

# At the National Museum of Scotland Body Beautiful – Diversity on the Catwalk

A new exhibition opens today at the National Museum of Scotland. Entitled Body Beautiful it seeks to challenge the usual view of what beauty on the catwalk is.

This looks at bodies of all shapes and sizes regardless of gender, age, race or disability. Recent fashion seasons have included models of diverse types with brands like New York's Chromat leading the way. In London, Teatum Jones chose not to stage a runway show at all for its spring/summer 2019 Round Table not Runway presentation, and instead brought fashion leaders and activists together for a discussion on the industry's responsibility to better reflect society.



Sinéad Burke poses with a Christopher Kane outfit she has loaned for the exhibition, displayed on a bespoke mannequin cast from her body. PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography

Sponsored by Edinburgh St James and supported by Arts & Business Scotland through its Culture & Business Fund Scotland, the exhibition champions the people, designs, and voices influencing positive body image and inclusivity, presenting key looks that show pivotal developments in contemporary fashion. On display are catwalk ensembles from designers including Ferragamo, Pam Hogg, Ashish and Jean Paul Gaultier, brought to life through film, photography and fashion publications.

Interviews capture the different perspectives of key influencers in the industry, from casting directors and models to stylists, editors, educators and advocates. The work of noted fashion photographers – including Nick Knight, Emma Summerton and Amos Mac – is displayed alongside audiovisuals from designers FTL Moda and Teatum Jones, fashion showcase Fashion Scout and other independent film makers. The exhibition also draws on the work of students from Edinburgh

College of Art's Diversity Network, incorporating the voices of the next generation of young designers.



Sinéad Burke poses with a Christopher Kane outfit she has loaned for the exhibition, displayed on a bespoke mannequin cast from her body. PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography

In planning *Body Beautiful*, the exhibition team consulted an advisory panel of specialists to ensure that a broad range of voices and experts in the field of diversity inform the exhibition's content and accompanying programming. These include fashion commentator Caryn Franklyn MBE; model Eunice Olumide MBE; academic and writer Sinéad Burke and activist, writer and public speaker Jamie Windust. Bespoke mannequins have been commissioned to reflect the range of people represented in the exhibition, including two which were cast from life.

Georgina Ripley, Senior Curator of Modern & Contemporary Fashion & Textiles at National Museums Scotland said: "Diversity has become a key talking point in the fashion world in recent years, and *Body Beautiful* is the first exhibition to examine the various ways in which the industry is addressing body positivity. With more and more designers incorporating ideas around inclusivity into their work, attitudes are shifting, making this a particularly exciting time in fashion.

"The catwalk creations on display in this exhibition offer a refreshing counterpoint to historical, narrow ideals of beauty, and they demonstrate that diversity can be a consideration for everyone working in the fashion industry today."

Rochelle Burgess, Associate Director for Edinburgh St James said: "We're delighted to be a part of this exhibition that celebrates the rich tapestry of diverse voices and talent within the fashion industry and hope to collaborate again in the future with National Museums Scotland. Edinburgh St James will create a new fashion hub for the capital, providing a home for the brands that this city has been waiting for.

“From the start, we have sought to blend Edinburgh St James with the vibrant culture of the city and exhibitions like Body Beautiful perfectly encapsulate what this cosmopolitan capital is all about.”



Body Beautiful: Diversity on the Catwalk, Thursday 23 May to Sunday 20 October 2019, National Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh A new exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland examines how today's fashion industry is challenging perceptions and championing alternative ideals of beauty on the catwalk, in advertising, editorial and behind the camera. The first exhibition of its kind in the world, Body Beautiful: Diversity on the Catwalk looks at how fashion creatives are embracing inclusivity and body positivity by exploring five key themes: size; gender; age; race and disability. Visitors will learn how the industry is calling into question existing practice, and why it must address diversity from the inside out to reappraise contemporary ideals of beauty. Pic caption: Sinéad Burke poses with a Christopher Kane outfit she has loaned for the exhibition, displayed on a bespoke mannequin cast from her body. PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography [www.neilhannaphotography.co.uk](http://www.neilhannaphotography.co.uk) 07702 246823