

INSIDE THE WESTMINTERS MENSWEAR ARCHIVE: a case study of garment-research as a pedagogical practice

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Abstract

Menswear has a long history of utilising garment archives as a research method to inform the creation of new design outcomes, with Massimo Osti, an Italian designer, widely credited as the primary proponent of this approach. He made extensive use of his garment archive in Bologna during the 1970s and 1980s, resulting in numerous innovations in menswear that we now take for granted. His method of drawing inspiration from existing garments has become embedded in the processes of most fashion houses and designer brands. As a result, this method of referencing design archetypes necessitates access to previous iterations of clothing-objects to interrogate, investigate, and create new transformative outcomes.

The Westminster Menswear Archive was established in 2016, allowing the replication of this process within the academy, enabling researchers, students, and designers in industry to access and use the collection for garment-based research. It was founded to assemble a collection of artefacts to develop the technical and functional study of menswear design, raise general awareness of menswear as a design discipline, and serve as a resource tool to inform contemporary practice.

With garment-based research being a critical component of the fashion industry's research and development process, it has become essential in the University of Westminster's pedagogic practice, with students increasingly using archival garment research to expand their knowledge of the materiality of fashion and enable them to generate new ideas and prototypes for their design development.

Using examples from the collection, this paper examines how the archive has inspired a fundamentally different approach to pedagogical practice for students, replicating contemporary industry methods while also reflecting on how industry engagement with the archive has influenced the archives collection policy.

Introduction

Garment archives in the fashion industry

The value of archives to fashion brands as a means of reinforcing their history and communicating it to consumers has increased over the last decade (Stoppard, 2016; Ahmed, 2017). One of the ways that this is further enhanced is by using the archive as a means to produce re-editions (Nast, 2012; Yotka, 2020) or to inspire new design outcomes (Gleyse, 2021). Within the fashion industry, the use of garment archives as a means of research for creating new designs has been a long-standing practice (Murphy, D, 2011). Most noticeably, within menswear, the Italian designer Massimo Osti who started C.P. Company in 1971, used pre-existing garments as his starting point for creating new fashion outcomes (Moreno, 2021, p13). By the end of the 1990s, his archive contained more than 33,000 garments (Osti and Facchinato, 2016, p96).



Figure 1. The Archivi di Ricerca Mazzini in Ravenna, Italy, which holds over 400,000 items.

© Archivi di Ricerca Mazzini

The relevance of garment archives to a designer's research process has grown over the last fifty years, with designers such as Nigel Cabourn, Neil Barrett, and Paul Harvey having all built private collections that have been vital to their design processes (Limnander, 2009; Tempe, 2016; Dystant, 2017). Simultaneously, specialised archive services have also been established to address the industry's requirement to access source garments for research.

Several private archives serve this purpose globally, for example, Archivi di Ricerca Mazzini in Ravenna, Italy, Artifact NYC in New York, and Contemporary Wardrobe in London.

While large fashion brands are happy to reveal their use of their house archives for inspiration (Fury, 2017), there is little discussion or even acknowledgement of how designers undertake object-based research by examining garments created by other companies to inform their design process. The persistent invisibility of this practice means that students may have difficulty understanding that this is a legitimate means of research enquiry.

Rather than being regarded as plagiarism, the analysis of the cut, construction, materiality, and cultural significance of existing garments and the capacity to synthesise disparate elements to create new outputs are vital components of contemporary design practice. While many designers are reticent to acknowledge their use of pre-existing garments to inform their research, Vigil Abloh has incorporated this practice into his design philosophy. Abloh outlined his approach to object-based research during a lecture he delivered at Harvard University.

I have my 3 percent approach. Right now I'm only interested in editing something 3 percent from its original form...I don't want another shoe. I want to see something that makes me recognise the shoe that I already have.

(Abloh, Sigler and Whitman– Salkin, 2018, p21–23)

Paul Harvey, creative director of Italian menswear brand C.P. Company, echoes the notion of menswear design as a process of research, editing, and bricolage within the confines of established archetypes. Speaking about his use of military garments as a source of design development, he said:

I do believe we are happier with things we know in some way. [The military] spend a long time developing stuff, you know 5 to 6 years, we don't have that luxury...That's what why we do this constant referencing, one is to do with memory and the other is a lot of ideas that have been worked through very carefully and then you can use that.

(Harvey, 2021)

Garment archives in the academy

Anecdotal evidence suggests that in fashion education in the United Kingdom, the usage of garments to inform new design outputs has historically depended on individual tutors bringing clothing from their personal wardrobes in for object-based learning. However, several teaching collections are located throughout the United Kingdom, ranging from a few garments to over 2,000 artefacts, but no unified resource lists their locations, contents, or accessibility. It has been more than three decades since the publication of Hazel Clark's short overview of textile collections held in British polytechnics and colleges (Clark, 1988).

Clark's paper provided an overview of nine collections, most of which predominantly contained textiles and swatch books with only a relatively few examples of whole garments.

In 2021, correspondence with the author revealed some details about the current teaching collections of dress at several fashion schools throughout the United Kingdom. The University of Huddersfield's 12-piece teaching collection focuses on examples of dress that students would not have access to otherwise and their educational value (Evans, 2011). The Yorkshire Fashion Archive (YFA) is housed at the University of Leeds Design School and holds around 2,000 items of apparel and accessories manufactured or acquired in the Yorkshire region throughout the last century (Hall, 2017).



Figure 2. The storeroom of the Yorkshire Fashion Archive, University of Leeds.© Andrew Groves

The fashion collection held by the Museum & Study Collection at Central Saint Martins holds 379 objects, predominantly produced by students or alumni of the fashion design courses. In addition, it also holds a further 126 artefacts that belonged to the designer Hardy Amies (Willcocks, 2021). Kingston University is home to the Benenden School Costume Collection, which comprises 351 costumes from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, comprising men's and women's clothing (Renfrew, 2021). Kingston also has around 375 items from London-based knitwear business Sibling (Alexander, 2021). The Textile Study Collection at Goldsmiths University has approximately 400 dress items, which comprise complete clothes, fragments of garments, and accessories (Cameron, 2021). While some fashion institutions, such as the Royal

College of Art, do not have teaching collections, research indicates that their students continue to use garment research to inform their design processes (Murphy, 2011). This brief overview demonstrates the continued use of garment-based research as a teaching tool; however, it does not clarify how these garments are utilised by fashion design students or the new artefacts that may have been generated as a result of their use for garment-based study.

Significant research has been conducted that documents the creation of specific collections and fashion archives situated within the academy outside of the United Kingdom, for example, at the Fashion Institute of Technology (Trivette, 2017) and the Hong Kong Design Institute (Peirson-Smith and Peirson-Smith, 2020). These articles examine the construction and usage of archives as a means '*preserving, curating, and narrating fashion*' (2020, p274), but they also highlight that these collections are not designed to function in a similar way to commercial fashion archives, which exist solely to generate new fashion outcomes.

Research has been conducted to determine the factors that influence the use of dress collections within the academy (Marcketti and Gordon, 2019), expanding on a previous survey of historic clothing museums and collections at American colleges (Marcketti et al., 2011). While other research has examined the use of fashion collections held within the academy to inform dress studies with some analysis of their use to inform design practice (Banning and Gam, 2020; Cobb, Orzada et al., 2020).

Object-based learning (OBL) has become increasingly popular within universities as a method of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) that can enhance teaching across a variety of subjects. Given that a significant focus of most fashion design courses is devoted to the creation and construction of new fashion artefacts, it's perhaps surprising that little research has been conducted on the use of teaching collections to enable students to develop new outcomes using object-based learning. Instead, OBL is more frequently employed in fashion education in relation to fashion history or dress studies. Often, it is employed to decipher the social, historical, or artistic significance of the artefacts under consideration (Mida, I. and Kim, A., 2015).

While there is some research on the use of object-based learning (OBL) as a means of informing pattern cutting and construction (Birk and Saiki, 2017; McKinney and Cho, 2018), little has been written about the use of teaching collections for OBL as a distinct pedagogical methodology to generate new fashion design outcomes. A notable exception is the use of the Yorkshire Fashion Archive by undergraduate students at the University of Leeds (Almond, 2020), which provides an example of how fashion teaching collections can enrich pedagogy through object-based learning.

The formation of the Westminster Menswear Archive

In May 2015, before establishing the Westminster Menswear Archive in October 2015, the exhibition *Archetypes* (Groves and Leach, 2015) at the University of Westminster examined how garment-based research was an integral process within modern menswear design.

Through the investigation of six archetypal garments, the denim jacket, the trench coat, the duffle coat, the leather jacket, the field jacket, and the MA-1 Jacket, the show analysed how various designers have taken these tropes and reworked them within their aesthetic. To highlight this creative process, the display juxtaposed source research garments displayed adjacent to their designer counterparts, together with secondary research imagery and design development work. In revealing this usually hidden creative process within menswear design, the exhibition legitimised and elevated it. In turn, the response from students and academics to the show underlined the importance of continuing to develop this research by establishing a significant teaching collection.

Established in 2015 at the University of Westminster, the Westminster Menswear Archive (WMA) was inspired by the garment archive created and used by Italian menswear designer Massimo Osti, which housed over 33,000 items by the late 1990s (Osti and Facchinato, 2016, p96). Osti's collection was non-hierarchical, combining military, utilitarian, industrial, and fashion garments, a strategy that the WMA has adopted.

The WMA was devised to be integrated within the pedagogical practice of the university's design courses and to replicate the fashion industry's use of garment archives as part of their research activity. The WMA started acquiring garments in October 2015, focusing on army uniforms and camouflage in preparation for the exhibition *The Vanishing Art of Camouflage* (2016). It received a £350,000 grant from the Quintin Hogg Trust in June 2016 as part of the trust's objective to improve education at the University of Westminster by funding various projects proposed by staff. By 2021 the WMA had acquired over 2000 garments from 1780 to the present, predominantly focusing on post-1940s British menswear. The collection includes designer fashion, streetwear, everyday dress, sportswear, workwear, and uniforms. It is notable for its extensive selection of early Alexander McQueen menswear, Massimo Osti's work for Stone Island and C.P. Company, and Umbro's collaborations with designers such as Peter Saville, Aitor Throup, Kim Jones, and Palace. It also houses a growing range of garments by University of Westminster alumni, including Liam Hodges, Priya Ahluwalia, San Kim, and Robyn Lynch.



Figure 3. By 2021 the Westminster Menswear Archive held over 2000 garments. © WMA

It is the first large-scale collection designed to be used by industry and students to be housed within an English university (Burns, 2017). It has resulted in the establishment of a hands-on environment in which industry professionals and design students are co-located to conduct object-based research to inform their future design outputs. By incorporating this fundamental principle into the design of the archive, industry and pedagogical practice are brought together

to foster the development of communities of place and communities of practice (Wenger, 2000). Students get an understanding of how to integrate aspects of an object's materiality, functionality, or aesthetic into their work by studying examples of other designers' reinterpretations of archetypal garments. In contrast to traditional teaching collections or collections of dress housed in museums, the WMA was purpose-built to replicate the procedures of a commercial archive but within the academy. Industry users include designers from Burberry, Versace, C.P. Company, Dunhill, Bottega Veneta, Pringle, and Nike. This unique dual-use enables the working processes of designers to be observed and documented, increasing the understanding of the innovative ways in which the archives are used by industry for garment-based research. Further, it enables the development of a pedagogical strategy guided by this knowledge, thus aligning teaching with current industrial practice.



Figure 4. Student examining garments in the Westminster Menswear Archive. © WMA

using the archive for garment research at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year. Due to the two-year duration of the new postgraduate programme, the first publicly visible design outputs informed by research undertaken using the WMA came from the June 2017 BA Fashion Design graduates. The three case studies presented reflect on two of these students who used the archive for object-based research in 2017 and a student from the following year that used the archive to inform their graduate collection.

Case study one - Aimee Determann 2017

Aimee Determann produced some of the first garments created in response to research undertaken in the Westminster Menswear Archive. Determann gained access to the archive in September 2016 and undertook object-based research on several items within the WMA, including disposable overalls, immersion suits, and the internal fastening on a Stone Island jacket. Determann's garment research focused on utilitarian workwear that could be worn over other garments. The packaging for the DuPont Tyvek Overall (2016, WMA.2017.041) includes illustrations on how to put on and take off the suit. While the Xingtai Thermal Immersion Suit with Built-in Flotation (2005, WMA.2017.037) features graphics depicting how to put on the suit printed onto the garment's exterior. Aspects of these garments were integrated into her graduation menswear collection, which was comprised of six multi-layered outfits. Determann discussed her inspiration in correspondence with the WMA's curator (Determann, A. 2017. Email to Danielle Sprecher, 21 September):

The inspiration for the collection came from protective chemical workwear and functional clothing. Looking at utilitarian clothing designed to be worn only in the work place, I felt some elements of the safety clothing had an unexpected level of aesthetic consideration. I began to question how much of the design was really useful and how much was there to simply allow the wearer to feel safe.

The outfit consists of three garments, Tyvek Jumpsuit (2017, WMA.2017.275.1), Tyvek Jumpsuit hood (2017, WMA.2017.275.2) and Pair of boot covers (2017, WMA.2017.275.3). Determann's jumpsuit is constructed in two parts. The garment zips up the centre front and has large yellow and black stripes down the back and front. The second section fastens to the front on both sides using Dutch rope-style fastenings that thread through the outer covering. This second layer is printed in red with four large images of a male figure labelled A, B, C, and D, along with instructions on how to wear the garment. Several garments from the Westminster Menswear Archive are referenced within Determann's outfit, and these were used to inform her use of print, graphics, fastenings, and materiality for her collection.

Determann's jumpsuit is made of Tyvek and is materially similar to the archive's DuPont Tyvek Overalls (2016, WMA.2017.041). Tyvek is a spun-bonded material developed by DuPont in 1955. It is composed of high-density polyethylene fibres. It is highly resilient, resistant to water and chemicals, tear- and puncture-proof, breathable, and printable. The seams on the DuPont overall are stitched together using cover-stitching on the inside.



Figure 5. Left to right: Aimee Determann runway outfit (2017), DuPont Tyvek Overall (2016), Xingtai Thermal Immersion Suit with Built in Flotation (2005). © WMA

Externally the seams are then covered with blue tape. In contrast, Determann's jumpsuit is sewn with a standard lockstitch and a 1cm seam allowance. Black tape has been applied to the outside of the garment to accentuate the cut of the garment; however, it is not aligned to the garment's seam lines. The jumpsuit also references the Stone Island Ice Suit (1988), which features an inner liner attached to the coat via a series of cords that loop into one another, a feature adapted from its use in the sailing world.

Rather than concealing this functionality within her jumpsuit, Determann used it to secure an outer layer to the garment by threading yellow Dutch rope-style fastenings through the outer layer. The use of contrast colour accentuates this usually hidden functionality.



Figure 6. Top row: Instructional illustrations on Xingtai Thermal Immersion Suit (2005), bottom left: Dutch rope system within Stone Island Ice Suit (1998) Bottom right: Aimee Determann runway outfit with printed instructions and Dutch rope fastening (2017) © WMA The second garment selected as a research reference is the Stone Island Ice Suit - Jacket and Liner (1988, WMA.2016.299.1).

The final garment that informed Determann's collection is an immersion suit, Xingtai Thermal Immersion Suit with Built in Flotation (2005, WMA.2017.037). An immersion suit is a full-body suit designed to keep the wearer afloat and alive during high-seas emergencies. It fastens using a black waterproof rubber zip that is laid onto the outside of the suit. This detail has been replicated on Determann's Tyvek suit, which features a similar rubberised zip stitched onto the front of her garment.

The other feature that Determann chose to reinterpret in her design is the graphic instructions printed on the outside of the anti-exposure suit. These instructions are designed to enable the wearer to be put on in less than two minutes without the assistance of others. To help with this, the garment's lower body is printed with four drawings, numbered 1-4, showing a man putting on the garment. In Determann's reimagining of this detail, she depicted someone dressed in her jumpsuit in four distinct stages, accompanied by instructions on how to wear the garment properly. These illustrations of a male figure were relabelled A, B, C, and D, were then screen-printed in red ink onto the outer layer of Determann's Tyvek jumpsuit.

Following her graduation in June 2017, the Westminster Menswear Archive acquired one of these ensembles to add to the permanent collection. Determann also discussed self-referencing garments in her correspondence with Danielle Sprecher three months after the runway show (Determann, A. 2017):

The designs became increasingly complicated and amusingly difficult to get in and out of, referring back to direction diagrams printed on safety clothing, I developed my own illustrations specific to each garment explaining how to wear the clothing. When deciding how to put together the Tyvek pieces I referred back to chemical clothing with taped reinforced seams, spraying the seams with paint allowed Tyvek tape to stick better and referenced the painted seams of safety clothing.

Case study two - Nicholas Yip 2017

The second example of student work informed by archival research is by Nicholas Yip, who also graduated from the University of Westminster's BA Fashion Design programme in June 2017. Yip showed a military-inspired collection that drew inspiration from several of the Westminster Menswear Archive's outfits. The archive owns two complete catwalk ensembles from Yip's graduate collection, including Nicholas Yip Khaki Green Greatcoat with Black Moiré Ribbon Decoration (2017, WMA.2019.84.4). For its silhouette, detail and ornamentation, this greatcoat was inspired by two specific military coats in the archive.



Figure 7. left to right Nicholas Yip Khaki Green Greatcoat with Black Moiré Ribbon Decoration (2017), Dege and Skinner Life Guards Officer's Frockcoat (1994), British Military Household Division Greatcoat (1970-1979). © Westminster Menswear Archive.

The coat's silhouette was influenced by another military garment housed in the WMA: a ceremonial greatcoat worn by a Foot Guards soldier, British Military Household Division Greatcoat (1970-1979, WMA.2015.62). This full-length military coat features a half belt at the back, an open double pleated skirt, a high collar that can be pulled up, two hip pockets, and epaulettes on the shoulders. Yip reinterpreted each of these aspects of cut into his coat design. While the Foot Guards coat is composed of single-layer grey wool, Yip's runway version is constructed using a furnishing fabric called Divina from Kvadrat. Several metres of this material were donated to Yip during his internship year at Louis Vuitton in 2016. Divina is a woven fabric that undergoes mechanical processing and high heat during the dyeing process, imparting colour richness and depth. This produces a smooth, directionless, and uniform surface that is very similar to felt. The decorative use of moiré ribbon on Yip's coat references a Life Guards officer's frockcoat held in the archive, Dege and Skinner Life Guards Officer's Frockcoat (1994, WMA.2017.134).

This military uniform was worn by a Major who served in Iraq and, Afghanistan, and Bosnia. It was made in 1994 by Savile Row tailor's Dege & Skinner as part of a contract the company had with the Ministry of Defence. It is crafted from blue doeskin and features a stand-up collar with intricate figured braiding on each sleeve. Each sleeve takes approximately one week to

complete by hand due to the complexity of the application and pattern of the braiding. In 2018 Dege & Skinner made a similar frockcoat for Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, to wear for his wedding to Meghan Markle.



Figure 8. Close-up of the ribbon decoration and rosettes that adorn Nicholas Yip's Khaki Green Greatcoat with Black Moiré Ribbon Decoration (2017, 2019.84.4)

Nicholas Yip reinterpreted this decorative motif into his design by using wide black grosgrain ribbons stitched decoratively into folded points across the coat's centre front and let loose to varied heights, the longest extending beyond the coat hem. In Yip's interpretation, each row of the ribbon increases rather than decreases in length as they descend the body. A narrower green grosgrain ribbon is placed over the left chest to resemble military ornament.

It is finished with the same black grosgrain ribbon as shoulder epaulettes, but with the ribbon extended down the arm and a military symbol. The moiré ribbons were created by Toye, Kenning, and Spencer. The company was founded in 1685 and is renowned for its fine weaving and supplying regalia and insignia to the British military and the royal family.

The back of the coat includes a cross-shaped design comprised of two rows of black grosgrain ribbon stitched to the coat with khaki and black rosettes resembling military crosses and secured with metal poppers running the length and width of the cross design.

Cases study three - Megan Williams 2018

The third student case study features garments designed by student Megan Williams for her Autumn/Winter 2018/19 collection, shown in February 2018 at London Fashion Week as part of the BA (Hons) Fashion Design course's runway show. Williams produced an oversized MA-1 style bomber jacket in olive green with silicone reinforced shoulders and an integrated backpack. The jacket features raglan sleeves, with ribbed piping over each shoulder and a horseshoe-shaped line of wide white webbing running down the front of the jacket, which is secured by a white double-tab zip. Each sleeve features a 3-D box pocket at the top, and the front of the jacket has two oversized angled patch pockets with flaps. Green ribbed fabric is used to finish the hem and cuffs, and the jacket is double stitched in contrasting white thread. Following her graduation, the Westminster Menswear Archive acquired a runway ensemble that included Megan Williams Bomber Jacket, Megan Williams Hooded Top, and Megan Williams Knitted Trousers (2018, WMA.2019.182.1, WMA.2019.182.2, WMA.2019.182.3).



Figure 9. Left to right: Megan Williams outfit at London Fashion Week, February 2018, Megan Williams Bomber Jacket (2018), © WMA

The functionality of Williams' collection is inspired by space suits, which consist of protective outer jackets and tightly knitted underlayers. She conducted research using clothing from the archive and studied the book *Spacesuits: The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Collection* (Young, 2009). Williams examined early military garments worn by the United States Air Force in the WMA, particularly the MA-1 jacket, which was introduced in the 1950s, because these military garments influenced the design language of spacesuits in America. The

MA-1 jacket has evolved into an iconic menswear garment and was featured in the University of Westminster's 2015 exhibition Archetypes (Groves and Leach, 2015). Williams attended this show and conducted research on the designer versions of the MA-1 jacket housed at the WMA, including those by Vivienne Westwood, Calvin Klein, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Paul Smith, Burberry, C.P. Company, and Liam Hodges.



Figure 10. Left to right: Vivienne Westwood Clint Eastwood Jacket (1984), USAF N-3B Cold Weather Parka (1965), Stone Island Mussola Gommata Jacket (1991) © WMA

Williams' development of three-dimensional box-shaped pockets was influenced by similar pockets that featured on a Stone Island jacket from 1991, Stone Island Mussola Gommata Jacket (1991, WMA.2016.269) and Vivienne Westwood Clint Eastwood Jacket (1984, WMA.2016.267) from Westwood's 1984 Clint Eastwood collection. In contrast to the traditional MA-1 jacket's set-in sleeves, Williams' garment incorporates raglan sleeves reminiscent of those found on the USAF N-3B Cold Weather Parka (1965, WMA.2016.057).

In communication with Dr Danielle Sprecher, curator of the Westminster Menswear Archive, Williams (2018) outlined how she used the archive to inform her creative process:

Once I had an idea of the kind of garments, I wished to reference in my collection I would usually make a few provisional visits to the archive. Covering the wider bases of shapes and details through photography and making quick sketches from these. From these visits I'd get a better idea of which garments I'd like to reinterpret. I was able to take detailed measurements and replicate patterns to toile and modernise in my own way, borrowing a beautiful sleeve shape, pocket or hood construction while maintaining the integrity of that particular garment. The archive

also inspired my personal design solutions by seeing how others solve the same problem.

Conclusion

The three case studies presented in this article demonstrate a range of approaches to object-based learning as part of a pedagogical approach to teaching fashion design using the WMA.

Aimee Determann's research focused primarily on the functionality and materiality of utilitarian workwear and questioned the value system inherent in differentiating between fashion and non-fashion garments. The physical and symbolic layering of clothing was a feature of both her research garments and runway collection, with each displaying illustrated schematics of the outfits on their surfaces. Nicolas Yip's research examined the tensions inherent in the language of ceremonial military dress, which is traditionally regarded as being fundamentally masculine but allows for the use of adornment and surface decoration in ways that in a fashion context are typically used for womenswear. Megan Williams' research explored the evolution of an archetypal garment from its military origins to the countless designer reiterations that have been created over the last 45 years. The archive enabled her to examine several of these designer reinterpretations allowing her to have a better understanding of how different designers interpreted them. This enabled Williams to create her own response, which incorporated an exaggerated silhouette, distortion of scale, and detail to reinvent this iconic garment in her aesthetic.

By replicating the environment of a commercial fashion archive, the WMA has enabled students to benefit in several ways. It increased students' awareness of how object-based learning might assist them in interrogating the outcomes created by others in their discipline to support the generation of new knowledge in the field of fashion. It has provided students with access to a diverse range of exemplar clothes that they would not have had otherwise and has prompted them to seek out design solutions that already exist in these garments. The emphasis on design archetypes within the WMA, such as the MA-1 jacket, trench coat, and trucker jacket, has enabled students to view their work as a continuum within categories, building on existing knowledge and expanding it within specific garment histories. The WMA's non-hierarchical collection policy has assisted students to synthesise the materiality, processes, and concepts inherent within the design languages of industrial, military, or designer clothing. Finally, hands-on access to physical objects has enabled students to understand garments from the inside out, their construction, materiality, and hidden functionality. As a result, their design output has expanded beyond the usual emphasis on only the exterior appearance of their garments.

Additional research is necessary to ascertain the extent of teaching collections housed in universities and colleges in the United Kingdom that provide fashion education. Preliminary inquiries seem to suggest that many collections remain under-resourced,

incompletely catalogued, with limited digital accessibility and with little public information about how users can access them. Garment-based research has been an intrinsic part of the fashion industry's design process for at least 50 years and is an integral part of the skills required of graduates. Further research on how teaching collections are integrated into fashion pedagogy via object-based learning would enable a better understanding of the varied approaches utilised and assist academics to integrate this process within their teaching practice.

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