

# WOMEN FASHION POWER

29 OCTOBER 2014 – 26 APRIL 2015 AT THE DESIGN MUSEUM

From Elizabeth I to Margaret Thatcher, Coco Chanel to Lady Gaga, the clothes women wear have always been a powerful form of self-expression and part of a sophisticated visual language.

WOMEN FASHION POWER looks at how influential women have used fashion to define and enhance their position in the world. The exhibition celebrates exceptional women from the spheres of politics, culture, business and fashion – forward thinkers who have had an impact on our wardrobes and the world stage.

Bringing together clothing, photography, archive footage and interviews, WOMEN FASHION POWER showcases twenty-seven contemporary women – each of whom are contributing an outfit for display. In alphabetical order, the women are:

**Genevieve Bell**, Vice President of Intel Labs, Director of User Experience  
**Camila Batmanghelidjh**, Founder and Director of Kids Company  
**Joan Burstein**, Founder of Browns  
**Shami Chakrabarti**, Director of Liberty  
**Wei Sun Christianson**, Co-CEO Morgan Stanley, Asia Pacific  
**Livia Firth**, Creative Director of Eco Age  
**Lady Gaga**, Musician and performer  
**Miriam González Durántez**, Partner at Dechert, wife of Deputy Prime Minister of the UK Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP  
**Diane von Furstenberg**, Founder and Co-chair of Diane von Furstenberg  
**Thea Green MBE**, Founder and Managing Director of Nails Inc.  
**SHS Princess Charlène of Monaco**  
**Dame Zaha Hadid**, Founder and Director of Zaha Hadid Architects  
**Anne Hidalgo**, Mayor of Paris  
**Roksanda Ilincic**, Designer  
**Qiong-er Jiang**, Artistic Director of Shangxia, China  
**Anna Jones**, Chief Executive of Hearst Magazines UK  
**Alfiya Kuanysheva**, CEO of BATT, Kazakhstan  
**Pearl Lam**, Owner of Pearl Lam Galleries, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore  
**Natalie Massenet MBE**, Founder and Executive Chair of NET-A-PORTER, Chair of British Fashion Council  
**Megha Mittal**, Chairman and Managing Director of Escada  
**Charlotte Olympia**, Designer  
**Julia Peyton-Jones**, Director of the Serpentine Galleries  
**Dame Zandra Rhodes**, Designer  
**Skin**, Musician  
**Kirsty Wark**, Journalist, broadcaster and writer  
**Dame Vivienne Westwood**, Designer  
**Morwenna Wilson**, Senior Projects Director at Argent LLP

Donna Loveday, Head of Curatorial at the Design Museum and co-curator of the exhibition said: 'This exhibition is a celebration of exceptional women. All of the women we invited to contribute to the exhibition were chosen because they are leaders in their field and they understand that the clothes they wear are a part of the way that they communicate with the world. Today we see the evolution of a new power dress code - professional



women are engaging with contemporary fashion as a way to express individuality, a sense of style and project empowerment. The women in this exhibition demonstrate their individual approaches to fashion - in their own words’.

WOMEN FASHION POWER also examines the last 150 years of women’s fashion with an immersive visual timeline which takes the visitor from the restrictive boned corsets of the nineteenth century to the statement Louboutin heels of today. Alongside archive photography and film footage, pieces on display include: a 1920s beaded ‘flapper’ dress, 1930s clothes and accessories owned by Elsa Schiaparelli, a 1941 handbag designed for carrying your gas mask in style, a ‘Le Smoking’ suit designed by Yves Saint Laurent in 1966, the blue Mansfield suit worn by Margaret Thatcher when she was elected leader of the Conservative party in 1975, a punk wedding dress from Zandra Rhodes’ 1977 ‘Conceptual Chic’ collection, a pair of bubblegum-pink 1980s Reebok Hi Tops and the Jacques Azagury dress worn by Diana, Princess of Wales on the occasion of her 36th birthday.

As more women are holding office and being recruited into society’s most powerful leadership roles, WOMEN FASHION POWER asks whether it is time to reassess the role of fashion in the public sphere – not a frivolous distraction, but an essential component of the working woman’s toolkit.

WOMEN FASHION POWER is designed by the world renowned architect Zaha Hadid. The exhibition is co-curated by fashion expert and commentator Colin McDowell and Donna Loveday, Head of Curatorial at the Design Museum.

Colin McDowell said ‘This exhibition shows how women have used different approaches to dress in order to make statements which are unique to them and their personalities. Few of the women in this exhibition would see themselves as fashion plates or even strong fashion followers. They create their own wardrobes, not to be fashion plates but to demonstrate who and what they are.’

**DESIGN MUSEUM, SHAD THAMES, LONDON, SE1 2YD**

**OPENING: 10.00 -17.45 daily. Last admission: 17.15**

**Admissions: £12.40 Adults, £9.30 Students, Members and Under 6s free. PUBLIC INFORMATION T: 020 7940 8790 W: [designmuseum.org](http://designmuseum.org)**

**#WOMENFASHIONPOWER**

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## Notes to Editors

- The **Design Museum** is the world's leading museum devoted to architecture and design. The museum opened in 1989 and its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. The museum has hosted exhibitions showcasing some of the most important pioneers of design including, Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, and Dieter Rams. The Design Museum plans to relocate from its current home at Shad Thames to the former Commonwealth Institute building in Kensington, West London. The project is expected to be completed by 2016. Leading designer John Pawson will convert the interior of the Commonwealth Institute 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, showcase its world class collection and extend its learning programme. For more information, please visit: [designmuseum.org](http://designmuseum.org)
- Advertising campaign for WOMEN FASHION POWER provided by **The Beautiful Meme**, a brand and advertising agency led by writer Tom Sharp and designer Ben Haworth. Cited by The Drum as one of the UK's top 25 emerging agencies, and winners of the 2013 Design Week Best Identity for their work on The Battle of Bannockburn, TBM also rebranded English National Ballet last year. As well as their work for clients across the world, The Beautiful Meme are creating their own swarm of robots.