



Image credit: All Our Children collection, Image by Ruth Ossai, SS21

## Bethany Williams: Alternative Systems display

Opens 22 February 2022 the Design Museum

Media Preview Tuesday 22 February, 8AM, RSVP to [pr@designmuseum.org](mailto:pr@designmuseum.org)

[IMAGES HERE](#)

Celebrate London-based fashion designer Bethany Williams, who is pursuing an alternative vision for the fashion industry by using waste materials and forging community collaborations.

Encounter her highly individual creative approach, examine her process material and get to know the communities she has given voice to through her innovative designs.

The free display also pays tribute to the Emergency Designer Network, a collaboration which resulted in thousands of sets of scrubs being provided to frontline workers during the pandemic.

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This spring, the Design Museum presents Bethany Williams: Alternative Systems, a celebration of a new model for the fashion industry proposed by the studio's work. Opening on Tuesday 22 February 2022, this dedicated display explores the way in which Williams' work confronts

social and environmental issues through community collaboration and a spirit of reuse.

Exhibited across the four walls of the balcony gallery in the museum's atrium, the display is part of the 'Designers Thinking in Public' programme. Expressing Williams' approach to design, it presents the story of her innovative process as a designer through garments, textile samples, archive material, photography and film footage. Visitors will also have the chance to touch sample fabrics that have been made by repurposing waste.

Whether it is by using waste ribbon to create woven fabrics, telling the stories of partnered charities through print design or constructing garments in collaboration with rehabilitation programmes, discover how activism and the environment are at the heart of each project.

**Priya Khanchandani, Head of Curatorial and the display's curator said:**

"Bethany Williams' work fuses a streetwear style with handcrafted forms that are rooted in human values. I see it as a joyous example of design that is socially produced and kinder to our planet. The display is framed around the notion of Alternative Systems because it shows the immense potential for the design industry – fashion and beyond – to confront social and environmental issues through more ethical ways of working. The exhibits unravel the voices of the studio's many collaborators, their creativity sewn into the garments' every stitch, and celebrate what inclusive design could be."

**Bethany Williams, Designer, said:**

"With our work we hope to continue to reach new audiences, encourage inclusivity and positive change for the fashion industry. The Design Museum continues to be aligned with this via the exhibitions curated, including their Waste Age exhibition, which we featured in last year. We are so proud to showcase our new exhibition: Bethany Williams: Alternative Systems, a celebration of the new way of working proposed for the fashion industry by the studio's work. In order to celebrate this exhibition, we are even hosting Bethany Williams' LFW Presentation, 'The Hands that Heal Us' at the London Design Museum, the very day the exhibition launches."

Visitors will get to know the organisations that Williams' studio has collaborated with, such as the San Patrignano drug and alcohol dependence rehabilitation programme in central Italy, the Magpie Project for mothers and their children living in insecure housing in east London, and Adelaide House, a women's shelter based in Liverpool. Each season, the studio collaborates with a different charity and donates a percentage of profits to the cause at hand.

Follow the design story behind each of the studio's collections, including garments with stories embedded into them, such as the 'Prison messages' sports jacket from the Women of Change collection, which features screen-printed words from letters exchanged between the women of HMP Downview prison in London and the women of the San Patrignano community about what change means to them. Alongside it is an image of the 1912 Suffragette Handkerchief embroidered by women at HMP Holloway, which inspired the design of this garment.

In the final section, visitors will get to know the work of the Emergency Designer Network, a collaboration between Phoebe English, Holly Fulton, Cozette McCreery and Bethany Williams. Using their knowledge of textile manufacturing, they created a network that galvanised hundreds of volunteers and provided approximately 12,000 scrubs, 100,000 masks and 4,000 gowns to frontline staff.

To coincide with the display opening, on Tuesday 22nd February, sustainable fashion designer, humanitarian and artist Bethany Williams, will present her latest collection, The Hands that Heal Us, at the Design Museum.

The Hands that Heal Us is inspired by the ever growing community of makers, creatives, local and social manufacturers, all of whom play such an integral part in the Bethany Williams brand and supply chain.

Bethany Williams: Alternative Systems opens on Tuesday 22 February 2022 at the Design Museum. Entry is free of charge.

**-Ends-**

#### **Notes to Editor Curated**

**by**

Priya Khanchandani, Curator

#### **Exhibition Design**

Edit

#### **PRESS ENQUIRIES:**

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#### **About Bethany Williams:**

Bethany Williams is a sustainable fashion designer, humanitarian and artist. After graduating with a BA in Critical Fine Art Practice at Brighton University and receiving an MA at The London College of Fashion in Menswear, Williams launched the label in 2017 with a mission to create positive social

and environmental change in the world. Since its inception, the label has grown exponentially, establishing itself as a leading figure in the fashion industry when it comes to setting sustainability standards. Each of the seasonal collections is approached from a social manufacturing point-of-view which Williams set up at the core of her business which is built within a framework of a social enterprise. By creating long-standing partnerships with local grassroots organisations such as The Magpie Project as well as international social initiatives including San Patrignano, Making For Change and Manusa, Williams is weaving a growing network of creative hubs which contribute to the making of a better tomorrow.

Over the years, Williams has accumulated numerous achievements and accolades, most recently winning the 2021 BFC/Vogue Fashion Designer Fund in addition to the Queen Elizabeth II Award for Design, being the 2019 LVMH Prize finalist as well as receiving two Fashion Awards – as Emerging Menswear Designer in 2019 and for her involvement in the Emergency Design Network initiative in 2020. This year, Williams is a finalist for the International Woolmark Prize with results following later in the year.

**About the Design Museum:**

The Design Museum is the world's leading museum devoted to contemporary architecture and design. Its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. Since it opened its doors in 1989 the museum has displayed everything from an AK-47 to high heels designed by Christian Louboutin. It has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over seven million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers and architects including Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams. On 24 November 2016, the Design Museum relocated to Kensington, west London. John Pawson converted the interior of a 1960s modernist building to create a new home for the Design Museum giving it three times more space in which to show a wider range of exhibitions and significantly extend its learning programme.

In October 2020, the Design Museum was awarded £2,968,634 by Arts Council England from the Culture Recovery Fund announced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

In July 2020, the Design Museum was awarded nearly £1 million National Lottery funding through the Arts Council's Emergency Response Fund.

[designmuseum.org](http://designmuseum.org)