What is it about McQueen’s designs that make them so appealing and unique?

Much of the appeal of McQueen’s fashions derives from their theatricality. He was drawn to periods in which fashionable silhouettes were particularly exaggerated, such as the 1860s, the 1880s, the 1890s, and the 1950s. But while he looked to these epochs for inspiration, his fashions always appeared emphatically contemporary—a combination of his ingenious construction techniques and his eclectic mixing of historical and cultural references.

Do you have a favorite show/collection?

One of our favorite runway presentations was McQueen’s spring/summer 1999 collection, entitled “No. 13.” The collection was inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement, and featured the athlete and model Amie Mullins in a pair of hand-carved prosthetic legs. McQueen’s promotion of beauty rarely adhered to classical or platonic ideals. For him, beauty was to be found in difference, in anomalies and irregularities.

McQueen has been called the most influential designer of his generation; do you think his work will stand the test of time?

McQueen’s impact on fashion is uncontestable. You only have to think of his “bumsters” to appreciate the extent and enormity of his influence. But his legacy extends beyond specific designs to his general philosophy of fashion. For McQueen, fashion was not just about utility and practicality but also about ideas and concepts. In this respect, he was an artist whose medium of expression happened to be fashion. Like many artists, his fashions were reflective of his personality and state of mind. They were intensely autobiographical.

Which designers most influenced him?

In terms of tailoring, McQueen was most influenced by designers whose technical acumen mirrored his own, designers such as Gilbert Adrian and Cristóbal Balenciaga. In terms of dressmaking, he looked to designers who shared his sense of theatricality and his love of exaggerated silhouettes, such as Charles Frederick Worth, Christian Dior, and Charles James. But McQueen’s fashions are incomparable. When you look at one of his suits or one of his dresses, they bear the hallmarks of his singular creativity. McQueen fashions, like his vision, are inimitable.
Just announced

**ALEXANDER McQUEEN**

Savage Beauty

Andrew Bolton and Harold Koda

With contributions by Tim Blanks and Susannah Frankel

A stunning overview of the career of designer Alexander McQueen, whose iconic and intricate fashions challenged the conventional parameters of clothing

Alexander McQueen (1969–2010) was one of the most influential, imaginative, and inspirational designers at the turn of the millennium. His fashions both challenged and expanded the conventional parameters of clothing beyond utility to a compelling expression of culture, politics, and identity. Focusing on the most iconic and acclaimed designs of his prolific career, this stunning book examines McQueen’s inimitable technical virtuosity and its subversion of traditional tailoring and dressmaking practices.

The book also focuses on the highly sophisticated narrative structures found in McQueen’s collections and in his astonishing and extravagant runway presentations, which suggested the most avant-garde installation and performance art. Intended as an assessment of Alexander McQueen’s entire career, the book includes in-depth studies of six collections that illustrate and encapsulate thematic chapters as well as an interview with Sarah Burton, the new creative director of Alexander McQueen who had been the designer’s right-hand design aide since 1996.

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See the reverse side for a conversation with Andrew Bolton and Harold Koda.