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COUNCIL



CELEBRATING
**LONDON
FASHION
WEEK**
19-23 FEBRUARY 2016
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International designers imagine Utopia at Somerset House
19 – 23 February 2016
West Wing, Somerset House
design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2016
#IFS2016

The British Council and the British Fashion Council (BFC) will present work by emerging fashion designers from 24 countries in an exhibition entitled 'Fashion Utopias' at Somerset House. The exhibition is the fifth edition of the annual International Fashion Showcase (IFS) and forms a key part of London Fashion Week's public-facing programme which celebrates the universal relevance of fashion in contemporary culture.

The International Fashion Showcase is a series of specially commissioned and curated fashion installations featuring work by emerging designers from all over the world. Now more than 500 of the most exciting international designers from 80 countries will have exhibited in the IFS initiative. This year it is part of Somerset House's *Utopia 2016: A Year of Imagination and Possibility* which will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the publication of Thomas More's inspirational text, *Utopia*.

For IFS 2016, the West Wing at Somerset House will be transformed into a Utopian terrain, designed by Hatty Ellis Coward, where an emerging generation of international designers and curators invite visitors to share their vision of the future.

The exhibition will be arranged over 14 galleries, 13 of which will represent a country. There will be one group installation, 'Next in Line', curated by Shonagh Marshall and sponsored by Italian mannequin manufacturer **Bonaveri**, which will feature designers from 11 further nations.

The countries taking part in IFS 2016 will be:

Austria, Czech Republic, Egypt, Guatemala, Indonesia, Lebanon, Korea, Portugal, Philippines, Nigeria, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine.

Next in Line: Argentina, Bahrain, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, United Arab Emirates.

Country installations include:

- Thomas More's vision of Utopia was singular and eccentric. In response to this the **Czech Republic's** installation seeks to capture the free-spirited, and often unconventional, voices of a new generation of designers.

Guatemala will portray Utopia as an everyday action that makes a wish come true or instigates change, and each designer will create miniature versions of their designs as traditional worry dolls.

- **Indonesia** will present a group of designers who are looking at modestwear with new eyes. Like many Utopias the installation will create its own cosmology with each designer representing an essential element – earth, fire, water and wind, – and their search for the elusive unifying fifth element quintessence.
- Each designer from **Lebanon** will create a customised piece for IFS in the unifying shade of blue. Lighting design inspired by Lebanese architecture will enhance the silhouettes of these one-off pieces.
- Lagos Fashion and Design Week in collaboration with Stranger concept store in Lagos will curate an installation of **Nigerian** menswear and womenswear that imagines the creative energy of designers as a cosmic bang. Inspired by optical illusions the installation will ask visitors to imagine a moment when the impossible fleetingly seems real.

Fashion, with its continual yearning for the future, is perhaps inherently utopic. Designers often hold up a mirror to collective dreams showing how they might take shape. They act as commentators and innovators as well as dreamers, taking a pivotal role in imagining and creating change. IFS provides opportunities for designers like these to engage with the UK fashion community and to build international connections, paving the way towards future creative and commercial collaborations.

A series of seminars, visits and mentoring opportunities, organised by **London College of Fashion**, will help designers prepare for the showcase. The Designer Support Programme will bring together a network of LCF affiliated academics and researchers, to offer mentoring opportunities and business development during IFS. A collaboration with **Fashion Scout** will offer designers involved in IFS the opportunity to show their work on the catwalk. **Time Out London** join us as event partners for a Friday Late on 19 February, an evening of fashion, music, performance and activities going behind the scenes of Fashion Utopias. **Direct Drive TV & Inition** will be capturing the exhibition as a Virtual Reality experience and **Unmade** are collaborating with 6 IFS designers to launch a collection of knitwear using their revolutionary technology.

A prize-giving ceremony on 21 February during London Fashion Week, chaired by a panel of industry experts, will announce a winning Country and Designer, as well as a Curator Award sponsored by Bonaveri. The Award is designed by Yunus and Eliza, participants in the BFC Rock Vault initiative. The panel is headed by **Sarah Mower MBE, BFC Ambassador for Emerging Talent and Chief Critic at Voguerunway.com**. Sarah said: “At a time when it often seems as if we’ve plunged into a dystopian age, it’s a liberating act to think about exactly the opposite: if we could create a Utopia, how would we want it to be? The theme set for the fifth International Fashion Showcase will bring the optimistic visions of over 80 emerging designers of 24 countries to London – a capital known for holding up the ideas of aspiring fashion talent as pre-eminent. From the entries we’ve already seen, this year’s showcase will be a chance to witness a phenomenally uplifting inter-cultural compare-and-contrast. Each country’s deeply-felt exhibit is also to be framed with a national curator, a fast-developing field of collaboration on the frontiers between art and fashion. The installations, which for the first time are to be set in the beautiful surroundings of Somerset House, promise to give a flash-forward to the possibilities of multiple happier futures. Prizes will be awarded for both designers and curators, and we expect to see the beginnings of many careers starting right here, in London Fashion Week.”

Over the course of the exhibition there will be programme of events open to the public. For more information visit: design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2016

The International Fashion Showcase is directed by Anna Orsini, Strategic Consultant British Fashion Council and Niamh Tuft, Programme Manager British Council.

The British Council and the British Fashion Council would like to thank Bonaveri, sponsor of Next in Line and the IFS Curator Award, and official mannequin supplier to the International Fashion Showcase; our partners London College of Fashion and Fashion Scout for the mentoring and showcasing opportunities offered to the International Fashion Showcase designers; collaborators Direct Drive TV & Inition and Unmade for the unique opportunities offered to designers; event partners Time Out; and furniture suppliers Arper.

-- Ends --

Notes to Editors:

Listings Information

Dates: 19 – 23 February 2016

Opening Hours: 10.00 – 18.00 Daily

Address: West Wing Galleries, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

www.somersethouse.org.uk

Free admission, pre-registration advised via Biletto <https://biletto.co.uk/fashion-utopias-international-fashion-showcase-2016>

Transport: Temple, Embankment, Charing Cross, Waterloo

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International Fashion Showcase 2016 images: <http://bit.ly/1MQaY3e>

For more information visit:

design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2016

www.Utopia2016.com

The International Fashion Showcase **2012 was founded in the year of the Olympics to celebrate its values of respect, excellence, equality and friendship.** Finalists included a group show by Botswana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, as well as Belgium, China, Estonia, Italy, Japan, Korea and USA. Korea was the winning country with their exhibition *A New Space Around the Body*, which showcased eight emerging designers from the region, and was presented with a trophy designed by Jordan Askill.

In **2013** Estonia was awarded with a sculpture designed by former BFC NEWGEN recipient Dominic Jones for their exhibition *The Estonian Ministry of Creative Affairs*. The shortlisted countries were Argentina, Austria, Estonia, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden), Switzerland and Tanzania.

In **2014** sixteen countries exhibited at a central venue at 180 Strand. The overall Showcase winner was again Estonia with their exhibition *Fashion Now: Estonia*; and the recipients of two new awards, for Designer and Curator, were Hyein Seo of Korea and Yoshikazu Yamagata of Japan respectively. Each winner was presented with a sculpture created by previous NEWGEN and BFC Emerging Accessory Designer 2010 recipient, jewellery designer Husam el Odeh.

New initiatives for **2015** included a partnership with On|Off, curators of Next in Line, and a designer support programme organised with London College of Fashion. Colombia were the winners of the International Fashion

Showcase Country Award for their exhibition *Framework*; while the Designer Award was presented to Julia Männistö for her impressive collection showcased in the Colombian exhibition and the Curation Award going to Yegwa Ukpo of Stranger Lagos in Nigeria. Winners received a trophy designed by emerging Brazilian jeweller Fernando Jorge, a BFC Rock Vault graduate who participated in IFS 2014.

The Advisory Panel for the International Fashion Showcase 2016 is:

Chair: Sarah Mower MBE, BFC Ambassador for Emerging Talent and Chief Critic at Voguerunway.com

Alistair O'Neill, Central Saint Martins & Independent Curator
Anders Christian Madsen, iD
Anna Orsini, British Fashion Council
Barbara Grispi, British Fashion Council
Cassie Strodder-Davies, Victoria & Albert Museum
Fabio Piras, Central Saint Martins
Kendall Robbins, British Council
Mandi Lennard, Mandi's Basement
Martyn Roberts, Fashion Scout & Graduate Fashion Week
Miriam Bouteba, Time Out
Niamh Tuft, British Council
Robb Young, Business of Fashion
Samantha Conti, Womens Wear Daily
Shonagh Marshall, Somerset House
Stavros Karelis, Machine A
Tristan Webber, Royal College of Art

About the British Council

The British Council global arts team works with the best of British creative talent to develop innovative, high-quality events and collaborations that link thousands of artists and cultural institutions around the world, drawing them into a closer relationship with the UK.

The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We are a Royal Charter charity, established as the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Our 7000 staff in over 100 countries work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year through English, arts, education and society programmes. We earn over 75% of our annual turnover of nearly £700 million from services which customers pay for, education and development contracts we bid for and from partnerships. A UK Government grant provides the remaining 25%. We match every £1 of core public funding with over £3 earned in pursuit of our charitable purpose.

www.britishcouncil.org

About the British Fashion Council

The British Fashion Council (BFC) was set up in 1983 to promote British fashion internationally and co-ordinate this promotion through fashion weeks, exhibitions and showcasing events. The BFC now supports designers beginning at college level and extending to talent identification, business support and showcasing schemes to help British designer businesses develop their profiles and business globally and promote British fashion and its influential role in Britain and London. The BFC Colleges Council offers support to students through its Foundation, BA and MA scholarships, links with industry through design competitions and Graduate Preview Day. Talent identification and business support schemes include the BFC Fashion Film sponsored by River Island; BFC Rock Vault; BFC Headonism; BFC/GQ Designer Menswear Fund supported by Vertu; BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund; NEWGEN sponsored by TOPSHOP and NEWGEN MEN sponsored by TOPMAN. The British Fashion Council supports Boden's Future British initiative. Showcasing initiatives and events include London Fashion Week, London Collections Men, LONDON show ROOMS, the BFC Fashion Arts Foundation, International Fashion Showcase, London Fashion Weekend and the annual celebration of excellence in the fashion industry: the British Fashion Awards.

www.britishfashioncouncil.com

About Somerset House

Somerset House is a unique part of the London cultural scene, a historic building within which surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th century origins, it has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Today, Somerset House is a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming to all and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries. Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture including photography, fashion, architecture and design, with an extensive integrated learning programme. We currently attract over 2.5 million

visitors every year. It is one of the biggest communities of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses.

www.somerset-house.org.uk

About Utopia 2016

Utopia 2016 is four seasons of activity celebrating the 500th anniversary of the publication of Thomas More's Utopia. Published in Leuven in December 1516, More's Utopia presented an imaginative and playful vision of the world as it could be at a time of great change. More's Utopia is deliberately ambiguous: both "no place" and "good place", he is clear that many other visions for society are possible. Through a series of exhibitions, events, new commissions, talks and workshops, Utopia 2016 will explore the broad cultural history of the idea of utopia and its relevance to 21st-Century cultural, ecological, and social challenges and opportunities. The year celebrates the pivotal role of the arts and culture in creating spaces where utopian dreams are possible. Throughout Utopia 2016 people from all walks of life will be invited to experiment with new ways we might live, make, work, play and dream. Utopia 2016 is a collaboration between three neighbours: Somerset House, King's College London and the Courtauld Institute and Gallery, in partnership with the British Library, the AHRC, and the British Council, will also engage many of the 300 plus creative organisations, artists and makers resident at Somerset House.

www.Utopia2016.com

About Bonaveri

Established in 1950, **Bonaveri** is the world leading manufacturer of high quality mannequins.

The ability to combine manufacturing excellence with visionary research on forms and shapes has allowed Bonaveri to participate in and influence the birth, definition and growth of the fashion industry in Italy and around the world.

The company is based at Renazzo di Cento (FE), Italy, where the manufacturing facility combines craftsmanship with automation. A tour of the plant takes you from the laboratories that use sophisticated digital scanning techniques, to those where sculptors - working with clay, chalk and resin – give life to the figures that then make their way through to the windows of the most famous world's fashion streets. This dual creative approach has a single goal: to reach a timeless aesthetic which is the underlying soul and identity of the mannequins.

The support of young talents, as well as the cooperation with fashion schools is part of the Bonaveri DNA, which has developed specific programs to spread the culture of good shapes and together with helping new designers to emerge onto the market. In line with this, Bonaveri is supporting the International Fashion Showcase 2016 for a second year and is the official mannequin supplier.

www.bonaveri.com

About London College of Fashion

London College of Fashion's rich heritage and responsiveness to changes in design practice have positioned it as a leading global provider of fashion education, research and consultancy. The College's work is centred on the development of ideas: its staff and students use fashion alongside historical and cultural practice to challenge agendas and explore innovation. We redefine Fashion as a discipline as academic, ethical, sustainable, political, social and art and believe that it can be used to better lives; to drive change, to improve the way we live. Fashion is an industry; it does not live in isolation, and behind every designer is a supply chain, a business plan, a partnership. We nurture enterprise and support our students to gain skills in business and management so that they have an increased understanding of all the ingredients to create a sustainable design business in all senses of the word. Our focus is always the long term. London College of Fashion's history in craftsmanship, beginning in the early twentieth century with Shoreditch Technical Institute Girls School, Clapham Trade School and Barrett Trade School and the later additions of Cordwainers, gives us an unparalleled understanding of manufacture and quality, yet we are constantly refining and searching for cutting edge technique, with research centres such as the Centre for Sustainable Fashion. This, combined with a forward-thinking media and communications portfolio and a relationship with the global fashion and lifestyle industries, underpins our mission to "Fashion the Future".

www.fashion.arts.ac.uk

About Fashion Scout

Fashion Scout is the leading international platform spanning London and Paris Fashion Weeks. Scouting the most exciting new designers from across the globe Fashion Scout presents them to the top international press and buyers generating great media awareness and sales. From showcasing the UK's most promising graduates to hosting shows for IFS countries Fashion Scout is at the forefront of the international fashion scene, including recently pioneering the discovery of the incredible talent from Kiev.

The belief that fashion is truly international is the driving force behind Fashion Scout. Its founder, Martyn Roberts, is a regular guest at global fashion weeks scouting new talent and mentoring designers, preparing them for the international market and helping them build sustainable business.

www.fashion-scout.co.uk