Lee Alexander McQueen CBE (1969–2010) was a British fashion designer/couturier who founded his own house, Alexander Queen, in 1992. He was then appointed head designer at Givenchy (1996 to 2001). Later in 2001 he partnered in with The Gucci Group (now Kering) under his own label, Alexander McQueen.

Mind, Mythos, Muse is the first McQueen exhibition on the West Coast.

Lee Alexander McQueen was “fashion’s closest thing to a rock star,” wrote Amy Spindler in The New York Times in 1997. He had his own label, Alexander McQueen; was head designer at Givenchy and partnered with Gucci; and designed clothes for actual rock stars including David Bowie and Björk. His collections were notoriously shocking, and his skills were virtuosic.

Lee Alexander McQueen grew up in London’s East End. His first job in fashion was as an apprentice at the bespoke Savile Row tailors Anderson & Sheppard, when he was sixteen. He notoriously claimed that while working there he placed hidden profane notes in garments made for the Prince of Wales. Early in his career, McQueen also worked for theatrical costumers Angels and Bermans, and fashion designers Koji Tatsuno and Romeo Gigli.

He then went back to school for a master’s degree in fashion design at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. His striking MA graduation collection,
which had a Jack the Ripper theme, was bought in its entirety by Isabella Blow, an aristocrat, magazine editor, and fashion muse and influencer before there was such a thing as social-media influencers.

McQueen established his own label in 1992, and was known as an *enfant terrible* of the fashion world for his shocking designs and collection concepts—early collections included *Taxi Driver* (after the Scorsese film) and *Nihilism*. McQueen would continue to put controversial collections on the runway for the rest of his career.

In 1996, McQueen became head designer of Givenchy. Around this time, he also designed the wardrobe for a David Bowie tour and clothing for Björk videos and album covers. In 2001, Gucci bought 51 percent of McQueen’s label, with McQueen remaining creative director. The McQueen label continued to grow. Between 1996 and 2003, McQueen earned four British Designer of the Year awards, and was honored as a commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II in 2003.

Lee Alexander McQueen died by suicide in 2010, on February 11, just nine days after his beloved mother and constant supporter, Joyce McQueen, passed away.

A major McQueen exhibition, *Savage Beauty*, was shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2011, curated by Andrew Bolton and Harold Koda, breaking all attendance records at that time. It later opened at the Victoria & Albert Museum in 2015, again breaking their attendance records.

**LACMA**

LACMA (the Los Angeles County Museum of Art) is the largest art museum in the western United States. Its permanent collection holds more than 147,000 objects spanning 6,000 years. More than 1 million people visit LACMA each year.

Originally part of the LA Museum of History, Science, and Art in Exposition Park, LACMA became its own, art-focused institution in 1961. The Wilshire Boulevard location, designed by William Pereira, opened in 1965. The campus has grown significantly in the decades since, now spanning 20 acres and many buildings. The Lynda and Steward Resnick Pavilion in which this exhibition is housed is one of the newer buildings, added in 2010. Four buildings on the LACMA campus were demolished in 2020 to make space for the forthcoming David Geffen Galleries, designed by Peter Zumthor—a lengthy capital project that has been extensively covered and discussed in the *L.A. Times* and other media outlets.

**THE LYND AND STEWART RESNICK EXHIBITION PAVILION**

The Resnick Pavilion at LACMA was designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, a winner of the Pritzker Prize who is known for high-tech public places such as the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris (1977) and the new Academy Museum of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences adjacent to
LACMA. Opened in 2010, the Resnick Pavilion at LACMA is the largest purpose-built, naturally lit, open-plan museum space in the world.

Lynda and Stewart Resnick are major patrons of LACMA who gave a $45 million lead gift in 2008 for the construction of the new exhibition pavilion. The Resnicks are co-owners of The Wonderful Company, a global company behind such brands as POM Wonderful and Fiji Water.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

○ What do you make of the title of the exhibition, Mind, Mythos, Muse?
○ The exhibition contextualizes McQueen’s work amid his artistic influences. How does this illuminate McQueen’s creative practice or the idea of artistic influence more broadly?
○ What is the relationship between fashion and other visual arts? Performing arts? How is fashion unique as an art form, and how does it intersect and overlap with other forms?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

○ The Eighth R. L. Shep Triennial Symposium on Textiles and Dress: Lee Alexander McQueen, a free video series Watch via LACMA’s exhibition website
○ Other exhibitions at LACMA lacma.org
○ The USC Fisher Museum of Art fisher.usc.edu
○ Fashion classes at the USC Roski School of Art and Design roski.usc.edu
○ Upcoming Visions and Voices events, including
  10/8 Taipei Night at the USC Pacific Asia Museum
  10/21 Louise Bourgeois: What is the Shape of This Problem? — Exhibition Walkthrough and Conversation
  10/22 Exploring the Prints of Louise Bourgeois
  10/25 Lido Pimienta in Concert

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

CHRISTINA SNIDER of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

ARTICLES


BOOKS


DATABASES

Bloomsbury Fashion Central
GQ Archive
Harper’s Bazaar Archive (1867–current)
LGBTQ+ Source

JOURNALS

Fashion and Textiles
Fashion Theory

STREAMING MEDIA

McQueen (Bleecker Street, 2018)
Lee Alexander McQueen: Mind, Mythos, Muse

One of the most significant contributors to fashion between 1990 and 2010, Lee Alexander McQueen (London, 1969–2010) was both a conceptual and technical virtuoso. His critically acclaimed collections synthesized the designer’s proficiency in tailoring and dressmaking with both encyclopedic and autobiographical references that spanned time, geography, media, and technology. The first McQueen exhibition on the West Coast, Lee Alexander McQueen: Mind, Mythos, Muse contextualizes the designer’s imaginative work within a canon of artmakers who drew upon analogous themes and visual references. Exploring imagination, artistic process, and innovation in fashion and art, the exhibition examines the interdisciplinary impulse that defined the designer’s career. Displaying select McQueen garments from the Collection of Regina J. Drucker alongside artworks largely from LACMA’s permanent collection, Mind, Mythos, Muse presents a case study of the designer’s methods and influences, and in doing so, provides the opportunity to better understand artistic legacy and cycles of inspiration.
Lee Alexander McQueen: Mind, Mythos, Muse
2022 By Clarissa M. Esguerra

McQueen’s iconic fashion juxtaposed with historic textiles and works of art, revealing the
designer’s dynamic approach to storytelling.

One of the most significant contributors to fashion between 1990 and 2010, British designer
Lee Alexander McQueen was both a conceptual and a technical virtuoso. His critically
acclaimed collections synthesized his unique training in Savile Row tailoring, theatrical
design and haute couture with a remarkable breadth and depth of encyclopedic and
autobiographical references spanning time, geography, mediums and technology.
McQueen’s singular viewpoint produced exquisitely constructed, thought-provoking, often
subversive or allegorical fashion.

Taking a reflective look at McQueen’s artful design process, this book documents the
designer’s diverse sources of inspiration by displaying McQueen’s imaginative fashions
alongside related artworks. McQueen’s encyclopedic references range from ancient Greece
and Rome to Tibetan silk brocade patterns, 17th-century Dutch painting, the prints of Goya
and the films of Stanley Kubrick. In each of these cases and beyond, examples of McQueen’s
imaginative and extraordinary work are displayed alongside artworks from LACMA’s
permanent collection. Spanning art from a multitude of mediums, eras and cultures, this
publication provides a new and innovative assessment of McQueen’s work and highlights his
mindful approach to storytelling and construction through fashion.

Lee Alexander McQueen (1969–2010) was one of the most important fashion designers at
the turn of the 21st century. In 2011, following his death, the Costume Institute in New York
organized an enormously successful retrospective of his work at the Metropolitan Museum
of Art.

All descriptions sourced from Amazon
Arguably the most influential, imaginative, and provocative designer of his generation, Alexander McQueen both challenged and expanded fashion conventions to express ideas about race, class, sexuality, religion, and the environment.

Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty examines the full breadth of the designer’s career, from the start of his fledgling label to the triumphs of his own world-renowned London house. It features his most iconic and radical designs, revealing how McQueen adapted and combined the fundamentals of Savile Row tailoring, the specialized techniques of haute couture, and technological innovation to achieve his distinctive aesthetic. It also focuses on the highly sophisticated narrative structures underpinning his collections and extravagant runway presentations, with their echoes of avant-garde installation and performance art.

Published to coincide with an exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art organized by The Costume Institute, this stunning book includes a preface by Andrew Bolton; an introduction by Susannah Frankel; an interview by Tim Blanks with Sarah Burton, creative director of the house of Alexander McQueen; illuminating quotes from the designer himself; provocative and captivating new photography by renowned photographer Sølve Sundsbø; and a lenticular cover by Gary James McQueen.

Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty celebrates the astounding creativity and originality of a designer who relentlessly questioned and confronted the requisites of fashion.
If Alexander McQueen were to give a masterclass on design, creativity and attitude, what wisdom would he impart? Discover McQueen's life, work and legacy in this sharply curated biography focusing on artistic spirit.

Alexander McQueen will go down in history as the most talented and enigmatic 'bad boy' of fashion. But it was his drive and visionary perspective that secured his place in sartorial legend when his defying couture looks sent shockwaves through the fashion landscape.

But how did he think? And how was his attitude reflected in his work? *What Alexander McQueen Can Teach You About Fashion* breaks down McQueen's life and work into memorable maxims – including Don’t be Scared of Fear, Challenge Gender, Add Volume, then More Volume and Show Skin. This book uncovers McQueen’s creative flair, his inspirations, his business acumen and the details that make his designs so arresting.

With pithy, thoughtful text and inspirational photographs, learn something from McQueen and apply it to your own life, creativity and style. These are the things that really define what it means to be McQueen.
This definitive publication on Alexander McQueen (1969–2010) invites you into the creative mind and world of one of Britain’s most brilliant, daring, and provocative designers, and the many themes and references that shaped his visionary fashion collections.

A true comprehensive study, this catalog is the first in-depth look at McQueen and explores key themes of the exhibition—tailoring, gothic, primitivism, naturalism, and futurism. The book also features previously unseen material as well as groundbreaking essays and feature spreads by multiple authors and leading fashion commentators. This kaleidoscopic approach explores themes central to the designer’s work and his collections, such as the psychology of fashion, natural history, the theatre and spectacle of his shows, and the key creative collaborators during McQueen’s lifetime.

Alexander McQueen also offers an encyclopedic survey of McQueen’s catwalk collections, illustrated with striking images by leading fashion photographers, and specially commissioned photographs that capture the breathtaking skill of his designs and awesome theatricality of his shows.
Lee Alexander McQueen (1969–2010), whose design combined visionary aesthetics, emotional power, and extraordinary craft, was known for staging provocative shows that were as much performances as venues to display his couture creations. Charged with energy, informed by history and culture, and filled with fresh concepts, McQueen’s shows have become legends not only of fashion but also of art. Anne Deniau was the only photographer allowed backstage by McQueen for 13 years, beginning in September 1997 and ending with the final show in March 2010. She captured McQueen working with his close circle of collaborators — including designer Sarah Burton, milliner Philip Treacy, jewelry designer Shaun Leane, and model Kate Moss — to create his meticulously produced spectacles. Her book offers an inspiring homage, through the art of photography, to the work of a great artist.
Alexander McQueen, the iconic designer whose untimely death in 2010 left the fashion world reeling and fans worldwide clamoring for more, fused immense creativity, audacity, and a hauntingly dark aesthetic sense into powerful, unforgettable imagery. The strange, singular beauty of his clothing was matched by the spectacle of his legendary fashion shows, which demonstrated his outstanding showmanship and consistently pushed the boundaries of runway events. Robert Fairer’s intimate, vibrant full-color photographs of McQueen’s collections, taken backstage and on the catwalk when few photographers were allowed access, offer a unique insight into the life and work of one of the world’s most captivating figures.

This previously unpublished portfolio of stunning, high-energy photographs captures the people and the spirit that made the designer’s flamboyant shows unique. Fairer, Vogue’s backstage fashion photographer for over a decade, was an integral part of the whirl of activity behind the scenes. These images, which capture both the glamor and the grit, represent a new genre of fashion photography and are a treasure-trove of inspiration. This superb book contains an introduction and collections texts by fashion expert Claire Wilcox. Dynamic images of McQueen’s collections—thirty of his total of thirty-six shows are presented chronologically—portray behind-the-scenes moments that reveal stylists, models, hairdressers, makeup artists, and McQueen himself at their most candid and creative.
Alexander McQueen Unseen

2016 By Robert Fairer
Judith Watt, a leading fashion historian and close personal friend of her brilliant, tragic subject, offers a close-up backstage look at the life, legacy, and visionary genius of Alexander McQueen. From his East London childhood to his explosive, game-changing fashion career to his shocking suicide at the age of forty, Watt’s *Alexander McQueen* features revealing commentary and intimate perspectives by those who were closest to the fearless, groundbreaking designer—including milliner Philip Treacy, stylist Katy England, photographer Nick Knight, as well as friends and collectors Sarah Jessica Parker, Lady Gaga, and Daphne Guinness—and stunning, photographs, many never before seen, of some of his most remarkable designs and intricate apparel.
London 1996: Alexander McQueen took over the Hawksmoor masterpiece Christ Church in London's East End for what was quite possibly the greatest fashion show on Earth. A candle-lit, cruciform catwalk with a backdrop of stained-glass windows set the tone for an extraordinary collection. Lace sat against chiffon and rubbed shoulders with couture and club-culture clothing and digital print. Dante was the seminal collection that would resonate throughout Alexander McQueen's career. This book features unique photographs shot behind the scenes, with raw, unseen pictures of the designer, models and clothes. The fashion creatives who worked with McQueen to make the show such a success recall this pivotal time in the designer's career and reflect on what made Dante truly groundbreaking. Newly created imagery of clothes shown on the catwalk gives an insight into why this collection was so special.
In 2008 Alexander McQueen commissioned photographer Nick Waplington to document the creation of his Fall 2009 collection—all the way from inception to runway showing. Unfortunately, it was to be the last Fall/Winter collection that McQueen would stage before his untimely death. This show, which he titled *The Horn of Plenty*, found McQueen revisiting his 15-year archive of work and recycling it into a new collection. In effect, it was his personal survey of his work to date. The set was composed of broken mirrors and a giant trash heap made up of all the sets from his previous shows; critics have commented that this reflected McQueen’s feelings towards the fashion system and how it pressures designers to be creative geniuses while relegating each collection to the garbage bin of history as soon as it’s sold. Waplington was given unprecedented access to McQueen and his staff, which included the current Creative Director of the brand, Sarah Burton. Every step of the creative process is documented in fascinating detail and readers receive a rare insight into the inner workings of McQueen’s creative process. Most notably, McQueen himself placed the book’s layout, picture by picture, on storyboards. The book was ready for publication when McQueen died, then was put on hold—until now. This substantial overview, with more than 120 photographs, is published just as McQueen edited it, commemorating the most personal of his collections. It includes an essay by Susannah Frankel, Fashion Editor at *Grazia* (U.K.).
Alexander McQueen: Fashion Visionary

2014  By Judith Watt
Alexander McQueen: Evolution

2012  By Katherine Gleason

From Jack the Ripper Stalks His Victims, his 1992 graduate collection, to Plato’s Atlantis, the last show before his death in 2010, Lee Alexander McQueen was as celebrated for the exquisite tailoring, meticulous craftsmanship, and stunning originality of his designs as he was notorious for his theatrical—and often controversial—runway shows. McQueen found inspiration for his avant-garde collections everywhere: his Scottish ancestry, Alfred Hitchcock movies, Yoruba mythology, the destruction of the environment—even the fashion industry itself. Whatever his inspiration, however, McQueen’s concept for his runway show came first and was crucial to the development of the collection. Every show had a narrative and was staged with his characteristic dramatic flair. Highland Rape featured disheveled models smeared with “blood” staggering down the runway in town clothes. In Scanners, two robots sprayed paint on a model trapped on a spinning platform. In Widows of Culloden, a hologram of supermodel Kate Moss held center stage. Other McQueen shows staged models walking through water, drifting snowflakes, rain, and wind tunnels; pole-dancing in garish makeup at a carnival, playing living pieces in a bizarre chess game, and performing with trained dancers in a Depression-era-style marathon. Illustrated throughout with stunning photography and liberally sprinkled with quotations from McQueen and those who knew him best, Alexander McQueen: Evolution is the story of the designer’s thirty-five runway shows and the genius behind them.
Vogue on: Alexander McQueen

2012  By Chloe Fox
A tribute to Alexander McQueen, 1969-2010. An iconic, imaginative, and inspirational fashion designer whose work turned heads and hearts all over the world. 125 stunning fashion showcatwalk photographs, with commentary by an experienced fashion journalist.
McQueen: The Illustrated History of the Fashion Icon

2018   By Tom Rasmussen

This book is an illustrated look at the life, loves, fashion moments, and ultimate tragedy of one of fashion's greatest stars.

The savage beauty of his creative vision stunned and shocked the fashion world for over 15 years, with his avant-garde theatricality leading many to call him the enfant terrible of British fashion. He created fashion moments which have not faded from memory, like David Bowie's Union Jack coat from 1996, Sarah Jessica Parker's tartan Met Gala dress from 2006, and Lady Gaga in those alien armadillo shoes in the “Bad Romance” video clip in 2009.

But before he was Alexander McQueen, he was Lee Alexander McQueen, the boy from London who dreamed of becoming a fashion designer. He worked his way up from making suits on Savile Row to starting his own fashion label and becoming one of the youngest designers ever to win the award for British Womenswear Designer of the Year.

McQueen: The Illustrated History of a Fashion Icon tells Lee Alexander McQueen's story through the gorgeous illustrations of R. Song and text by Tom Rasmussen, charting the rise of McQueen through his life, his loves, his friendships, his struggles, his models, and his biggest fashion moments, before his deeply sad death at the age of 40 in 2010.
Magnificently illustrated with some of McQueen’s most riveting designs, this book illuminates the struggles of a man who dared to defy accepted fashion norms and give the world a new sense of grandeur.

From conflicted gay teenager and aggressive and remote young man, through to his lonely suicide, this book charts Alexander McQueen’s ascent to couturier par excellence, highlighting his spectacular shows and showing how his confrontational, streetwise manner was simply a shield that protected and masked a very shy, sensitive, and insecure man who hailed from the wrong side of the high fashion tracks. McQueen’s talent is now globally acknowledged to have been unmatched in contemporary haute couture, and this book distills from the lavish sweep of his colors, designs, fabrics, and forward-driving concepts the essence of a man on a quest for beauty and his own contentment. In casting the spotlight on the stark contrast between catwalk glamour and his upbringing and personal demons, the book shows how his talent both nourished and destroyed him. It takes us from the vicious glare of the walkway where he was fêted by the wealthy and famous as an innovative artist to behind the glamour. There, defiance delineated a life that was hurled into inescapable depression by the deaths, first of his great friend and supporter Isabella Blow and then by his mother.
Alexander McQueen: Blood Beneath the Skin

2015  By Andrew Wilson

The first definitive biography of the iconic, notoriously private British fashion designer Alexander McQueen explores the connections between his dark work and even darker life.

When forty-year-old Alexander McQueen committed suicide in February 2010, a shocked world mourned the loss. McQueen had risen from humble beginnings as the son of an East London taxi driver to scale the heights of fame, fortune, and glamour. He designed clothes for the world’s most beautiful women and royalty, most famously the Duchess of Cambridge, who wore a McQueen dress on her wedding day. He created a multimillion-dollar luxury brand that became a favorite with celebrities including Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell.

But behind the confident facade and bad-boy image, lay a sensitive soul who struggled to survive in the ruthless world of fashion. As the pressures of work intensified, McQueen became increasingly dependent on the drugs that contributed to his tragic end. Meanwhile, in his private life, his failure to find lasting love in a string of boyfriends only added to his despair. And then there were the dark secrets that haunted his sleep...

A modern-day fairy tale infused with the darkness of a Greek tragedy, *Alexander McQueen* tells the complete sensational story, and includes never-before-seen photos. Those closest to the designer—his family, friends, and lovers—have spoken for the first time about the man they knew, a fragmented individual, a lost boy who battled to gain entry into a world that ultimately destroyed him.

“There’s blood beneath every layer of skin,” McQueen once said. Andrew Wilson’s biography, filled with groundbreaking material, dispels myths, corrects inaccuracies, and offers new insights into McQueen’s private life and the source of his creative genius.
More than two decades ago, John Galliano and Alexander McQueen arrived on the fashion scene when the business was in an artistic and economic rut. Both wanted to revolutionize fashion in a way no one had in decades. They shook the establishment out of its bourgeois, minimalist stupor with daring, sexy designs. They turned out landmark collections in mesmerizing, theatrical shows that retailers and critics still gush about and designers continue to reference.

Their approach to fashion was wildly different—Galliano began as an illustrator, McQueen as a Savile Row tailor. Galliano led the way with his sensual bias-cut gowns and his voluptuous hourglass tailoring, which he presented in romantic storybook-like settings. McQueen, though nearly ten years younger than Galliano, was a brilliant technician and a visionary artist who brought a new reality to fashion, as well as an otherworldly beauty. For his first official collection at the tender age of twenty-three, McQueen did what few in fashion ever achieve: he invented a new silhouette, the Bumster.

They had similar backgrounds: sensitive, shy gay men raised in tough London neighborhoods, their love of fashion nurtured by their doting mothers. Both struggled to get their businesses off the ground, despite early critical success. But by 1997, each had landed a job as creative director for couture houses owned by French tycoon Bernard Arnault, chairman of LVMH.

Galliano’s and McQueen’s work for Dior and Givenchy and beyond not only influenced fashion; their distinct styles were also reflected across the media landscape. With their help, luxury fashion evolved from a clutch of small, family-owned businesses into a $280 billion-a-year global corporate industry. Executives pushed the designers to meet increasingly rapid deadlines. For both Galliano and McQueen, the pace was unsustainable. In 2010, McQueen took his own life three weeks before his women’s wear show.

The same week that Galliano was fired, Forbes named Arnault the fourth richest man in the world. Two months later, Kate Middleton wore a McQueen wedding gown, instantly making the house the world’s most famous fashion brand, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened a wildly successful McQueen retrospective, cosponsored by the corporate owners of the McQueen brand. The corporations had won and the artists had lost.

In her groundbreaking work Gods and Kings, acclaimed journalist Dana Thomas tells the true story of McQueen and Galliano. In so doing, she reveals the revolution in high fashion in the last two decades—and the price it demanded of the very ones who saved it.
Shaun Leane
2020 By Shaun Leane, et al

A comprehensive visual record of the life's work of this renowned jewelry designer, known for his work with Alexander McQueen

Celebrated world-wide for his modern romantic jewels that push the boundaries of contemporary design, Shaun Leane has been responsible for creating a new genre of jewelry; precious, poetic, with a sense of eternity, yet relevant to today's world.

Illustrated with a breath-taking combination of high fashion shots and detailed close-ups of the pieces themselves. Captured by photographers Nick Knight, Robert Fairer and Chris Moore, along with a dedicated photo essay of unseen backstage images recorded by Leane's close friend Ann Ray.

Shaun Leane is introduced by the jeweler himself, then divided into three distinct parts: His heritage and training, by Joanna Hardy; reflections on Leane’s famous collaboration with Alexander McQueen, by Claire Wilcox; and his modern classic commercial jewelry style, by Vivienne Becker. Altogether, this book provides a vital overview of an artist that will be of interest to anyone who follows the contemporary jewelry and fashion scene.
Alexander’s MUSE
and Mentor

Isabella Blow

For a time, starting in the early 1990s, Isabella Blow and Alexander McQueen were inseparable—fashion muse and master—lovers without the sex. They shared something else: a self-loathing so intense it would devour them both, with Blow’s suicide in 2007 and McQueen’s in 2010. In an adaptation from her new book, Champagne Superman, MAUREEN CALLAHAN reveals how two great British talents lost the battle of their lives.

https://archive.vanityfair.com/article/2014/9/designed-for-destruction
“McQueen was very attracted to people being abused,” says Detmar Blow.

September 2006
If Alexander uses some of my ideas in his show, and he has, I don’t get paid: he does,” said Isabella Blow.

When McQueen took the job at Givenchy, Isabella assumed that she’d be named the house muse, that McQueen would put her on salary. He gave her nothing. She was heartbroken.

“She gave Lee everything,” says Julian Macdonald. “All her money, all her time, all her energy. She introduced him to everybody.”

Then, when he went to Givenchy and he had money, he told her to pin off. He had millions, she was penniless, and he gave her nothing. “He just shut the door.”

Isobel, hopeful all would be made right, tried to keep her mouth shut, but not long afterward, while being interviewed, she got drunk and the truth came out.

“The role of a muse is changing,” she said. “If Alexander uses some of my ideas in his show, and he hasn’t, I don’t get paid, he does.”

Isabella had been a muse to McQueen and declined herself a convert to luxury. “I think people want that now,” she said. “They don’t want to look at though it has taught them all their clothes in a thrift shop.”

With “Dante,” McQueen used masks that referenced the religious iconography of photographer Horst P. Horst, in support of McQueen’s model genre and conveyance, their gilded faces slashed with crimson lips. Writing in The New York Times, Anna Spiegel described “Dante” as a combination of “Blue Blood” from the novel. McQueen, she said, “brought the excitement, edge, and originality he is known for and added a wonderful fourth dimension for the first time: mannerism.”

“Fashion Is a Vampire Thing”

On October 14, 1996, LVMH announced that Alexander McQueen, now 27 years old, was taking over as head designer at Givenchy. His appointment left designer Michel de Givenchy devastated. “I find it a total disaster, and I suffer,” he said, “but that’s the way it is.”

September 2014
satisfying her, and she was self-destructing.

“She’d made some pretty rash and not great decisions about her own career,” says Chris Bird. “She’d gone on holidays and not returned. She wasn’t turning up for work and getting fired and she put her hope on Lee... His instinct was ‘I want to be my own person. I worked bloody hard for this.’”

The mother of Philip Treacy, another fashion discovery, was worried, too. More and more she warned him that Crowell was the last. She was never a beauty, but she had style and fair air; now she was suddenly looking very old and tired, with huge bags under her eyes. McQueen suggested plastic surgery. Instead, she went to Philip for him and gave the press a tear-jerky explanation: “Fashion is a complex thing,” she said. “That’s why I wear the clothes, to keep everyone away from me. They say, ‘Oh, can I kiss you?’ I say, ‘No, thank you very much. That’s why I’ve worn the hat. Goodbye. I don’t want to be kissed by all and sundry.’

Just as McQueen and McQueen were two of the fashion industry’s most influential, by so much self-styling until so much beauty that they were alienating friends and colleagues, sabotaging themselves, and in the designer’s case, deranging himself. McQueen told Denton that he needed to be abased sexually. “Dent, that’s the way it is.”

“I think the way he tried to metabolize [his] past was by having sex,” says Bird. “His personal relationships were very volatile.

For all their donations, Leslie had always kept the doors open for him. At Hills, McQueen could see what he liked with whom he liked, and it would stay behind these walls. When it came to that, Leslie would never judge.

“Can Everybody Not Give Lee Any Drugs?”

IN 1997, for the second time in two years, the British Fashion Council named McQueen Designer of the Year (in honor he shared with John Galliano. No number of accolades...could ease his demons. “His only usefulness,” Werner Weitzel said later, “in as a measure of zero talent.” Yves Saint Laurent called him a “dull-witted snob.” As it turned out, McQueen had flunked. He could barely speak the language. He was under pressure to turn a profit.

“The costume collections were amazing,” says Macdonald, who succeeded McQueen at Givenchy. “The ready-to-wear—nobody bought the clothes. If you looked at the figures, it was a disaster.”

Behind the door, McQueen’s ordnance was satisfying. A boyfriend had recently tried to commit suicide, and McQueen’s reaction, Bird says, was stunning: “Lee said, ‘How dare he try to kill himself in my fucking house’?”

McQueen was now constantly on coke, even asking Eric Lanvin, then head press officer at Givenchy, for help.

“He would call to ask for certain vitamin substances,” Lanvin said in the documentary McQueen & I. “I’m not talking about vitamins. I’m talking about cocaine.” McQueen also took up cigarettes, which shocked even him. “I never smoked in my life until I started at Givenchy,” he said. He consumed as much as Kier Meek and Marc Jacobs, two packs a day.

“It was like, ‘Can everybody not give Lee any drugs’?” Macdonald says. “He was completely off his head. He was, like, taking coke, taking coke; he was just uncontrolable. In a mad way, in a state of panic. ‘You need to find out...Oh God, that guy really needed help.’

McQueen, in the depths of self-pity, became obsessed with physical imperfections and disability. This became the theme for yet another breakthrough, his spring-summer 1999 show, “No. 13.”

The Parisian Aimer Mulins, a double amputee, walked in underwear prospheta. For the finale, Shelia Harlow stood on a rotating platform, seated in white as two robot arns elevated her with spray paint.

“The triumph of London’s fashion work,” Terry Jones wrote. “McQueen captured the raw aggression of Britney and the wiggling showmanship of the art scene.” McQueen agreed. “It was my best show; he’d said, “that moment with Shalom.” He later said he was so moved that he wept. As usual, McQueen was working out his own demons on the runway, and “No. 13” was a plain depiction of how he saw himself: bubble, disable, a puppet on a pole of vandallism by automations.

“Anger in my work reflected anger in my personal life,” he would later tell Merckx.

He wanted out of Givenchy. He’d lost weight, dropped his hair, and rolled with rock stars and royalties. Yet he was sure that the fashion elite were mocking him, the fat East End who thought he was good enough for French couture. He took credit for what happened next. As Lauren Goldstein Croce writes in her book Ibelle Bling: A Life in Fashion, she was invited next to Tom Ford at a dinner in May 1999 and told him, “You should look at Alex:” Ford, then creative director at Gucci Group, was impressed “not only was McQueen the most revolutionary designer of his generation, but provoking him could be the best revenge against Bernard Arnault, who’d recently appointed a hostile takeover of Gucci Group. Ford and C.E.O. Domenico De Sole successfully fought off by persuading the French conglomerate Pinault-Printemps-Rhadia to inject $5 billion into the company, later acquiring Yves Saint Laurent as well.

Gucci sent him to the press: “Fire me!” he said. Gucci made him an offer: a spot at a prestigious couture. McQueen would only have to produce for his own house. The one caveat: McQueen had to make clothes that would sell. In late 2000 he officially announced his defection to Gucci Group.

“Talk about bite the hand that feeds you,” McQueen said. “I bloody chewed it up and spat it out.”

“THe Loneliest Place on the Planet”

When he seemed to be the biggest, professionally, McQueen was in his personal life. He’d met a new man, George Evernham, who, at 22, was several years younger than McQueen and had never been exposed to the fashion industry. He was
saddened by what he saw. "The fashion world is the lowest place on the face of the planet,"
Forsyth told The Mail on Sunday. "It's a shame to see some of our best people in such a situation."

When he saw McQueen's apartment, he was shocked. "The place was a mess, with clothes hanging from the ceiling and a large hole in the floor." Forsyth

McQueen and Forsyth were both devastated by the news. "I can't believe it," said Forsyth. "We had just talked about his new collection and his plans for the future." McQueen's last public appearance had been at a fashion show in Paris, where he had welcomed the audience with a "Thank you" before removing his coat and throwing it to the floor. "He had been so happy," said Forsyth. "I can't believe he's gone."
Alexander’s **MUSE**

**Annabelle Neilson**

Annabelle Neilson in Alexander McQueen’s ‘Joan of Arc’ show in London, 1998
Anna Deniau/Courtesy Photo

Alexander McQueen and Annabelle Neilson at her birthday party in 2009
Richard Young/REX/Shutterstock
Alexander’s MUSE  

Daphne Guinness

Daphne Guinness + Lady Gaga  V Magazine
Photo: Steven Klein
A personal look at the extraordinary life, career and artistry of Alexander McQueen. Through exclusive interviews with his closest friends and family, recovered archives, exquisite visuals and music, "McQueen" is an authentic celebration and thrilling portrait of an inspired yet tortured fashion visionary.
McQueen And I - Alexander McQueen Documentary

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrfbKS-p7As
One only needed to look at the nature of Alexander McQueen’s work – the inherent violence and melancholy in every piece – to see there was a deep and permeable wound at the core of the young designer. He put everything into his work including it is said, “his dreams, nightmares and fears”.

The renegade of British Fashion, the late Alexander McQueen was more than a designer, he was and still remains a major figure in British culture, redefining the rule book with his youthful succession and a body of work that were more avant-garde forms of art than works of fashion. McQueen defied his East End beginnings, rising to the annals of fashion history by taking his place at the head of Givenchy at just 27 years of age. For years to come, his string of groundbreaking shows for both the French powerhouse and his own eponymous label, revealed the relentlessness of his imagination and an undeniable talent that took critics by surprise. From his first collection paid for in dole money all the way to his multi million dollar empire, it was clear people were interested in whatever he was selling, even if that was at times controversial. In February of 2010 the rebel designer would shock the world one final time, ending his longstanding battle with depression. Millions mourned the loss of his genius whilst those closest to him recalled the humble man behind the curtain.

Lee Alexander McQueen was born on the 17 March 1969, into the working class suburb of Lewisham, London. The youngest of six children, McQueen tapped into his creative side at an early age. With the encouragement of his mother he began designing dresses for his three sisters. Despite his flourishing creative interior, there was a darkness that Lee would endure throughout his life. At the age of six he began to grapple with his homosexuality, but fully embraced it into adulthood. As McQueen would later joke, he came “straight from his mother’s womb and into the gay pride parade”. At age nine he became the victim of sexual abuse at the hands of a non-blood relative and witnessed first hand physical violence against women.

McQueen's early collections like “Highland Rape” delved into these dark territories of violence and sadness particularly against women, shocking viewers and attracting much criticism. In the 90's his name was hard to avoid, the subject of tabloid headlines and underground chatter for his compelling and brazen antics. Starting as an apprentice tailor on Saville Row and progressing to the highly regarded fashion institute Central St Martins. McQueens debut collection in 1992 was bought out in its entirety by none other than Isabella Blow, the then editor of British Vogue and one of the most ostentatious characters, in an industry spilling with the eccentric. For McQueen she represented the powerful and successful women he wanted to dress; and in McQueen, Isabella found a kindred spirit: one whose talent for design was perfectly complimented by a sense of promotion and a keen eye for style. Her love of design extended to unearthing new talent, catapulting the career of McQueen alongside other contemporaries from milliner Phillip Treacy to model Sophie Dahl. Generating a close relationship, the two would go on to become an inseparable artist and muse combination of the high fashion industry, only to be destroyed by it from within.
The History of Alexander McQueen

Alexander McQueen’s life story is one of the most beautiful, yet tragic in all of fashion. In this video we'll talk about how he got his start on London’s Savile Row, the funny story of how he ended up at Central Saint Martins, his appointment at a legendary fashion house, and the launch of his world famous label ‘Alexander McQueen’. We will also address the often forgotten downside that comes with fame and riches - as McQueen struggled to cope with the world around him despite his sudden rise to stardom. This is truly one of the most important stories we’ll talk about on this channel, and hopefully you can learn something valuable from it. This is the history of Alexander McQueen.
'The Works' BBC documentary - Alexander McQueen 'Cutting Up Rough' 1997. The program documents the designer early on in his career having launched several of his own collections and recently been appointed Chief Designer at Givenchy. The film also shows his relationship with Isabella Blow and behind the scenes footage during his 'It's A Jungle Out There' Fall/Winter 1997 Collection.
Alexander McQueen’s Most Iconic Runway Moments

Charting the fire and dazzle of Alexander McQueen’s unique career, these edited catwalk highlights showcase the most unforgettable moments from his now legendary catwalk shows in London, New York and Paris from 1998-2003. Including the controversial ‘Highland Rape’ collection which showcased McQueen’s trademark bumster trousers and ‘Voss’, which opened on models in a glass cube reminiscent of a psychiatric ward and closed on writer Michelle Olley reclining nude whilst attached to a breathing tube surrounded by circling moths, here are the moments which defined McQueen as both provocateur and definer of beauty.

Established in November 2000, SHOWstudio is an award-winning fashion website, founded and directed by Nick Knight, that has defined the manner in which fashion is presented via the Internet. A pioneer of fashion film and live fashion broadcasting, SHOWstudio is now recognised as the leading force behind these mediums, offering a unique platform to nurture and encourage fashion to engage with moving image in the digital age. In its documentation of fashion and the arts, SHOWstudio has collaborated with pop culture icons and creatives including Tracey Emin, Lady Gaga, John Galliano, Kate Moss, Alexander McQueen, Charles Jeffrey, Gareth Pugh and many more. Visit SHOWstudio.com for in-depth analysis on key runway shows in fashion history via ‘The Narrated Catwalk’, and exclusive footage from McQueen’s career in ‘Unseen McQueen’.

SHOWstudio: Plato’s Atlantis by Alexander McQueen
www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVN4WUKlzjA
The exhibition, organized by The Costume Institute, celebrates the late Alexander McQueen's extraordinary contributions to fashion. From his Central Saint Martins postgraduate collection of 1992 to his final runway presentation, which took place after his death in February 2010, Mr. McQueen challenged and expanded the understanding of fashion beyond utility to a conceptual expression of culture, politics, and identity. His iconic designs constitute the work of an artist whose medium of expression was fashion. The exhibition will feature approximately one hundred ensembles and seventy accessories from Mr. McQueen's prolific nineteen-year career. Drawn primarily from the Alexander McQueen Archive in London, with some pieces from the Givenchy Archive in Paris as well as private collections, signature designs including the "bumster" trouser, the kimono jacket, and the three-point "origami" frock coat will be on view. McQueen's fashions often referenced the exaggerated silhouettes of the 1860s, 1880s, 1890s, and 1950s, but his technical ingenuity always imbued his designs with an innovative sensibility that kept him at the vanguard.
Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty

http://blog.metmuseum.org/alexandermcqueen/
Alexander McQueen’s mind was full of preoccupations – one only need look at the scope of his collections for evidence – and fed by a voracious appetite for discovery. He was a hoarder of references – in his studio, pattern books from the 16th century would sit next to piles of *National Geographic* magazines; photographs of death masks, coral, globes and clock faces might be pinned to the walls, and a well-thumbed copy of McDowell’s *Directory of 20th-Century Fashion* was frequently called upon (according to current creative director Sarah Burton, it was his favourite book). In McQueen’s collections, these idiosyncratic artefacts would be woven together like a vast web of firing neurons.

It is little wonder, then, that McQueen found solace in the cavernous halls of the V&A museum – “It’s the sort of place I’d like to be shut in overnight,” he said of the central Cass Court – and would spend hours discovering the treasures within. His relationship with the museum would prove fruitful, too – the designer participated in Fashion in Motion twice; in 2001 his work was featured in the era-shaping *Radical Fashion* exhibition and in 2003 he created the museum’s annual Christmas tree, a hovering crystal chandelier which hung conspicuously in the Great Hall. (continue in link)

www.anothermag.com/fashion-beauty/11002/five-books-that-most-inspired-alexander-mcqueen