOMAS — jersey sweater: HELMUT at BT2 —beanie: WAREHOUSE — double rose cut garnet & double rose cut pink sapphire, both set to 18ct yellow gold chains, to order: NATASHA SHERLING

# M a y



Tartan jacket, jersey sweater & beanie: AS BEFORE — off white viscose skirt: CÉLINE at BROWN THOMAS — black ripped jeans and platform runners at TOPSHOP





Black brocade oversized coat: JOHN ROCHA — denim shirt: ACNE at BROWN THOMAS — leather paneled sweater: COLIN HORGAN — ripped jeans: TOPSHOP — shorts: STYLIST'S OWN — beanie: WAREHOUSE



Black embroidered cotton-blend skirt & jacket: SIMONE ROCHA — ripped jeans: TOPSHOP — beanie: WAREHOUSE — socks, shoes and jewellery: AS BEFORE





Pink vintage sweater: WENDY'S WAREDOBE — BOW — pink neoprene skirt, SIMONE ROCHA at HAVANA — pink jersey pants: JOHN ROCHA — green puffa coat: ZADIG & VOLTAIRE at COSTUME — beanie: WAREHOUSE





Spitfire t-shirt: STYLIST'S OWN — tiger jungle hoodie: KENZO at BROWN THOMAS — floral feather print bomber jacket and embroidered wool skirt: STELLA MCCARTNEY all BROWN THOMAS



T-shirt, hoodie and bomber jacket: AS BEFORE — embroidered wool skirt: STELLA MCCARTNEY all BROWN THOMAS — ripped jeans: TOPSHOP — socks, shoes and jewellery: AS BEFORE





Check shirt: SAINT LAURENT PARIS — black jersey hoodie: HELMUT at BT2 — jewellery: AS BEFORE



Check shirt: SAINT LAURENT PARIS; two tone wool pants: CÉLINE both BROWN THOMAS — black jersey hoodie: HELMUT at BT2; leather skirt: TOPSHOP — socks, shoes and jewellery: AS BEFORE



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PHOTO: LEONN WARD

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HEARTBREAKER

H e a r t



Art direction: LEONN WARD Model: SEBASTIAN at FM Models

Denim jacket: ALEXANDER MCQUEEN — vintage cream jacket: YVES SAINT LAURENT

B r e a k e r



Boy I gotta shake, shake it off  
Gotta do what's best for me  
Baby and that means  
I gotta shake you off



Black t-shirt: DIOR HOMME— purple scarf: STYLIST'S OWN



Oh why, did you  
have to run your  
game on me I  
should of known right



Wait a minute this  
is too deep, I gotta  
change the station





Stylist Assistant: KIERAN KILGALLON — Model: BOPPER

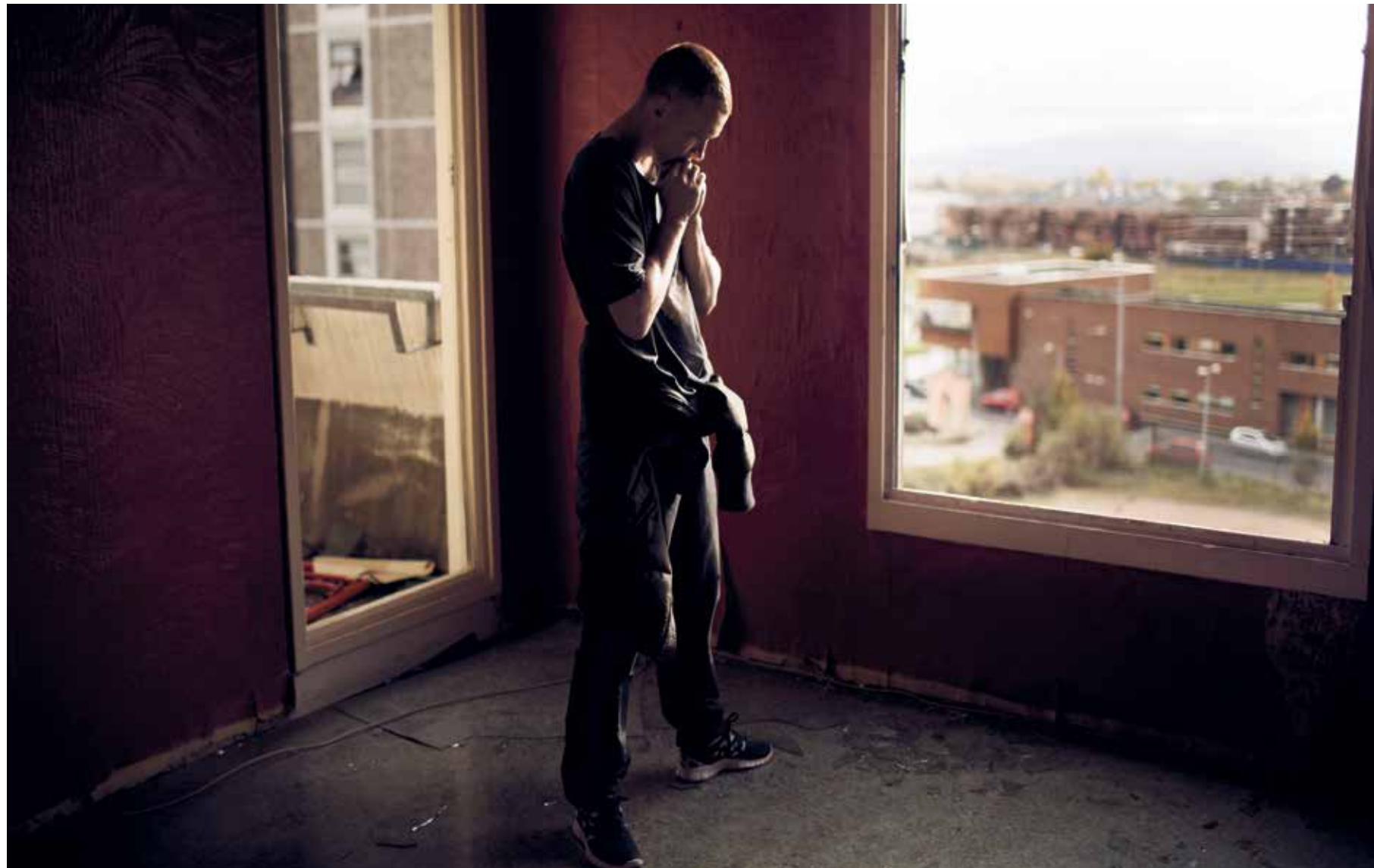


Shirt: ALEXANDER McQUEEN — angora jumper: GUCCI at BROWN THOMAS



Shirt & jumper: AS BEFORE — wool coat: GUCCI at BROWN THOMAS





T-shirt & puffer jacket (around waist): DOLCE & GABBANA at BROWN THOMAS — tracksuit bottoms & runners: MODEL'S OWN



Adidas jacket: LIFESTYLE SPORTS





T-shirt: DOLCE & GABBANA at BROWN THOMAS









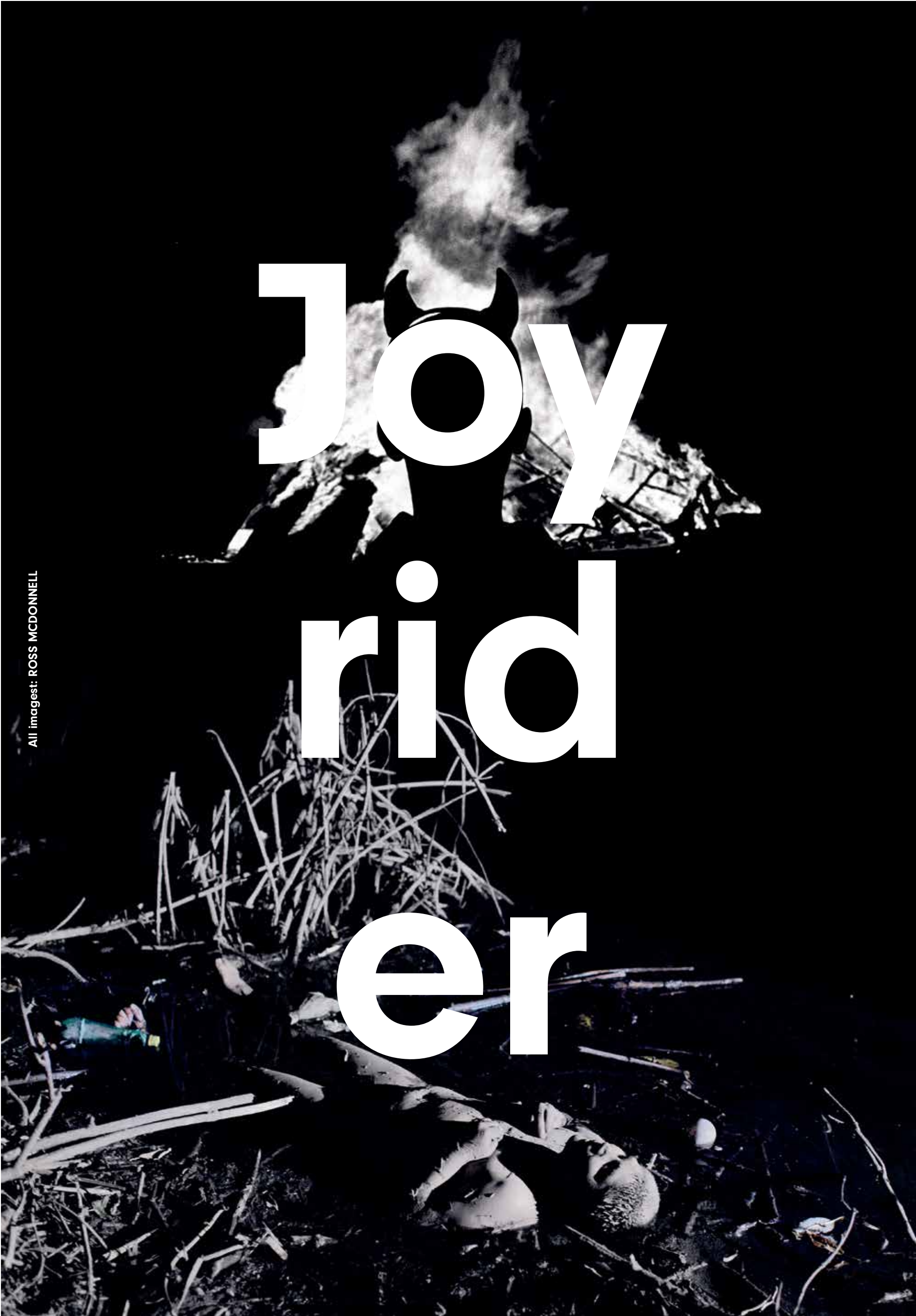


Wool coat: OUR LEGACY at INDIGO & CLOTH — t-shirt: MODEL'S OWN



Jacket: ADIDAS at LIFESTYLE SPORTS — tracksuit bottoms: MODEL'S OWN





# Joyriders

All images: ROSS MCDONNELL

Ross is an enigmatic character; travelling the world so much you never quite know if he's coming or going, or quite where he's been. What's certain though, he creates pictures that resonate in a magical way, capturing a beauty that is hard to come by. Photographer, cinematographer and director, Ross's talent transverses both mediums in equal measure. With work published in titles such as The New York Times, Art in America, The Observer and The Washington Post, we were excited to collaborate with him on this issue of THREAD.

Attentive and soft-spoken, it's pretty crazy to think of Ross venturing into dangerous territories but his character is so genuinely open and unassuming, it's also hard to imagine him not fitting in. His most recent work, 'Vigilantes', documents an uprising movement known as 'Auto Defensa' in Ayutla de Los Libres, situated in the Guerrero State of Mexico. The incredible photographs of masked men frankly depict the guerilla soldiers, prompting you to consider his own position in the situation. The series was featured in Time Magazine and just recently exhibited at Paris Photo as a collection of delicate Ambrotype images on glass.

Dublin remains pivotal to Ross as he continues to develop projects here. The Joyriders series, centering on a gang of youths from Ballymun was one of his first important body's of work. Following on from this he created an esoterically beautiful documentary Remember Me My Ghost, exploring the domestic life of the female residents of the same community. Ross found inspiration for the work upon discovering a poem, 'Ballymun Incantation' by Dermot Bolger, pinned to a fridge in one of the tower flats.

Research shapes all of McDonnell's work, but what stands out is the time he invests with the people and the places that he is drawn to. He is captivated by the characters he encounters, their

experiences, their histories, their stories. "It's finding the nugget that works," explains Ross. "I tend to know what I'm looking for and then it has to capture my imagination, it's all about finding that something and this is why I prefer to work on long term projects. I like to be involved I guess".

To what extent have the places you grew up in and travelled to shaped your work as a filmmaker and photographer?

I think totally. I had a very fortunate upbringing, both of my parents worked in the airline business and my youth was filled with me and my family hanging around airports trying to get on flights by waving stand-by plane tickets at glamorous check-in attendants.

The contrast of a Sikh's headdress against the mundane greys of the Birmingham Airport baggage claim in 1987, the size of an Arabic family's huge Louis Vuitton suitcases at Heathrow Terminal 4; a tour group of Hassid's twirling ringlets and their round hats filling JFK arrivals. All of these tiny moments are seared into my memory. Perhaps I started to observe things in a photographic way from a young age.

How has living in Mexico City influenced your work?

Well I have a number of projects on the go in Mexico and I'm based there just now. I think maybe either my work is maturing or I am! Hopefully both.

One of the things that strikes me about your work is that all of it centers around socially unique characters, who are not only visually interesting but who live interesting lives, but not exactly following the rules of society. What attracts you to these subjects?

That's a good question. I think I'm drawn to places and subjects that are in a real state of transition or flux...maybe because I feel that way myself. Finding a character



within those worlds is always the challenge but maybe the process is what sustains my interest.

There is a certain poignancy to all of your documentary work, your narratives are very powerful and cinematic. What initially draws you to a project?

Well you're never quite sure what you're looking for until you find it. You know, making art or photographs or whatever, is just a means of expressing those parts of yourself that have to find a means of expression. As I mentioned before I guess being drawn to these subjects is a way to depict those things I feel myself. Maybe I'd be better off with a paintbrush! Certainly would save on airfares!

What kind of rapport do you initialise and maintain with your various subjects.

It depends. In Ballymun for example I've been taking pictures out there for almost ten years now. I have some great friends in the community and for the shoot for THREAD we were able to tap into that a little bit. Obviously for some things I work on it's more short term.

Can you explain the process of making a documentary? What captures your attention as a storyteller?

Oh God, that's a big question! I think stories with great visual potential and maybe a variety of layers or the possibility to be something more than what it says on the tin capture my attention. I try to be in the field shooting as quickly as possible, it's only through shooting a lot and editing that the narrative becomes clear... you simply have to find what works and what doesn't through a lot of graft I think.

As a documentary filmmaker and photographer, how much of your own opinion is integrated into your work and are the journalistic values of maintaining objectivity important to you?

I think subjectivity is crucial for my work. I hope that all of my work, while being grounded in real subjects is not merely objective studies of subjects. The only real beauty of photograph is its mystery, its alchemy, If I don't have that it's over..

Whose work do you admire and why?

I think anytime you have to question what you are doing you should also ask yourself "What would Werner Herzog do?" The answer is usually the way forward..

You shot a fashion shoot recently for this edition of THREAD. It must have been a unique experience combining a fashion story with your social documentary aesthetic?

We were free styling all the way! I can't think of anyone else I'd rather introduce to the Joyrider gang than Aisling! We ended up working with someone I haven't seen around Ballymun in over four years, Bopper Nolan. He was up for it and it looks super.

What's next?

I think I have one more body of work left in me in Ballymun and working on making books in Mexico. 2014 I hope is all about Afghanistan. A pivotal year for the country and to launch my series 'The Afghans'. Fingers crossed!









# Al as ta ir

Portrait: ALASTAIR MCKIMM by RICH GILLIGAN

The first time I met Al McKimm was in a storage unit for a couple of fashion agents in London's East End. He was quiet (initially), had a wide grin, the cold blue eyes of a killer and was dressed head to toe in black — baggy jeans, big hoodie and normal-sized baseball cap. I wondered why the agents had hired an Irish gangster rapper for the day: some sort of promotion I assumed.

Ten years later Al is a big cheese fashion stylist in New York City. Working with the likes of Jil Sander, Alexander Wang, Calvin Klein, DKNY and Helmut Lang. He dresses the big names — Lara, Cara, Joan. He's Fashion Director of The Last Magazine and NY Fashion Director at i-D Magazine as well as contributing fashion editor at Vogue Italia and WSJ Magazine.

So Al, seriously, how does a Bushmills' boy get to be such a successful fashion man in New York City?

Weird right? It definitely wasn't in any way planned and I think that's the key, I couldn't even have made it up. Firstly I didn't even know what a stylist was until I was 20.

So, what did you want to be when you were a kid?

A zookeeper. Really badly. My mum, total Belfast styles, said, "Och Ally, what about a zoologist?" But no, I wanted to shovel shit.

Belfast Zoo's loss and a long way from New York catwalks. What happened in between?

I suppose if I had planned a career it would've been in photography, which is something I was always interested in. Images. I was never a big reader but I loved art at school and very little else. I was the most average kid at school, as far as my education, but I always wanted to hang out with the creative kids and the ones who nobody fucked with and I considered cool.

I was always a bit of a rebel and had, and still have, a bit of an issue with authority which got me in a lot of trouble at school and I went through a few of them. I did fuck all really, except chase girls and smoke ciggies across the road from school.

Were you part of any particular tribe? Skater? Punk? Proclaimers' fan? Or just a wannabe badass?

From the age of 14 I was obsessed with surfing, which is how I spent my time unless I was at school or skateboarding. By this point we had moved out of Belfast to the North Coast and I had a close group of friends, most of us ended up in the Irish Surf Team for under 18s. So I surfed and skated every day until I left home at 18. I was also in a band for a short time as an obnoxious, tone-deaf front man. All my mates from home still play music but I had to find another path. Eventually, I ended up on this art foundation, which I really enjoyed and actually wanted to go to. This one woman, what was her name, we called her "Fanny Cratchit", she made me draw a herring until the thing was so old it was just rotting in front of me. It was a nice pencil drawing though; I think it's still at my mum's house somewhere.

So when did fashion hit your radar?

I saw this random documentary about John Galiano the same week I was applying for photography school. I found it really inspiring so I ended up applying for fashion design instead. I got in to Nottingham Trent Art School on an unconditional offer, which meant I didn't have to do any more work that year. Perfect. To be honest I think I got in so easily because they were so desperate for boys on those fashion courses at that time. Anyway, that's why Amy, my wife, calls me the Billy Elliot of fashion. Nottingham was amazing. I found out about styling in my second year and it was literally a light bulb experience, a job working between fashion design and photography seemed perfect. I met amazing people there too who are some of my best friends to this day. A bunch of us moved to London two days after graduation.

I was fairly obsessed with i-D Magazine at this point so on my second day there I knocked on their door in East London with my design portfolio thinking I could be a stylist there... What an idiot. I had no clue that I'd have to assist and work my way up.





The old door in the face, eh? But eventually a door did open?

I eventually met Edward Enninful, the then fashion director of *i-D*, now he's in New York too and the fashion director of *W Magazine*. He's a legend and I had an incredible experience working with him for a few years. He put up with a lot of nonsense from me. I owe him a lot. After that I went out on my own and it was all hard work and patience — small commissions growing year on year until I finally got some clients to hire me.

So influences to this point seem to be: Zookeepers, rebellion, photography, i-D Magazine, John Galiano and Billy Elliot. What else was finding its way into your work?

I feel like I go back to British youth culture time and time again. Skinheads, Teddy Boys, Punks, Goths, the 80s Club Kids, all that good stuff. I find that visual culture and self-expression the most exciting and original. I'm really into sportswear now too; I think it's the pre Chav, Chav in me. Mixing Nike and Reebok and Adidas with luxury fashion, although not a new idea, is fun. Ray Petri pioneered that look, again, another London stylist.

You've used the word 'obsessed' a lot. Is this part of some contract with Calvin Klein or are you a bit obsessive?

I'm very obsessive, always have been, mum used to call it my "wee notions" when I would become obsessed with things. When you're obsessive it helps you become good at things other people might not be interested in.

In what way?

Obviously if you have an obsessive or addictive personality it can be a very negative thing, drugs, alcohol, stalking — ha-ha. If you can use it as a focus it can be very powerful. It's taken me a long time to try to focus on the good. I think I have mild OCD and ADD so that's good for a laugh!

So what made you head to New York?

I first went to New York with Edward in 2002 and I fell in love with it right away, which I'd always been told I would. Once I started out on my own I was traveling back and forth between London and New York until I met Amy. That was the clincher.

What's different about working and living in New York?

I love New York; I'm totally in love with the place. The energy, the efficiency, the productivity level, the fashion, the people, the food, the magazines, the clients, love it!

Who's the king of New York?

Obama and Jay Z share the title. Or you mean fashion? At the minute Alex (Wang) is doing all right for himself!

Do you ever feel like you're getting away with murder?

Hahahaha, every day. You just nailed it. YES! Amen Scotty.

What's your best excuse if you fuck up?

I don't get to make excuses, either the work looks bad and lives like that forever or if it's with a client you don't get booked again. It's quite intense.

If you weren't a stylist what would you be doing?

I'd like to think I'd be surfing.

What's the difference between a stylist and an artist?

I think it would be arty to not answer this question.

What do you do to keep your mind sharp?

Coffee and sleeping.

What's your current obsession?

Making good images without trying too hard.



Image : ISELIN STEIRO by DANIEL JACKSON and ALASTAIR MCKIMM



Image: MEGHAN COLLISON by MACIEK KOBIELSKI and ALASTAIR MCKIMM



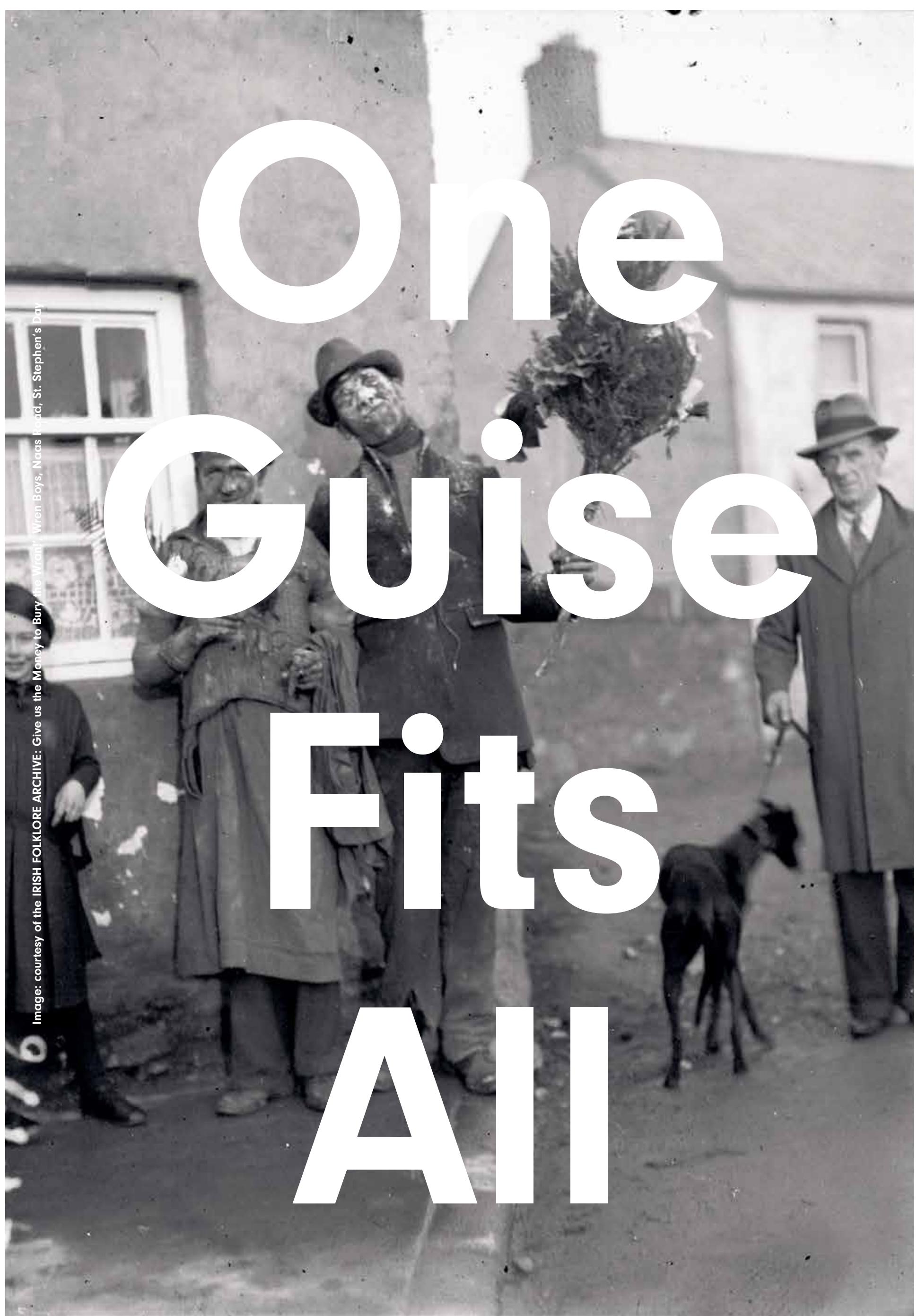


Image: courtesy of the IRISH FOLKLORE ARCHIVE: Give us the Money to Bury the Wren! Wren Boys, Naas Road, St. Stephen's Day

Despite the revelry and excess enjoyed by some late into Christmas night, we might expect little by way of quiet or tranquillity on the morning of St. Stephen's Day (the 26th of December), for this is the day that the Wren Boys make their rounds.

Early on this morning, laneways and roadways across much of Ireland resounded with the clamour and din of music and singing as the Wren Boys made their noisy procession from house to house, entreating their neighbours for money and in return providing entertainment and bestowing good luck upon the homes to which they called. Their troupe travelled in disguise, wearing costumes of old rags, women's clothes, tattered crowns or elaborate masks made of straw, and their presence was marked by altogether boisterous and jocular behaviour. A publication from 1775 AD described these rowdy groups as those 'who perform frolics in a personated dress'; doubtless a great many readers of this magazine will feel a familiar affinity with the Wren Boys in this regard.

In the weeks leading up to this spectacle, it was common to see crowds of youths peering into hedges in search of the tiny wren, and on discovering their elusive fare, they would chase the unfortunate creature, throwing stones and other missiles at it, until it was slain. The purpose of this hunt was revealed on the morning of St. Stephen's Day when the body of the tiny bird was borne aloft, tied to a holly bush decorated with brightly coloured ribbons and carried around the locality by the Wren Boys; a surreal centrepiece to their procession.

The custom of 'croosing' — a corrupted form of the word 'cruising' — or hunting the wren in this manner has existed here, as well as being found in varying forms in England, Cornwall, France, the Isle of Man and Wales, since the Middle Ages. So if, while cruising

around your locale dressed in your mother's clothing, wearing a bag on your head and petitioning your neighbours for money, you are met only with whispers and sour looks, you might enlighten their givers with the information that you are in fact expressing an important aspect of your cultural heritage; carrying out a practice that has existed in this country, and across Europe, for a great many centuries.

While our gallant rabble went about their procession, they rapidly sang a verse explaining their parade to all those they visited, claiming to have killed the wren (generally pronounced 'wran') and beseeching the occupants of the house to give them money to pay for the burial of the poor bird:

'The wran, the wran the  
king of all birds,  
St. Stephen's Day was  
caught in the furze,  
Although he is little, his  
family is great,  
Put your hand in your pocket  
and give us a treat,  
Up with the kettle and  
down with the pan,  
Give us the money to bury the wran'.

Moneys gathered from the morning's proceedings were generally spent on drinking at a 'Wren Party' held later that evening. In many instances, the Wren Boys were quite drunk before the end of the day, and such was their rowdiness that in 1845, the mayor of Cork prohibited the 'hunting of the little bird on St. Stephen's Day by all the idle fellows of the country'. But why all this antagonism towards the poor wren, you ask? Dry your tears, for you need not feel entirely sorry for the fellow. Across Europe, and indeed in the verse sung by the Wren Boys, the wren was recognised as 'the king of all birds'. In Greece he was known by the stately epithet Basileus, meaning simply 'King', in Germany is referred to as Zaunkönig or 'Hedge-King' and in the Netherlands is titled Winterkoning or 'Winter-King'.

A common story dating from around the sixth century BC however, tells us how the wren's royal title was granted to him, after he cheated in a competition held to see who could fly the highest among all of the birds. This he did by hiding away in an eagle's wing. As the eagle soared over his competitors and declared himself king of the birds, the wren emerged from his hiding place, and, in flying slightly higher than the eagle, succeeded in gaining the crown for himself. It is precisely this sort of cold and scheming behaviour that sets our wren out as somewhat of a rogue figure in popular tradition, no doubt smoking and pretending to read Camus or Machiavelli in his spare time.

Despite allegations of treachery being levied at the wren in folklore, the Wren Boys (who weren't all drunkenness and carousing) would hold a small ritual ceremony for their deceased and bedraggled companion at the end of the day's proceedings. Sometimes burying the creature on consecrated ground, and sometimes ceremoniously laying the wren to rest outside the house of an individual who had been less than generous in their offerings to the Wren Boys (a ritual that would ensure no good luck would come to the occupant of that particular house throughout the coming year). To keep one of the elusive creature's feathers in your purse or pocket however, was thought to bring good luck for the year ahead. Until that is, the Wren Boys would again break the crisp quiet of St. Stephen's morning with their singing and music, traipsing along lanes and roadways to the next house, merrily brandishing the 'king of the birds' with them as they went.

Jonny Dillon received his maters in Irish Folklore from UCD and is currently working on his PHD and making electronic music as Automatic Tasty.





Images: courtesy of NATIONAL FOLKLORE COLLECTION, University College Dublin & The National Folklore Collection, Turlough House, Castlebar, Co. Mayo



JONNY DILLON is based at the National Folklore Collection, UCD, where he is currently teaching and working on an MLitt thesis on Landscape and the Supernatural. He is on the committee of the Folklore of Ireland Society and makes records of electronic music as Automatic Tasty.



# Wren

Models: DONAL and JACK at Morgan The Agency and SHONA at Andrea Roche — Hair and make up: Jennifer Quinn



Pink mohair oversized wool coat: JOHN ROCHA — boots: JOANNE HYNES

# Boys



Navy knit rollneck: GUCCI; metallic stripe pants: DRIES VAN NOTEN both BROWN THOMAS





Cream knit jumper: CÉLINE; navy pinstripe skirt: STELLA MCCARTNEY both BROWN THOMAS — gold lamé bow: MURPHY SHEEHY — boots: JOANNE HYNES



Cable knit dress: KARL LAGERFELD at BT2 — collarless white shirt: TOPMAN — wool blazer: OUR LEGACY at INDIGO & CLOTH — head dresses: borrowed from the DINGLE PENINSULA WREN BOY FESTIVAL





SHONA; Embellished coat: DRIES VAN NOTEN at BROWN THOMAS — white shirt: ISABEL MARANT at COSTUME — gold rope worn as belt: A.RUBENESQUE / JACK; black wool coat: HENTSCH MAN at INDIGO & CLOTH / DONAL; wool blazer: OUR LEGACY at INDIGO & CLOTH — head dresses: AS BEFORE



SHONA; Metallic wool coat and metallic knit sweater: JOSEPH at BROWN THOMAS — boots: JOANNE HYNES / DONAL; Embellished white shirt; DRIES VAN NOTEN; navy shorts: MARC BY MARC JACOBS both BROWN THOMAS — beanie: PENGUIN at ARNOTTS — white chiffon veil: MURPHY SHEEHY — gold tinsel wig: STYLIST'S OWN



Model: PHOEBE at Morgan The Agency — Hair & make up: SARAH JANE LANAGAN — Thanks to CIARA, BREN and BISCUITS

PHOTO: JOSHUA GORDON

70

STYLIST: KIERAN KILGALLON

Te



“

Duffle coat: SAINT LAURENT PARIS; white rollneck: BALENCIAGA both BROWN THOMAS

71

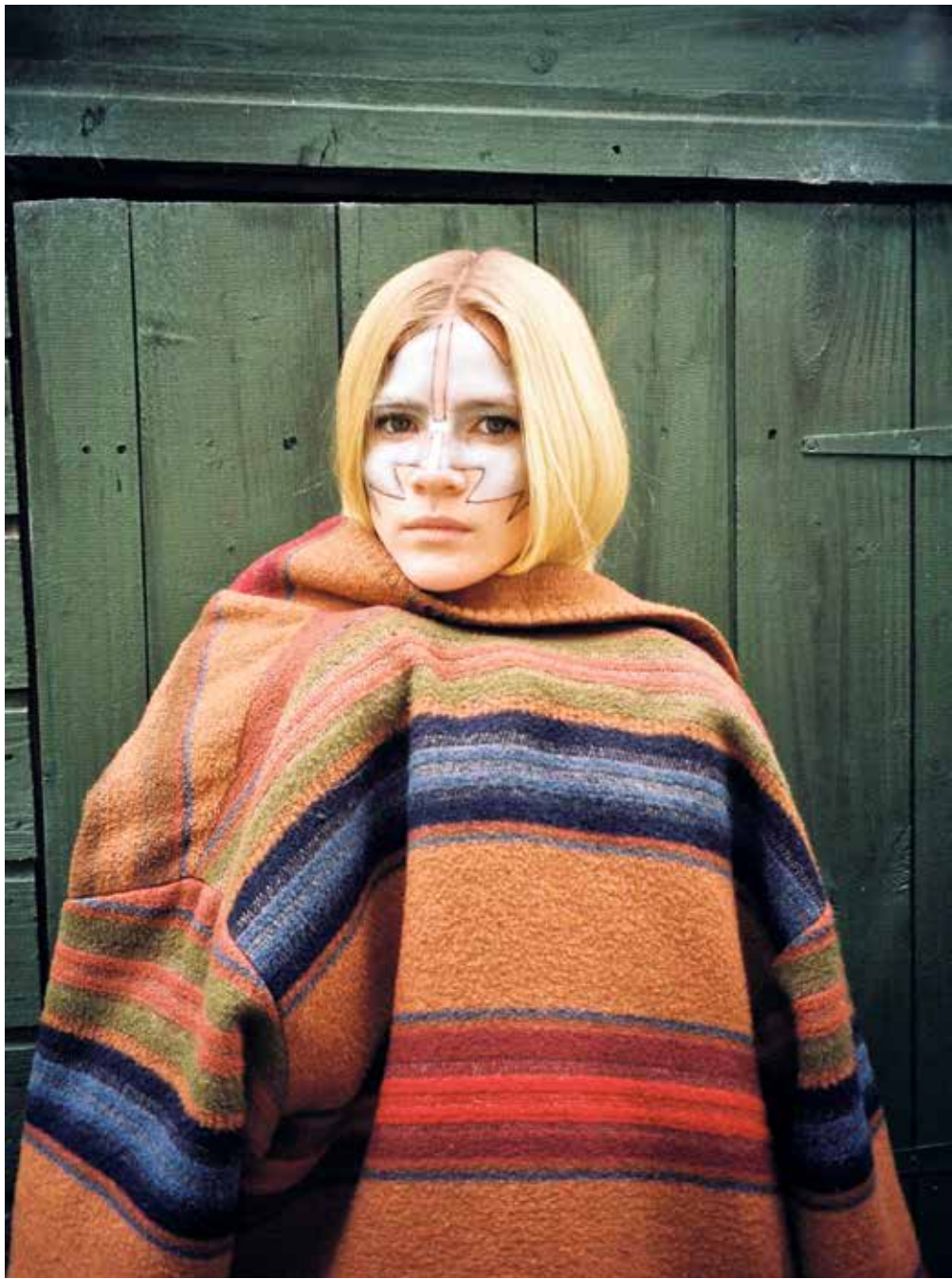


Vintage leather cardigan, vintage rainbow stripe knit vest and vintage stripe t-shirt: all COSTUME MILL — leather a-line skirt: SPORTMAX at BROWN THOMAS — navy shoes: CONVERSE at BT2 — unicorn earrings: OM DIVA





Vintage blue & red leather jacket, vintage navy suede a-line skirt and vintage gingham shirt: all HARLEQUIN — brown knit: YMC at BOW



Vintage Coat: THE COSTUME MILL



R o n a n

Models: DISTINCT Model Management — Hair and make up: SARAH JANE LANAGAN



Honeycomb knit poloneck: EDMUND MCNULTY at INDIGO & CLOTH —  
Sweatpant: AMERICAN APPAREL — Socks and runners: MODEL'S OWN



D e i r d r e

Contrast lace jumper: STELLA MCCARTNEY at BROWN THOMAS — Check wool shorts: DANIELLE ROMERIL at AVENUE32.COM



Kate & Ciara



Kate; Embellished mohair jumper: DRIES VAN NOTEN at BROWN THOMAS — Check wool trousers: DRIES VAN NOTEN at BROWN THOMAS — belt: STYLIST'S OWN / Ciara; cashmere jumper: YMC at BOW — ribbed and cable knit cardigan: PETRIA LENEHAN — patchwork jeans: JUNYA WATANABE at HAVANA — belt: STYLIST'S OWN

Nathan



Basket weave jumper: OLIVER SPENCER at INDIGO & CLOTH — Check cashmere coat: ALEXANDER MCQUEEN at BROWN THOMAS — kilt, jeans and boots: MODEL'S OWN



# Spotlight

## DEREK LAWLOR

# 1

Experimental technique and conceptual practice: this is knitwear, but not as your grandmother knows it. At the head of his eponymous label Derek Lawlor is constantly pushing the boundaries of the traditional craft, with unique processes of weaving and manipulation of fabrics characterising his collections. An emphasis on sculpture and silhouette, Lawlor's designs are not just innovative but sophisticated.

He is sought after to produce exclusive pieces for magazine editorials, exhibitions and music videos and balances the bespoke with a more commercial line of accessories and scarves and special RTW pieces. A recent collaboration with The Royal Ballet culminated in the design and exhibition of the dancers' costumes as a celebration of their strength, power and poise. This melding of art and fashion Lawlor describes as a seminal moment in an already exciting career. Writer and Irish fashion curator Gemma Williams introduces us to the designer and his work.



Images: PHILIP MEECH







I first met Derek Lawlor when I curated *New Fashion — Interventions in Materials and Techniques* at Fashion Space Gallery, London College of Fashion. Lawlor's unusual reference points — like Japanese armour and unique cord-work technique — indicated a visionary talent with a bold outlook on design. His graduate collection and equally impressive subsequent presentations marked him out as one to watch in the highly competitive London fashion scene. Yet there is much more to Lawlor: His modest character belies a natural eye that is wholly original.

Born in Ireland, Lawlor moved to England as a young child. A graduate of London's prestigious Central Saint Martins, Lawlor now runs his knitwear label from East London, the current hub for fashion creatives. With an emphasis on materiality, his work pushes the more traditional boundaries of knitwear, experimenting with weaving and knit processes, combining distinctive textures and creating a range of bespoke textiles. Perceptions of knitwear have evolved considerably over the years and Lawlor refuses to let the limitations of the medium affect his practice. His main focus is

the development of new fabrics, which he produces by combining techniques not conventionally used together, his signature look created by this unique pairing and juxtaposition.

Influenced by his father's creative process as a furniture maker, Lawlor speaks with great fondness of their relationship. He grew up helping him in his workshop, soaking up the atmosphere and observing the accomplished carving work taking place. Lawlor says he was fascinated by his father's approach to his craft, from the laborious hand drawing and shape sketching, to the meticulous design carving process. "I was always fascinated by his artistic approach to his work, he would draw out the carved designs in such detail they could almost be prints," he recalls. Interested in Celtic forms, his father would use the traditional motifs and patterns as inspiration for wallpaper prints, something as a designer he later incorporated into his own work. Retaining a close relationship with Ireland, Lawlor is incredibly proud of his heritage, returning regularly.

Lawlor has received a range of commissions during his career and one

of his most challenging and rewarding came from The Royal Ballet. Working in collaboration with stylist Olivia Pomp, he spent over two years designing garments to be worn by the dancers, delivering both movement and durability. "It was the most incredible experience of my career so far," he muses. "Seeing your garments in such movement, flying through air was such a special moment." The project culminated in a photography exhibition, capturing the dancers flights in black and white, by acclaimed photographer Rick Guest.

Lawlor's future forays include the development of an exclusive line of jewellery for the Irish market and a menswear collection and he will continue to experiment and innovate. "I believe designers are pushing the boundaries," he says. "There are so many new techniques that can be developed. I continue to develop my technique which I see as a huge advantage."



## Spot

## light

OISIN BYRNE

2

Working across multiple disciplines, from drawing and portraiture to performance and film, Oisín Byrne is one of Dublin's most experimental and embrace young artists. He has collaborated with a variety of professionals including musicians, cinematographers, fashion designers and even an astrophysicist. This focus on collaboration and community is an important aspect of his eclectic body of work, which belies the short span of his career. Currently exhibiting at IMMA In the Line of Beauty seeks to understand the search for beauty in our lives, through the work of eleven young artists, including Byrne, until February 2014.



Portrait: PETER FINGLETON

You're currently doing an MA at Goldsmiths, University of London. What's the subject and why did you choose it?

It's an MA in Fine Art. We're not pinned down to any particular discipline — so depending on what we're working on, on any given day, we have access to workshop facilities and technicians in anything through woodwork or metalwork, to soft materials, fabric print and dye, digital media... it goes on. Quite a few of my peers from Ireland are already in Goldsmiths, including Joseph Noonan-Ganley, Sam Keogh (who are also in the IMMA show) Elaine Reynolds and Chris Timms is in my year.

Your portraits in IMMA are on fabric—I think it lends a kind of fluidity to the works; like they're less rigid and fixed than if they were on a more traditional canvas. Was that part of your reasoning at all?

Like you say, there is also something between the stability and formality of these line drawings and the movement in the fabric. The portraits I make are always this same bodily size and that's a function of my arm span. Making them on fabric gives them a relationship to the body, to tactility and to domestic or intimate space.

The sitters in those works are asleep, (or pretending to be?) which is a different dynamic again.

Three of those portraits are sleeping, yes. I have a fascination with images of people with their eyes closed and people asleep. I like that it points to their interior world—the flat drawing becomes a surface to another interior world. There's also the intimacy of sleeping in someone else's waking (and watching!) presence, which is a weirdly trusting and transgressive act.

It's completely intimate. Do you feel more comfortable making portraits of people you know or do you work with 'strangers' too? And who usually approaches whom. Do sitters ever ask you to draw them, or is it always the artist's decision?

It's usually me who approaches a sitter though that isn't a rule. But it is a careful and slow process. Though to be honest, the portraits as a set total are a portrait of the people who surround me, who influence my thinking, who I collaborate with. Who's available to me.

What are your initial thoughts on living in London?

London is bigger—there is more distance between places and more choice of things to do. So that choice that you make more precise decisions about what you want to do and claim your position more. Because you can't be in two places at once here,

like you can at home in Dublin. There's the definite possibility of getting intellectual indigestion. I'm happy to be in a period in which I am thinking more than doing, and knowing at some point that will flip.

Is there any particular place you've ever felt an attachment to, a yearn to visit or go back to?

The Skellig did that to me; made me want to return — which was the beginning of my collaboration with AA Bronson there this year.

What did you work on?

Our collaboration was an Invocation of the Queer Spirits for the Skellig Rock. This outcrop was a 6th–12th century monastery and now a UNESCO heritage site. Because the Skellig had its own timezone (!) people could get married there outside of Lent. The place became associated with marriage and after it was demonasticised couples made pilgrimages there, to bless their unions. It turned into a place of courtship and then of general debauchery, alcohol and sex. To be included on a 'Skellig List' poem was a form of public humiliation and shaming. So our performance explored the history of the Skellig and invoked the queer spirits of the place: the histories of the place, pre- and post-monastic histories that had been excised or forgotten. We had



costumes made with high-vis material knitted into them. The images and costumes from the work are currently on show at Witte de With, Rotterdam in a show called The Temptation of AA Bronson.

Your drawings were used as part of the Jasper Conran show at LFW this year. How did that come about, whose idea was it?

Well — I was talking to Jasper about my making painted garments for performative works. And I was wondering if he could help me think about that. A few days later he rang and asked me to work on his collection. So it kind of flipped, from me wanting him to assist with my work, to me being very involved in his. It started with the fabrics for the last four dresses — the eveningwear. I made drawings and these were screen-printed onto different silks. Then Jasper asked me to make the catwalk and the set for the show. And the idea is that the surroundings and the dresses kind of merge in the finale of the collection — like the merging of body and space, or an interior and exterior world.

Fashion has come into your work before, e.g. the Paper Ball with the paper garments. Did you create those yourself? Where did the thinking come from?

The Paper Ball was set in Castletown House, a place that was all about a certain type of manners or behaviour in the

past, and perhaps even more so now as a very preserved heritage site. The performance was this kind of excessive moment or rupture in the place for a very short duration. The dresses were made in paper, partially in advance by me, finished on the day by my team, and made to be destroyed through their use. The thing only lasted three minutes, and was recorded on black and white 16mm. So the document looks like it is from the past, but doesn't necessarily give away what past.

Do you think parts of the art world still look down on fashion as a 'lower' art form? Is it seen as more commercial?

Yeah — though there are confluences, it's definitely a different world with a lot of differing values. I think both have their limitations and there is of course snobbery and misunderstandings between them.

Your Radical Science won the Uniquely Dublin competition\*. I guess that was quite subversive, in that I don't imagine it was the response Uniquely Dublin expected. Had you expected it yourself or did it come as a surprise?

Gary Farrelly and I had been making these Radical Science videos as an aside to our own separate practices — very provisional and badly-made videos that we began making on my mobile phone. I entered it in the competition as a provocation, and didn't

think it would get past the jury stage. I suppose they must have been swamped with more earnest entries and the shoddy production and bad taste of Radical Science was a relief? Then it went to the public vote and that was that. The best bit for me was seeing our pseudo-documentary played unmediated on the RTÉ news. The line between fact and fiction became even more skewed. Gary talking about the Spire being "put up by the office of public erections" and the famine memorial being "a document of Dublin's first fashion week" — on the national news with the RTÉ logo down the bottom!

\*Editors note: Uniquely Dublin was an international competition held in 2013 to celebrate Dublin, calling for entrants with something original to say about the city, in a unique manner.





Inde pendent

INVENTORY



Inventory started out as h(y)r Collective, a successful blog and small online store tapping into a refined aesthetic in men's fashion and design. At the peak of its popularity the team behind it began work on a printed publication. Their decision to pursue print on top of a thriving online platform might have surprised many but the additional, more in-depth content took the company to a new level. It also proved an opportune time to rebrand and develop their retail interests – a much bigger online store and two brick and mortar shops – into what is today known as Inventory. Our commercial director Garrett catches up with the Editor at Large Philip Watts in New York.

h(y)r Collective really stood out to me. It veered away from the standard blogs, and later with Inventory, it picked up on lesser-known brands. Does that same ethos still run through the company now?

It was a jumping off point that allowed its founders, Ryan Willms and Owen Parrott, to realise that there was a wider audience for what they were doing. The switch from h(y)r Collective to Inventory came not long after Simon Roe joined the company, and all three set about creating a much broader vision for the future. Both companies were originally quite focused on delivering an insight into the products and people the three of them admired, but with Inventory this grew to include a wider range of interests and topics, which has, over time, allowed both the magazine and company to flourish. This all essentially comes from the personal tastes and experiences of the Inventory team, combined with the talents and insight of those that we've been fortunate enough to work alongside over the past four years.

We theme each issue of THREAD to reflect our mood and concerns at the time and try to explore these ideas within the content. Do you take a similar approach?

We never set ourselves particular themes, but we certainly have goals. A lot of the magazine business comes down to both luck and design. There are often things that you want to do

that take a longer time to achieve than you first envisioned, while on the other hand a lot of things land in front of you, that are too good or too interesting to ignore. We only do two issues a year and we have a lot of content we try to fit in, so it's always a balancing act. For us, we always want people's work to get the attention and space it deserves; that's our number one priority. We are a niche publication at the end of the day, and we're constantly finding interesting ways to work within those parameters.

How do you feel about having an online store and a physical space? I sense that the physical retail store is very important to you?

Several of us have quite extensive retail backgrounds, and have grown up enjoying that experience; relishing the time we spent either working in or visiting those shops. I think we all enjoy being in that sort of environment and interacting with the people you meet there. We wanted our own stores to be a place where customers can leave with a bag full of new clothes or nothing at all, and either way enjoy the experience and the space itself. It's about the joy of discovery really – when you encounter something new, or find something at last that you've been looking for forever. You can't put a price on that. It's the same with the magazine, and it all comes from the joy in sharing things. It's great

to show people a new product or expose the work of a new photographer in the magazine. They're two sides of the same coin. Having the online store is great; the reach and impact cannot be rivaled, but seeing something in the flesh is hard to top, and it's nice to be able to offer both ways of shopping.

One of my favourite brands that came out of New York was Nom De Guerre, and I remember h(y)r working with them several years ago. With Inventory there have been pop up stores in both Partners & Spade and Vitsoe in New York. Did they help shape your store there when it opened?

To a degree, although our way of presenting the products was already well established when we opened our Vancouver location in May 2010. While none of us are originally from New York – so to a degree might be considered outsiders – we're all very familiar with the city and I've personally lived here for almost a decade now. Doing the pop ups was a great way to see first hand that there was an existing customer base here, but they were mostly opportunities to work with other brands and companies we admired, rather than any sort of pre-planned business model. We had always felt that there was a gap in New York men's retail, and an opportunity for us to open a store that people would want to visit, to find products they couldn't get elsewhere.

Images: AARON WOJACK





How long were you looking for a location?

We knew about the space from visiting Koji and his excellent shop Extra. We made some initial inquiries a couple of years ago, but for various reasons the timing wasn't right. A little later the space became available again, and we decided it was too good an opportunity to ignore any longer. This is a really great neighbourhood, and the location is pretty interesting for New York: you're in a busy area, but tucked away down a quiet little alleyway. With Extra right next door it means we not only have a friend close by, but our customers will often shop with Koji and vice versa.

This symbiotic relationship between the stores helps to make the alleyway a destination for people. We are fortunate to have a customer base that knows our work from online and in print, so we don't have to rely on walk-in traffic. Being here also means that it's rarely too busy to be able to help people when they come in, and so we're able to take the time to talk with customers, who in turn are able to enjoy the shopping experience a little more.

More and more stores are adopting the same approach to retail that, for me, Inventory sort of pioneered...

I think there is an avenue now for almost anybody to bring something to

the table, and whether that's something new, or worthwhile or interesting is up to the consumer to decide. Maybe there are a few connections here and there; stores that have a similar approach and brand list, but by and large the shops that I visit are very different from one another. There are exceptions of course, and there are always going to be people that jump onto a perceived bandwagon or follow a particular trend, but for the most part if I look around internationally I see a lot of really interesting and varied stores out there. There are many different ways to reinterpret these various products and ideas, and I like to think we've found our own, and offer something different from anything else you might see out there.

Do you think the menswear industry is getting more exciting?

Well there's certainly more interest now. In New York for a while it was a little more hidden; there were less stores, and you didn't see it as much. It's changing a little now, but for a while I'd see it more when I'd go to somewhere like London, where you'd see these groups of guys all looking the part and shopping on a Saturday in packs! Maybe because menswear felt neglected for so long it seems like it's been expanding almost exponentially over the last few years, but I think people are just a little more clued

in now, and more willing to invest in quality. On the flip side, once that expansion happens, it's easy for things to feel old quite quickly, so it's important to keep moving forward, and to keep evolving. These days it seems like men are seeking something more creative, and would rather spend their money on something important, interesting, or of a higher quality.



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