

WOMEN FASHION POWER

A film installation specially commissioned for the exhibition

2014

A film by Ruth Hogben

Julia Peyton-Jones OBE, director of the Serpentine Galleries, London

As a gallery director and curator I have to be very visually aware and this is something that inevitably extends to what I wear and how I appear. People who work in the arts are renowned for looking stylish and well dressed so there can be pressure to look good. It is often less about big labels and money, it is more about clothes that display creativity. The suit I wore to receive my OBE was designed by the late Alexander McQueen. It was a very special outfit for a very special occasion and I was touched by his generosity. He was a true artist who went well beyond the boundaries of fashion.

Anna Jones, chief executive of Hearst magazines UK

As a chief executive, I think it's important to wear clothes that show that you mean business. So working in a creative media business, that doesn't mean power suits so you have to think about having a softer approach to corporate style. For me personally, I tend to wear classic shapes but in interesting fabrics, so some kind of eye-catching detail - maybe a bright colour or an unusual piece of jewellery. I think it's important to have your own style and your own take on things, otherwise it's just clothes.

Megha Mittal, chair and executive director of Escada

I think it's important to find your own style because an original style is definitely always more interesting than one that is borrowed or one that is put on. And I think the most important point of all is always to feel comfortable in your own skin, whatever you wear.

Kirsty Wark, journalist, broadcaster and writer

I present a number of programmes on the BBC including politics, current affairs and arts programmes so I work across a variety of different departments. I'm anchoring programmes and also presenting. I interviewed Mrs Thatcher in the spring of 1990 and I wore a white Armani jacket with amazingly big shoulders. I looked like a New Romantic with my hair coiffed and back. But anyway, I remember thinking that what people said about that, was that I looked fresh and modern whereas Mrs Thatcher looked overdressed and frumpy, which was a little bit unfair but I think was quite interesting about what that conveys on television. What we wear is a reflection of us and you can't get away from that. It is very much about making a statement about your personality.

Morwenna Wilson, senior projects director at Argent LLP

I am a chartered engineer and I manage the design and construction of buildings at Kings Cross for the developer, Argent. I have a Carven 2013 Resort jacket which is probably my favourite jacket ever and continues to be my favourite jacket ever.

Because I work in the built environment, I'm fascinated by buildings and cities, and by maps and how cities evolve over time with quirky little streets versus straight, regular lines. This jacket is a map of Paris, also with the river running through it. I just think it's so beautiful, because from a distance it looks like a very random pattern, but when you get close you can see churches and buildings. The minute I saw it, I just fell in love with it and knew I had to have it.

Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty, the National Council for Civil Liberties

What we wear does matter because it is an expression of our individuality. That is why clothes are so repressed still in so many parts of the world and uniform is imposed on so many people, often against their will.

Wei Sun Christianson, CEO of Morgan Stanley China and Co-CEO of Morgan Stanley Asia Pacific

Invest in a good quality suit that can endure after a long haul flight. Use only a wardrobe with simple essentials like a blouse in a very nice fabric or a black dress. Don't always follow the latest trend. Often the most simple and clean-cut designs are the most versatile and timeless. And always remember to add a touch of your personality with a tint of your favourite colour or piece of jewellery. When you embrace your personality, you will feel comfortable and confident in your own skin.

Joan Burstein CBE, Founder of Browns

I chose this dress because Azzedine Alaïa himself made it for me. This was in the 1980s, I think I was one of the first people that he made privately for, unless you were in France or you were one of his clients. Knowing that has given me great confidence whenever I have worn it. To me, confidence is very powerful, and that's how I interpret it - power dressing.

Thea Green MBE, CEO of Nails Inc

I would never go to a client meeting in flat shoes, I would always put on a pair of heels for that extra bit of confidence. Heels make me feel bold, positive and more fearless. It's great to feel that you can embrace fashion when you work in a profession like I do. It's not so corporate, but you do need to make some clever choices if you want to be taken seriously and always be the professional.

Film credits

Producer

Drue Bisley

Director of Photography

Edward Edwards

Lighting Director

Robin Brigham

Digital Imaging Technician
Laura Falconer

Sound Design
Gunnar Óskarsson

The Design Museum would like to extend special thanks to all of the women who have contributed to the film.