



ISSUE 1

SIGHTFEELING



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THE COLOUR ALPHABET

For the inaugural edition of Seam Zine, we have decided to incorporate ‘The Colour Alphabet’ by ColourAdd to highlight the colours of garments and images.

These symbols will be visible throughout our digital magazine, accessed through the various QR codes across the Zine, to allow for users with colour impairments access and recognise the variety of colours throughout this zine. Below is the code that can be followed to understand what symbol corresponds to each colour.

Five graphic symbols, represent the Primary Colors (Blue, Yellow, Red) plus White and Black.



BLUE






YELLOW

RED

WHITE

BLACK






Through the acquired knowledge of the “Color Addition Theory”, the Code Symbols can be related and the entire color pallet identified.



Red

Blue






Purple



Yellow

Blue






Green



Red

Green

Brown



Red

Yellow

Orange

All Colour Symbols

 <div>Blue</div>	 <div>Green</div>	 <div>Yellow</div>	 <div>Orange</div>	 <div>Red</div>	 <div>Purple</div>	 <div>Brown</div>
 <div>Light Blue</div>	 <div>Light Green</div>	 <div>Light Yellow</div>	 <div>Light Orange</div>	 <div>Light Red</div>	 <div>Light Purple</div>	 <div>Light Brown</div>
 <div>Dark Blue</div>	 <div>Dark Green</div>	 <div>Dark Yellow</div>	 <div>Dark Orange</div>	 <div>Dark Red</div>	 <div>Dark Purple</div>	 <div>Dark Brown</div>
 <div>White</div>	 <div>Black</div>	 <div>Light Grey</div>	 <div>Dark Grey</div>	 <div>Gold</div>	 <div>Silver</div>	



MASTHEAD



Seam Zine Issue 1 'Sightfeeling'

Feature 1 *Photographers*

Daniel Ducasse, Aiesha
Accouche, Joe Fernandez

Talent

Marrius Pichay, Oleksandr
Aryku, Mixo Mbungela,
Zaahirah Wilde & Alexandra
Burton-Jones

Styling Assistant

Joe Fernandez

Styling

Models Own

Feature 2 *Photographer*

Joe Fernandez

Talent

Gianluca La Villa, Ry Rush,
Zoe Butcher, Aziz Anity,
Thomas Bradford, Layal
Balubaid, Charlotte Holly,
Seren Thomas & Freya East

Styling

Models Own

Set Designer

Joe Fernandez

Set Assistants

Alexandra Burton-Jones,
Freya East & Ry Rush

Feature 3 *Photographer*

Joe Fernandez

Talent

Marrius Pichay & Celian
Dewasmes

Clothing & Accessories

Silk Shirt - Gianluca La
Villa, **Shell Hearing Aid**
- Freya East & **Shell Hair**
Clips - Joe Fernandez

Set & Styling Assistants

Aiesha Accouche & Freya
East

Styling

Joe Fernandez

MANIFESTO

A Tribute To Those With A Deeper Vision...

The fashion industry is a business focused on the idea of looks, aesthetics and beauty. Seam is less interested in fashion but rather **style...**

Style is not clothing, materials or colours. Style is not something that can be packaged, sold and left on the bedroom floor.

Style is the intangibles and feelings which transcends fashion and allows our readers to express their identity freely. Without the anxiety that comes from the awareness of our bodies.

Style is the intonation of your voice, your sense of humour, the things which make you scream with anger or cry of laughter.

Something that is truly unique,

Style is more than what is seen at first sight

In this issue we celebrate the communities who have true style.

No choice but to live their lives on something deeper than what can be seen with our eyes.

People who will always have style because its the only way they are felt, heard and seen.

Seam is how we are binded together through different layers of being, celebrating and welcoming our style into each others lives.



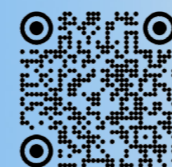
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Manifesto Writer - Joe Fernandez, **Interview's Writer** - Joe Fernandez,
Article Writer - Will Robins, **Painting** - Ghishlan Ranchoux, **Interviewees**,
Alex Cowan & Jenny Graham

Special Thanks To ...

Alexandra Burton-Jones, Thomas Bradford, Layal Balubaid, Freya East,
Ewa Besciak, Charlotte Holly, Emil Sumovskij, Lynda Fitzwater, the UCA
Photography Department & Andrew Warren.



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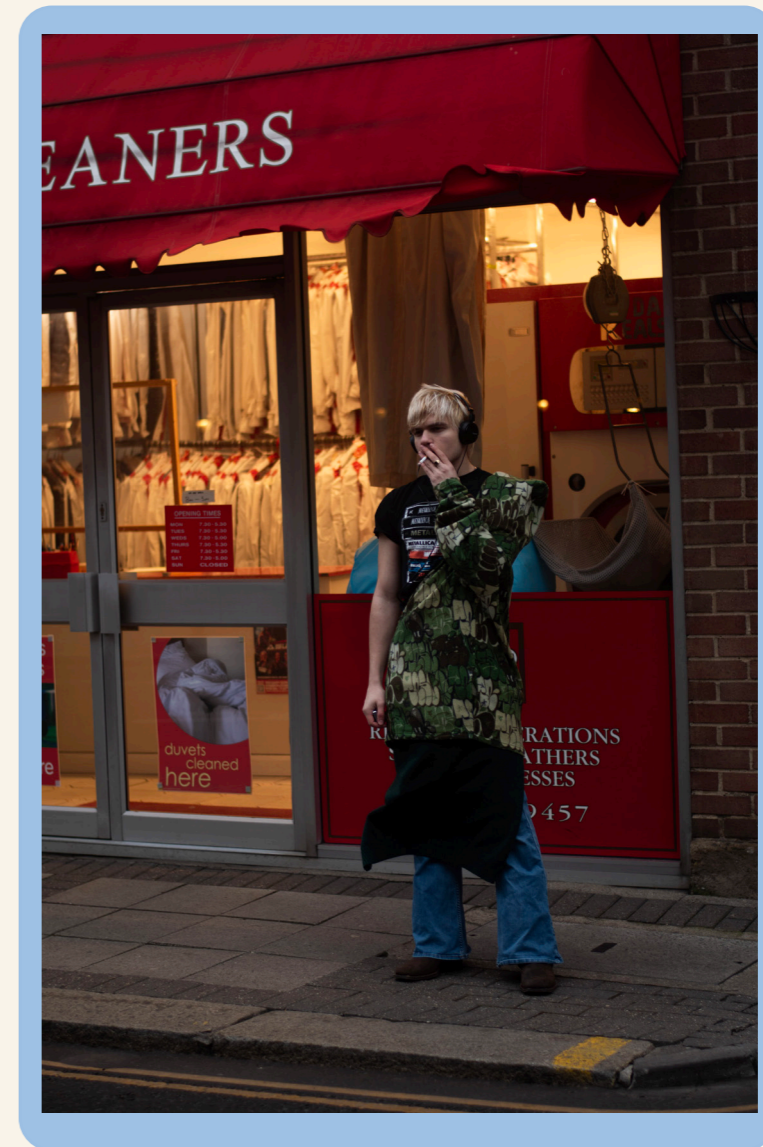
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Graham



FUNCTION & FEELING

CHARLOTTE
HOLLY



Decades ago, clothes were more accessible towards people with disabilities. There were tailors that would design clothes using techniques such as wrapping to make clothes comfortable and custom suited to the person wearing it.

Nowadays, clothes for people with disabilities are focused on function over feeling. This feature aims to imagine the idea of clothes coming back to being tailored for the model and worn in creative ways to create comfort whilst still making the model feel confident and good in what they are wearing.



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What Is Your Name?

Marrius

What Are Your Garments?

T-Shirts
from SZA &
The Prodigy
Concerts

Why Are They
Important To You?

They are important to me
as they are t-shirts from the
first ever concerts I went to.
They are sentimental to me
because of the friends I went
with and because I really
connect with their music.

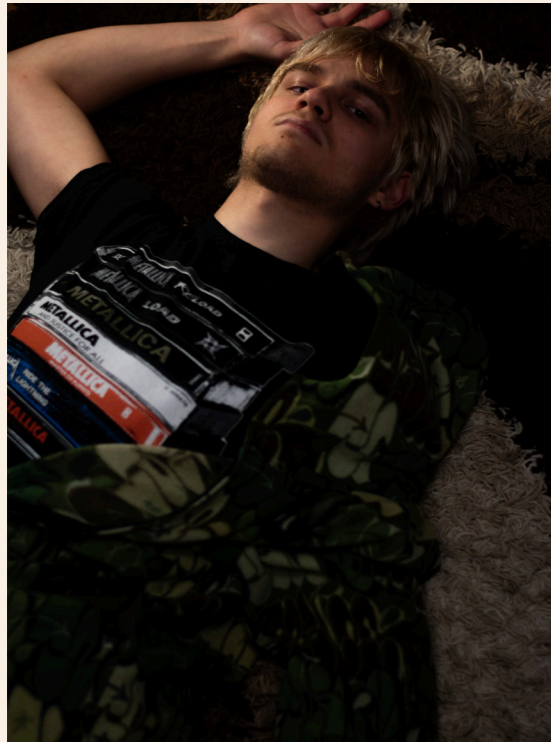
Photographed by Daniel Ducasse
Modelled & Styled by Marrius Pichay
Assisted by Joe Fernandez





What Is Your Name?

Sasha



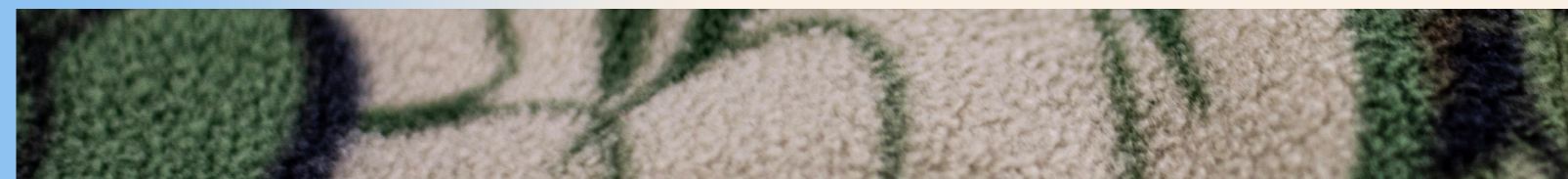
What Are Your Garments?

A green
camouflage
zip-up fleece
and a dark
green knitted
jumper.

Why Are They Important To You?

I think about my grandfather when I wear these clothes. I bought them whilst with him in a charity shop and we made his first BeReal there at that moment, so it brings back good memories of him.

Photographed by Daniel Ducasse
Modelled & Styled by Oleksandr Aryku
Assisted by Joe Fernandez



FUNCTION & FEELING

What Is Your Name?

Alex

What Is Your Garment?

A union-jack belt



Why Is It Important To You?

I chose this belt, as its something I would've loved to wear when I was younger. I think it makes a statement and also juxtaposes my identity as a black british woman, which is why I love it.

Photographed by Joe Fernandez

Modelled & Styled by

Alexandra Burton-Jones

What Is Your Name?

Mixo

Photographed by Aiesha Accouche
Modelled & Styled by Mixo Mbungela

What Are Your Garments?

A green, gray,
black and white
knitted striped
sweater.

Why Are They Important To You?

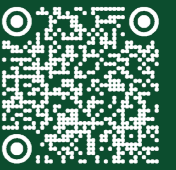
It reminds me of the earth. The
many different colours that the
earth brings as well as it being
my favourite colour, which I like
wearing, green.





An Interview With Alex Cowan

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SZ - Thank you very much for joining me today Alex, how are you?

AC- I'm good thank you, I've just come back from a lovely holiday in Costa Rica, so I'm chilled out and I'm loving life.

SZ - Amazing! Well, we will start off relaxed then, what is your name and can you tell us about the work that you do.

AC - My name is Alex Cowan, I work as a project archivist at the National Disability Arts Collection, which is a longstanding project based at the University of Buckinghamshire. I helped develop the initial application to the lottery to develop and deliver the archive.
The NDACA covers the history of UK

disability arts from around 1980 to the present, it primarily focuses on the living experience of disability but a part of that also has particular relevance and parallels with the history of disabled peoples struggles for civil rights In the UK at the same time, particularly in the 1990s but of course that struggle lives on today. We hold a collection of work created by disabled artists which falls into the category of the disability arts movement. Some people say this art is a movement such as surrealism or impressionism and the common criteria for this is that it has to be art about the lived experience of disabilities in some way.

SZ - That's super interesting, would you be able to maybe go into more detail about the NDACA's significance in

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEX COWAN

documenting the disabled arts scene in the UK over the last 20 years, because I think the sheer size of work that it has done is amazing.

AC – There's no other collection like it anywhere in the world. There are obviously disabled artists working solely in other countries, but I think what makes this collection so unique is that fact that firstly its multimedia. It covers everything from sculpture to embroidery & fabric work and other visual art to audio art as well. There's no one format that the artists focus on and it includes artists with a full range of disabilities from artists with physical disabilities to neurodivergent and artists with learning difficulties.

The founder of the concept was a disabled artist called Tony Heaton who realised that work by disabled artists wasn't necessarily represented in the collections, they were quite often overshadowed, or the collections didn't understand what the art was fully examining which meant disabled artists were often hesitant in describing and publicising their work. They worked with a charity called Shape, which has been running for 40 years, which exists to develop the career of disabled artists in the UK.

The first thing that struck me when I first started work on the collection was the

amount of people who had, in their own terms, entered the mainstream. That might be people like Jenny Seely who is the director of the disability

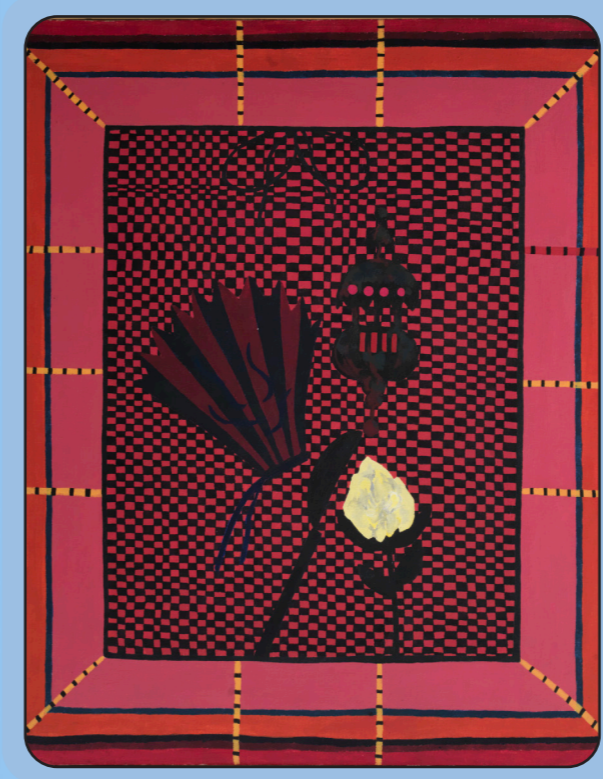
run theatre company Gray Eye, who did the opening ceremony for the Paralympics or Liz Carr the actor who has been in many shows.

Some of the artists we have worked with have made the mainstream and are well known in their own right as individual artists rather than being a part of a collective. There's a saying in disability rights, 'Nothing about us without us' a phrase borrowed from the anti-apartheid movement from the 80s. I think that's the most important reason for the collection because it means nobody speaks for these artists but themselves rather than taking into concern the artistic considerations of the mainstream. That goes right down to the descriptions of our work, where a normal catalogue writer might not have the experience to adequately describe the art that they are cataloguing.

SZ – So I guess the importance of having people that are really embedded in the culture of disabled arts really makes the NDACA so key to sharing these important stories. That's really amazing. In the last 20 years how have you seen the disability arts scene evolve within in the UK and what role has yourself and the NDACA played in preserving and continuing to preserve that history

AC - I'd say the part played directly by NDACA in this regard is quite minor, I think is important to this work should be preserved. And doubly important given that quite a lot of art produced by disabled people is in media that has quite a short life span, due to the materials that they are created from. There are a few works in oil and some in stone but mostly we have things drawn in felt

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEX COWAN



**'My Magic Fan (with noisy machine)'
by Lynne Beel, 1973 (Oil on Canvas)**

tip, things drawn on wipeable whiteboards, things produced with the best materials that those artists could afford, which often don't have longevity. Because disabled artists sadly don't enjoy careers or even lifespans as long and as popular as some artists might do, it's quite easy for things to be lost. I find it quite ironic that some disabled artists were very early digital adopters. The fact that they were using very primitive computers to produce their artwork for reasons of access has led to greater problems that might be faced by more and more mainstream artists because the software itself is inherently fragile.

I think the most important thing you can do is preserve and make people, including disabled contemporary artists, aware of the heritage that exists and the importance of it. I think the most interesting thing about disabilities arts,

is as I mentioned, how some of it can quickly become mainstream. I don't mean that in the negative context I just mean that in terms of audience reach when an artist ceases to be seen only by disabled audiences and becomes something that is more widely known.

I suppose you could see the same with fashion designers when they start out small and niche. Or with all of the fashion trends which might be from a portion of society that are marginalised. Through repetition and development, it moves into the mainstream, such as fashion trends adopted from LGBTQ communities. There are many examples of this throughout fashion and I think it's just another interesting example, of what started out as an marginalised culture or cultural expression becomes popular and more mainstream. I find that fascinating.

Honestly, people are always looking for the new, for the different and I think NDACA makes it possible for people to go on a voyage of discovery about disability arts in the same way.

SZ - That's really interesting, I think expanding on that, you talked about digital art, fashion and you've commented briefly on the different types of art that a lot of disabled artists have done. In your time as an archivist, is there any forms of artistic expression that you think are maybe less commonly seen in the disabled arts community? And why do you think that is? Also, I guess, expanding on that,



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what are the most common types of art that you see, If there are any?

AC - That's a difficult one to answer. I would say probably the biggest most noticeable thing is how quickly any sort of artwork becomes popular and acquires value.

Damian Hurst has been producing images of disability throughout his career and by dint of where he is, and then where he sits within with the artistic world, very quickly becomes quite common currency. And I think it takes longer for a disabled artist who uses their work to comment on the experience of disability to achieve fame, for want of a better term. I wouldn't say that there is any media that disabled artists don't work in, not that I'm aware of. What's quite interesting is that I think there are some areas that are exclusively in the preserve of disabled artists. One of the trends that we're only just starting to pick up on, is the fact that 3D printers allow for disabled people to design their own prosthesis. Whilst this is mainly an American trend, the artwork that is being produced to manufacture artificial arms or hands, is so far away from what the NHS or medical manufacturers provide. For it to be seen as artworks in their own right I find that very interesting.

Probably one of the most loaded pieces of artistry is a self-portrait. Lots of people when they first go to art school, the first thing they are asked to do is

paint themselves and our collection is filled with self-portraits, quite a lot of them nude. There is obviously a mission in the minds of these artists who create these paintings, to recapture their own body and I find that makes self-portraits by the artists we hold, I think more powerful. Because there's a whole layer of ownership of your body and having confidence or a lack of shame in your body, plays a role that it might not play for an artist in a different situation coming from a different angle. That's noticeable in every collection of visual art that we acquire, whether people paint or draw as an image or an expression, there are always these self-portrait images that are really quite loaded with meaning and significance because other institutions are constantly trying to own negative images for themselves, and I find that very interesting.

SZ – Yeah definitely, that's amazing, from an outsider's perspective I never would've thought about it like that but that's very enlightening.

AC - In a fashion context, before you dress yourself and in style & fashion, you have to work on the assumption that the body you bring to be clothed, doesn't necessarily belong to you or it seems in society like it doesn't belong to you, and I also think that gives a whole different layer to self-expression

SZ – That's a really amazing response and absolutely. My next question to you would be, how do you think the disabled arts scene in the UK has influenced mainstream perceptions of disability in general life. Art can sometimes be a way to highlight

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEX COWAN

something or help see something in a different light.

Do you think the art scene helps people understand disability a bit more? I understand that disability of course isn't fully understood and appreciated by the general public, so expanding on that, what do you think needs to change for the needs of the disabled community to be clearer in the conscience of the next generation of designers?

AC - Yeah, I think the most important thing, that we have been doing since the 90s, it's the dreaded v word, visibility. Just to see disabled people in a wide variety of situations, and depictions. I'm fascinated by charity collection boxes. The thing I find interesting about the charity collection boxes that I remember from my childhood was that, quite often the only disabled people I saw would be wearing the boxes that I remember. Because the living disabled people were hiding. Now disabled people appear on TV, in film and in the pages fashion magazines. Vogue, and others have all featured people with some kind of disability and increasingly models with learning difficulties or neurodivergent models, which reflects a genuine, the general expansion of all disabled groups in society.

I think probably the most influential thing is that the modern model of disability is much more accessible than previous model. The previous medical model of disability is old and outdated. I'll give you two examples. The medical model of disability says that disabled people have trouble accessing society because they're disabled. An example of this would be: you can't get into the building because you're in a wheelchair; you can't go up the stairs because you're on crutches

or you can't interact educational systems because you have learning difficulties. And that kind of makes the disability the fault of the person who experiences that impairment. The social model of disability, which is the current model says that it is lack of social provision, that creates disability. For example, if I were a wheelchair user: I can't access that building, not because I'm in a wheelchair, but because there's no ramp.

SZ – Because they haven't designed it in a way that's accessible for you.



The British Vogue May 2024 cover - 'Reframing Fashion'

AC – The social model seems to be something that was created in the in the early 70s. For my daughter's generation, they're very much aware of it as a concept, even if they



AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEX COWAN

don't describe it, as that. And if you extrapolate the algorithm of the social model It's possible that you or I may point to this innovation when we are old or if our incomes drop below a certain level. I think the most important thing is understanding, that it is a fallacy to ensure there are no barriers to participation by any particular group. I think this is also a very widespread point of view because it goes beyond disability. You can apply it to people of colour, or women, or the old or children who don't have the same rights as adults. It's about fairness and the desire our people to ensure that. That's probably the most important single thing that you can do.

SZ - Definitely. Okay. Unfortunately we have only got five minutes left so I'll leave you with one more question. First one, looking ahead into the future, what do you see as the main challenges but also opportunities for the art scene in the UK?

AC - I think the biggest barrier at the moment, is the current funding models for all arts, not just disability arts, are under threat, we see the nature of the Arts Council is changing. COVID has broken the traditional model of going to galleries or museums or physical institutions and I don't think they will really ever recover from that. And people who have yet to make the full move to a digital experience. To describe it with the same value, as going to a shop or going to a gallery to see a painting. I think we're in quite a transitional period, in terms of how people consume fashion, style and culture. We aren't quite sure whether we ascribe the same value to that virtual event, in the same way that we acquired it to the old experience.

But I think the important thing with disability rights in general, the realisation has to be that the struggle to secure and then maintain your rights very often will never end. And part of that struggle is to ensure continuing visibility. I don't see disabled artists, or just disabled people in general, being forced to go back

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into residential homes where they'll never get out. But I think as things become more virtual, you have to be careful that they don't disappear in a different way. Because yeah I can't make it a comment in much more detail than that. I think visibility is key and constant awareness of disability rights. And within that, we can help with disability for the next generations.

A woman with a COVID mask sits alone in Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels



SZ - Okay, perfect. Well, that comes the end of this interview with you, Alex. Thank you so much for your time. The last question I just want to ask is how can people get in touch with the NDACA and shape arts, how can they contribute to the amazing work that you guys are doing?

AC - You can find out more about the NDACA and Shape arts at: <https://the-ndaca.org/> and <https://www.shapearts.org.uk/> respectively.

The Future Generation



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“What Can Your Generation Of Fashion Related Creators, Do To Ensure Accessibility And Inclusivity For Individuals With Visual Impairments”



‘Braille garment tags’



‘I believe that to make fashion more inclusive, there will be new technologies in the future that innovate texture and feel of clothing’

‘I think Visual Descriptors is one of the best things that could be used to help people with Visual Impairments’



‘I think sensory enrichment and accessibility considerations within clothing and events’



‘Designing clothing with tactile elements, providing audio descriptions of their collections and implementing inclusive marketing strategies’



‘Continuing to dispel the misconceptions about being visually impaired’



‘Being creative with the materials we use in our garments to create texture and feeling in our outfits’

‘Using more braille within fashion design especially to tell a story as well as using audio design for photography and online work’



‘We can create experiences that appeal to all the senses’





Is There A Deeper Meaning To The Superficial Nature Of Fashion?

By Will Robins



To start this I have to say I've never been much into fashion, nor the latest trends but I have always loved the idea behind fashion. For my love does not come from the subject itself but for what It can represent. For what it can offer to anyone. Clothes are not simple pieces of fabric and material coating our bodies for warmth and protection, we are far beyond those days. Well, at least most of us. It has embedded a new meaning, so ask yourself this question, what does fashion mean to you?

For me it separates us from animals, it highlights our ability to create and express. Even if it is a subconscious act of expression, It still says something. There are not many things more pure-hearted than wanting to express an emotion or characteristic through the use of clothes. As humans, it is our right and our duty to indulge in this luxury and this luxury should not be stopped at the visually able. So here is another question, Is someone with visual impairment be that, colour blind, blind or any



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other impairment worth more or less when it comes to fashion? I hope you answered that they are worth the same! and if not, maybe you need to have a self-reflection on what you consider to be a characteristic that shapes the intrinsic values of someone's merit and whether that means they are worth less in this world, because that would be pretty messed up.

So how are people able to thrive in this cut-throat environment of fashion when there are people able to see such an 'important' element of the industry, colour. There is much more to fashion than just the colour to comprehend. There are textures, patterns and fabrics which all create the foundation of a good outfit. A good analogy to compare this creative profession is with the film industry. A filmmaker can have the best camera to make the shots look pretty but without a coherent storyline with a solid beginning, middle and end it will never be a good movie. This is the same for fashion, without the depth texture adds or the character created by the unique patterns or intelligence from the fabric, fashion would simply not be as breathtaking as it is today.

In the early 20th century, a cutting-edge new form of fashion emerged from the rebellious and genius minds of some of the greats including Elsa Schiaparelli, and Alexander McQueen. Avant-garde. Famous for its ability to deconstruct all

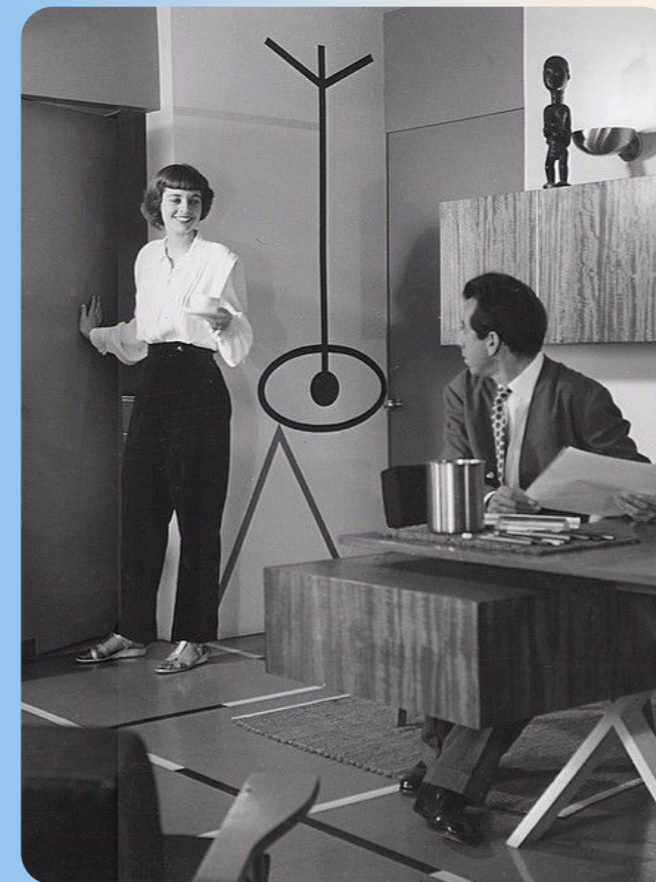
social norms in the industry. Abandoning traditional norms of beauty and functionality with the use of silhouettes, unusual materials, and unusually impactful proportions creates depth in fashion never seen before. One of these great minds at the centre of this rebellion leading at the frontlines was Alexander McQueen. McQueen earned the British Fashion Council's British Designer of the Year award four. After being teased for his homosexuality, it caused him to drop out of school at 16 years old seeking work in local suit tailors. Shortly after his career skyrocketed. Whether McQueen ever identified himself as disabled when he was alive was unclear but, his aim which he repeatedly stressed during numerous interviews was to reflect the prejudices and limitations of the audiences' aesthetic judgments. Creating this new form of fashion, which has opened many doors for people who otherwise, would have never thought the life of a fashion designer could become true, now is well within their reach. After the tragic loss of a close friend and colleague Isabella Blow, and then 2 years later the loss of his mother, he was found dead in his apartment one day before his mother's funeral, the cause of death was determined suicide.

This is what fashion means to me.
Expression. Power. Opportunity.

You can find more of Will's work on Instagram @ _will.robins_

Designer Focus

Alvin Lustig & Eliane Lustig Graphic Designers 1930s-1960s



In this issue we pay homage to influential designer duet Alvin Lustig & Elaine Lustig Cohen. Alvin was sadly struggling with blindness in the final years of his life, due to the deteriorating nature of his diabetes which would unfortunately take his life in 1955.

Whilst most designers would put down their pens and call it a day, for the last year of his life, Alvin kept designing, through an obsessive amount of detailed dictation to his wife Elaine, who would make his design come to life. According to Elaine, 'He would tell us go down a pica and over three picas, and how high the type should be, and what the colour should be,'. He would reference his previous work as well as the work of other greats to make their work come to life. In one especially poetic example, he depicted the shade of yellow he wanted to use as "the dominant yellow of Van Gogh's sunflower." Thanks to Elaine's skill, Alvin managed to design until his final days, whilst Elaine went on to become the designer she always wanted to be in her own right through success in painting and designing.

World Focus



The Island of The Colourblind Photobook By Sanne de Wilde

Belgian photographer Sanne De Wilde has created a beautiful project focusing on the islands of Pingelap and Pohnpei in Micronesia, to highlight the large population of people there who live with complete colour blindness.

The book endeavours to create photography that acts as the eyes of those with Achromatopsia, using different

photography techniques such as black & white, infrared and picture paintings as well as including UV sensitive details in the cover, which changes colour with light. Definitely check this out if you are a fan of book design or travelling!



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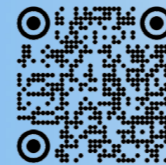
Sound Focus



The sound map is an innovative design by Charlene Lu which allows visually impaired users to preserve sounds from trips around the world using beautifully designed metal plates.

Each plate includes braille of simple important details, including the name of the city and each tourist attraction, which is placed on puzzle like shapes to form buttons that can be used to record and replay sounds from the specific places that the user goes to. Created in sleek beautiful metallic colourways, the sound map is a positive step in the right direction to allow the visually impaired to create, share and recall beautiful memories with loved ones and themselves of different cities around the world.

The Sound Map A Visual Sound Experience By Charlene Lu



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A Quick Convo With...

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Jenny Graham

With a multifaceted background in the fashion industry and her current endeavors in neuroinclusive marketing and communications, Jenny brings a wealth of experience and insight to the table. In this quick convo, we explore the evolution of modeling, and examine the pivotal role of marketing in fostering inclusivity for individuals with disabilities and impairments.

SZ - Can you share with us your journey into the fashion industry as a model? What inspired you to pursue modeling?

JG - By walking into a prom dress boutique in my local town at the age of 15. The shop was new to the high street and was just starting out. Karen (the owner), liked my height and asked if I would be keen to participate in her upcoming fashion show. Of course, I agreed and whilst modelling at this local fashion show, an established photographer in the area asked if I would be interested in pursuing fashion modelling for him. Through the power of networking and social media (Facebook at the time, then Instagram years later) I was securing more modelling work.

SZ - How do you navigate the challenges of being a fashion model with an impairment? Can you describe some of the specific obstacles you've encountered and how you've overcome them?



Photography by Ian Treherne

JG - I have been incredibly lucky to work with some great and understanding people over the years. My biggest challenge as a hearing-impaired individual was worrying about whether or not I would be able to hear the photographer as they would usually be

A QUICK CONVO WITH

photographing me from a distance and the camera would cover their mouth to the point where I was unable to lipread. Before the photoshoot began, I would always point out that they would need to speak up if they chose to direct me. As far as I can remember, everyone did accommodate the requirement or would use their body language to communicate. I was also lucky to work with other photographers and models who had disabilities. Therefore, I never felt like I was alone and knew my needs would be met. One photographer I worked with many times over the years was a visually-sighted and hearing-impaired photographer - Ian Treherne.

SZ - What has been your experience working with designers, photographers, and other industry professionals? Have you encountered any misconceptions or stereotypes about visual impairments in the fashion industry?

JG - While interning in the fashion industry during my time at the University, I met designers who were a lot less accommodating of my condition. I also found them to be very stereotypical about certain races, ethnicities and genders. However, photographers were more open-minded in my opinion. Perhaps it was just the people I met, as I had good luck with photographers and not-so-great luck with designers. Whereas, others may have had a completely different experience than me.

However, this was between 2012 and 2017, so I hope



The British Vogue March 2024 cover

the fashion industry has changed for the better since then.

SZ - As a model with an hearing impairment, how do you feel the industry can improve in terms of inclusivity and representation? Are there specific changes you would like to see implemented to better accommodate individuals with disabilities?

JG - In my opinion, the fashion industry has come a long way in terms of representing diversity. This month, I picked up Vogue's latest copy, which featured half a dozen female models, actresses, singers, TV presenters, etc. I was blown away by the fact they had showcased all these women from different races and ages. The only thing I noticed

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was the physique issue, there were no plus-sized models, which would have been great to see.

SZ - In your opinion, how can fashion brands and companies better market their products to people with disabilities, including those with visual impairments? Are there any successful marketing strategies you've come across that effectively cater to this audience?

JG - I have seen some advertisements on TikTok in recent years that cater for people with impairments. Otherwise, this isn't something I see a lot of. Fashion brands can better market their products to those with disabilities by ensuring there are using features like subtitles on each advertisement, not only a few of them.

SZ - Have you had any experiences where your visual impairment has been leveraged as a unique selling point in campaigns or projects or do you know of this happening to others? How do you feel about the balance between showcasing diversity and avoiding tokenism in the industry?

JG - Not me personally. However, I currently work for a start-up Tech company which focuses on DEI and our product is a digital assessment, which enables you to search for Neurodivergent areas of your brain. In other words, our product tests for

dyslexia, ADHD, Autism, etc. Due to the areas we tend to focus on, the company is fully dedicated to hiring those with Neurodiversities. Therefore, I work alongside many great people in the wider Sales and Marketing team who come across as a USP for various projects. For example, when the Sales team mingle at Tech, Education and Marketing events across the country, those with learning challenges are occasionally leveraged to represent our brand in the best possible way.

SZ - What advice would you give to other individuals with disabilities who aspire to pursue a career in fashion or modeling? Are there any resources or support networks you've found particularly helpful in your own journey?

JG - Honestly, just be yourself. If others can't accept your differences or who you are as a person, they don't deserve the pleasure of working alongside you. On my journey, I found many LinkedIn influencers/content creators to be quite inspiring. Including; Sophie Miller and Girls In Marketing, as they ensure inclusivity within their brands. Business of Fashion, was also a great foundation of PR knowledge for the fashion industry. I have been subscribed to this platform for 7 years now and I have noticed the way articles have changed to highlight the more important focuses in the world (gender and disability representation being amongst them).

SZ -How do you think the fashion industry can collaborate

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with individuals with disabilities to create more accessible and inclusive designs, experiences, and opportunities?

JG - I think to start reaching out to more agencies that represent disabled models. For example, Crumb Modelling Agency and Zebedee are great ones to look at in terms of hiring diverse talents. I also think by simply taking a chance on younger and disabled individuals regardless of their backgrounds. In the creative industry, I do sadly think there is a lot of nepotism and this needs to change. Everyone needs to be included regardless of who their parents are.

Models from Zebedee Casting Agency



SZ -In your opinion, what role can technology play in enhancing accessibility and inclusivity in the fashion industry for people with disabilities, especially those with visual impairments?

JG - Technology/AI is forever evolving and becoming more and more accessible. I like to think companies like the



one I work for are doing everything they can to create inclusivity and accessible digital outcomes for everyone. Many of our customers (schools and training providers) can receive sufficient funding to use our product, therefore we work with education providers in disadvantaged areas to ensure they have the resources to better understand their neuro differences. This is exactly what the fashion industry needs to do - invest in more digital products to help people with their disabilities and ensure no individual is left behind.

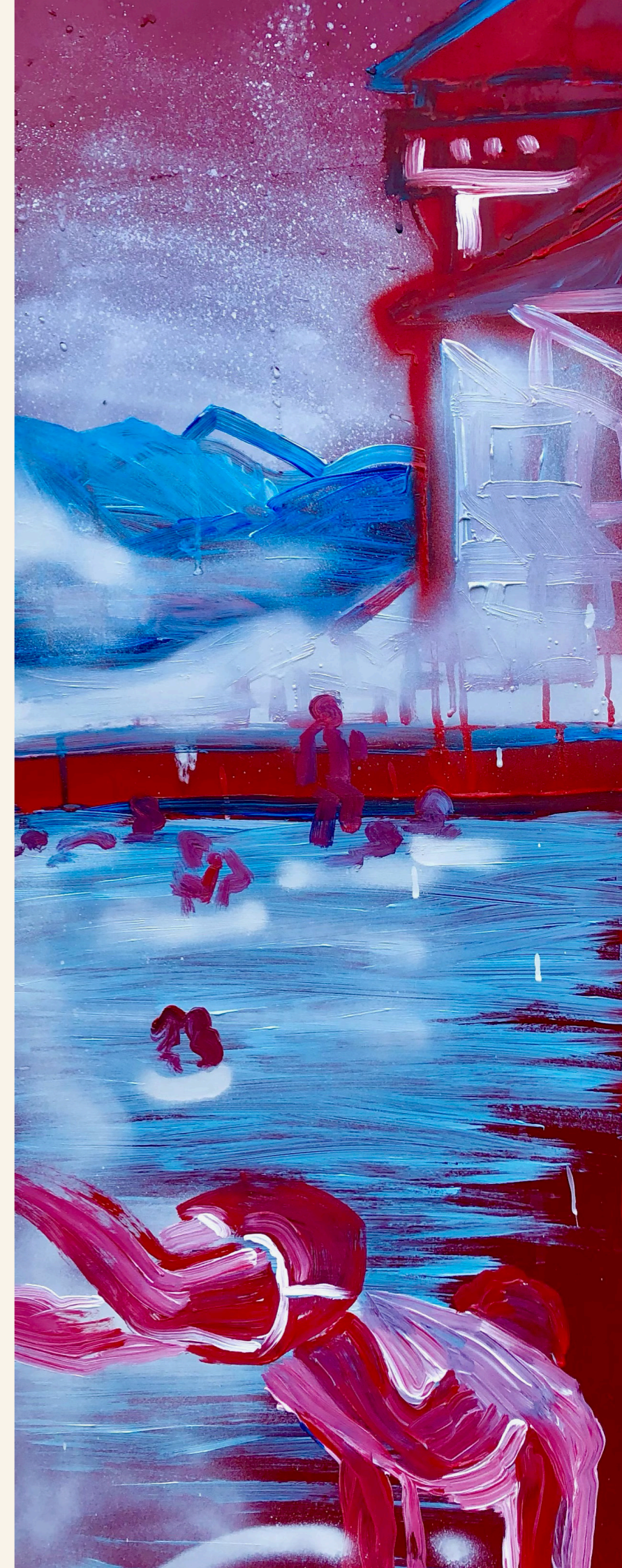
SZ- Looking ahead, what changes or developments do you hope to see in the fashion industry regarding representation and accessibility for individuals with disabilities, including those with visual impairments?

JG - I honestly hope to see everyone included and everyone represented in the fashion industry, regardless of ethnicity, age group or gender. We still have a long way to go, but we have also come a long way since I was growing up in the noughties. Back then, there wasn't much diversity in terms of advertisements and magazine covers. Although, technology is more advanced now and I truly believe it is paving the way for the fashion industry - for the better.



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By Ghishlan Ranchoux



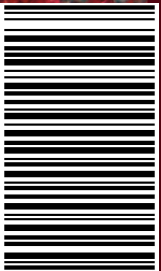
Freya Requiem

'everything is temporary'



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