

Museum unveils new commission – a little black dress by VIN + OMI

A new exhibition which opens at the National Museum of Scotland in July – Beyond the Little Black Dress – will include a new commission for the National Collection.

The commission is a dress by designers and climate activists VIN + OMI which includes horsehair and nettles from Highgrove, the private residence of Their Majesties The King and Queen, and it will go on display on 1 July.

The bold design was created for VIN + OMI's Autumn Winter 2020 collection. Emblazoned with the word 'RESIST', the streetwear-inspired look defies the expectations of the classic 'little black dress' whilst its materials and construction set a gold standard for sustainable production. The design team calculate the exact energy used in the production of their garments, down to the number of calories burned.

Georgina Ripley, Principal Curator of Modern and Contemporary Design at National Museums Scotland said: "We are delighted to have commissioned this striking piece for the National Collection, and we look forward to revealing it to visitors in Beyond the Little Black Dress. Fashion is one of the most energy-consuming, polluting, and wasteful of modern industries. In response, contemporary designers are seeking more sustainable solutions, like this nature-led approach from VIN + OMI. Their 'LBD' challenges us to resist the mainstream

and place the environment at the forefront of our fashion choices.”

The commission by [VIN + OMI](#) is one of the garments on display in an area of the exhibition exploring design responses to the climate crisis, and how new technologies can assist in reducing the fashion industry’s impact on the environment.

VIN + OMI are award-winning fashion and multimedia designers with studios throughout the UK. They began their collaboration with The King in 2019 as part of a project to creatively explore the waste output of the Highgrove Estate.

At The King’s suggestion, they initially collected waste nettles from the grounds of the estate to see how they might be utilised. They then developed a new-to-market nettle textile produced via innovative methods of fibre bonding and plant preparation. They went on to develop unique textiles and materials from Highgrove’s willow cuttings, cow parsley, plastic plant pots, horsehair and other organic materials.

VIN + OMI said: “For the last 20 years we have purposely set out to avoid being part of the fashion machine that contributes to the demise of the planet.

“We do not retail our clothing and are much more excited about experimentation, teaching and challenging. Our dress for National Museums Scotland shows what can happen with the waste from UK estates. These estates produce a large amount of plant and other waste.

“We have collaborated with King Charles for four years and his open-minded, eco, approach to running his estates makes a collaboration like this possible. National Museums Scotland is the perfect final home for this work – the alternatives to fast fashion must be constantly explored.

“Housing our work here helps future generations learn ways of naturally producing garments that do minimal damage to our

planet.”

Beyond the Little Black Dress is curated by Georgina Ripley, Principal Curator, Modern and Contemporary Design, National Museums Scotland, Dr Sequoia Barnes, Guest Curator and Carys Wilkins, Assistant Curator, Modern and Contemporary Design, National Museums Scotland. It will be accompanied by a [programme of events](#).

The accompanying book [Little Black Dress: A Radical Fashion](#) edited by Georgina Ripley, £30.00, is published by NMS Enterprises Ltd – Publishing.

Beyond the Little Black Dress is part of Edinburgh Art Festival, taking place between 11–27 August 2023.

edinburghartfestival.com/eaf-2023/



A model walks down the catwalk in the National Museums Scotland commission at London Fashion Week (February 2020). © VIN OMI



Award-winning fashion and multimedia designers VIN OMI. Image credit Jon Baker