

ALEXANDER McQUEEN

FASHION DESIGNER

Born—17 March 1969 in London.

Died -February 2010.

Nationality - -British.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Alexander McQueen came from a very modest background. His father was a taxi driver and he grew up in a council house in East London. By the time he was sixteen, McQueen had decided to devote himself entirely to fashion. He dropped out of school and took an apprenticeship at the Saville Row tailors 'Anderson and Shepherd'. This experience gave him the opportunity to sharpen his technical skills and tailoring, for which he later became famous. He then progressed to the famous gentlemen's tailors 'Gieves and Hawkes' who make suits for Prince Charles. These apprenticeships gave him the opportunity to master many different tailoring techniques such as pattern cutting, measurements and hand sewing.

At the age of 21 McQueen moved to Milan to work with international designer Romeo Gigli. McQueen then completed his masters degree in fashion design at the prestigious Central St. Martins College, where he had originally just hoped to be a pattern cutter. His first fashion collection received keen media attention and firmly established him as a promising young fashion designer. In 1991 his entire degree show was bought by influential stylist Isabella Blow who helped show his work to Vogue magazine and Harrods. He won the British Designer of the Year Award in 1996, 1997, 2001 and 2003. In 1997 he was employed by couture house Givenchy. In 2003 McQueen received a CBE.

It was announced on 11 February 2010 that McQueen had been found dead at his Mayfair home. The news came just days after the death of his beloved mother, Joyce.

STYLE

His shows were remarkably theatrical and brought him much attention and acclaim from both the press and celebrities who loved his clothes. Alexander McQueen shows are known for their emotional power and raw energy. His shows are gloriously romantic but very contemporary. His designs have a sense of drama and extravagance, fantasy and rebellion. McQueen loves the juxtaposition between contrasting elements: fragility and strength, tradition and modernity, fluidity and severity. He often uses humour or satire and presents his designs to comment on society or culture.

McQueen's famous "bumsters" spawned a trend in low rise jeans; on their debut they attracted many comments and debate but since then have become very popular. McQueen also became known for using skulls in his designs. A scarf bearing the motif became a celebrity must-have and was copied around the world.

2006 autumn collection



Savage Beauty



2009 collection



TECHNIQUES / MATERIALS

Alexander McQueen is most notably known as the genius of various tailoring techniques. He left school at the age of 16 with a single O-Level. He completed his A-Level in Art at night-school before being offered an apprenticeship at the revered Savile Row tailors Anderson & Shepherd. Here he learnt the intricacies of cutting jackets and the basics of cut and proportion. Through his apprenticeships, he mastered six methods of pattern cutting, from the 16th century to the present; his talented tailoring techniques are well known within the fashion industry. He moved to the theatrical costumiers Angels & Bermans to work on productions for big musical shows such like Les Miserables, which encouraged him to use more dramatic techniques and materials.

He has decorated his work with feathers, dying flowers, antlers, crushed beetles, human hair and bird wings. The weird, wonderful accessories alone send a tingle down the spine — especially when horns appear a protuberances from the shoulders of a jacket, or platform shoes seem like organic growths on the end of a foot.



Parrot dress 2003



Spring 2010 collection