Mary Quant

Large Print Labels

Part 1

Please return to the holder in ..... location (TBC)
The exhibition is designed for you to move through as you wish, but for practical purposes the labels in this booklet are arranged in sequence. Locations of objects are noted in bold at the top of the page.
MARY QUANT

“The whole point of fashion is to make fashionable clothes available to everyone.”
Mary Quant, 1966

Dame Mary Quant defined the young, playful look of the 1960s, becoming Britain’s best-known designer and a powerful role model for working women. Harnessing an explosion in shopping and the media – in photography, graphics, journalism and advertising – she helped to shape a forward-looking, innovative identity for post-war Britain.

This exhibition explores Quant’s career, from her experimental boutique Bazaar of 1955 to her international Mary Quant brand of the 1960s and ’70s. Quant changed the fashion system, challenging the dominance of Parisian couture and establishing London as a new centre of style. Thousands of her products were mass-manufactured and exported around the world, reflecting the profound changes of this formative period.

Continued overleaf
She wore the look as the ambassador of her designs, marketed with her instantly recognisable daisy logo. A creative influencer of the time, Quant popularised miniskirts, tights, waterproof mascara and other products women take for granted today.

Many of the exhibits here are cherished garments, accessories and photographs donated or lent by women responding to call-outs for Quant clothes and memories in the V&A’s #WeWantQuant and V&A Dundee’s #SewQuant press and social media campaigns.
‘MOOD’
1966
Worn by Lady Michaelle St. Vincent

Two generations of women wore this bold raincoat, highlighting the longevity of some of Quant’s designs. Lady Michaelle St. Vincent recalls that her mother ‘fell in love with the colour and style, wearing it with her white, wet-look boots. She passed the coat to me and it came into its own again when I had a bright red geometric bob in the ‘80s.’

PVC (modern boots)
Labelled ‘Alligator by Mary Quant’
Made by Alligator Rainwear Ltd, Stockport
Given by Lady Michaelle St. Vincent
V&A: T.60-2018
Model wearing ‘Mood’
Photograph by Gunnar Larsen, 1966
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Gunnar Larsen
‘THE POINT OF FASHION IS NOT TO GET BORED’
1972

Duration: 1 minute

Extracts from:
Mary Quant Fashions – Colour, 1972
Footage supplied by AP Archive/British Movietone

Models wearing Mary Quant designs, 1972
Video supplied by BBC Motion Gallery Editorial/BBC Archives/Getty Images
1930–54
BEFORE BAZAAR

“London was a bombsite and the only thing that thrived was the buddleia. Fog permeated everything. It was railway stations and Typhoo tea, stockings and suspenders.”

Born in 1930 near Blackheath, south-east London, to Welsh parents, Quant is evacuated during the war and grows up with austerity and clothes rationing. As a teenager, she longs to train in fashion design, although her parents insist she should follow them into teaching at grammar schools. As a compromise, she trains as an art teacher at Goldsmiths College, not far from the family home.

At art school, she enjoys socialising with exciting, pleasure-seeking, free-thinking people from different walks of life. At a fancy dress ball, she meets her future husband, Alexander Plunket Greene, a trumpet-playing bohemian from Chelsea.

When she leaves Goldsmiths, Quant’s first job is trimming high class hats at Erik’s, a couture milliner in Mayfair, but she gravitates towards London’s jazz clubs and the buzzing pubs and cafes around Chelsea’s King’s Road.
SKETCHBOOK
1944
Mary Quant

Made when Quant was just 14, this sketchbook shows her early interest in drawing figures, here in the nostalgic style of Mabel Lucie Atwell. In her 1966 autobiography, she recalled admiring a childhood friend’s short black skirt and tap shoes worn for dance lessons – the sort of clothes which later inspired her designs for the miniskirt.

Coloured pencil on paper with canvas covered boards
Made in London (probably)
Lent by Emma Gaunt
‘THE LONDON LOOK’
1965

Duration: 3 minutes

Film promoting Mary Quant and Foale & Tuffin designs for the American market and Puritan Fashions’ ‘Youthquake’ brand.

Courtesy of Mary Quant Archive
1962–66
THE MINISKIRT

“The Shock of the Knee.”

Quant’s ‘knee-skimming’ outfits are first noticed by the media in 1960. An emerging street style, shorter skirts develop in tandem with teenage dance crazes. Quant’s designs, often based on practical schoolgirl pinafores, adapt the look for grown-ups with hemlines gradually rising to well above the knee. Although exclusive Paris couturier André Courrèges achieves international publicity for higher hemlines in 1964, Quant, as a female celebrity designer, becomes recognised as inventor and ambassador for the style.

By 1966, many young metropolitan women are wearing very short skirts and the term ‘miniskirt’ is widely used. Despite attracting outrage from the older generation, the mini eventually becomes an accepted part of fashion as well as an international symbol of London’s youthful look and of women’s liberation.
'PEACHY'
1962
Worn by Margaret Stewart

Fitted at the top with a knee-length skirt fanning out into sunray pleats, this was one of Quant’s most successful early designs. Available in coloured tweeds, like soft pink and bright yellow, it transformed the prim grey school-pinafore into a smart, multipurpose dress, wearable from morning until night. Margaret Stewart’s husband called her Peachy dress the Scarlet Runner because it was so reliable.

Wool tweed
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London (probably)
Given by Margaret Stewart
V&A: T.27-1997
Model wearing ‘Peachy’
Photograph by Reginald Davis, 1962
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive/Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Reginald Davis
OP ART STRIPES
1963
Worn by Elizabeth Gibbons

Elizabeth Gibbons stood out in a crowd while wearing this tweed pinafore dress. Quant’s design dispenses with pleats and detail. It uses an A-line skirt and slightly raised hemline to enable free movement while maximising the graphic impact of the bold striped wool and its contrasting ginger bodice.

Wool tweed (displayed with modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London (probably)
V&A: T.36-2013
LACE DRESS
1964
Worn by Jenny Fenwick

Originally touching the knee and later shortened, this dress exemplifies the girlish, pretty styles central to Quant’s 1964 collections. Jenny Fenwick bought it from the new Top Shop concession in Peter Robinson department store, Sheffield. She felt that, ‘Mary Quant epitomised a style which was different to the norm and meant that teenage girls like me didn’t have to look like their mothers’.

Cotton machine-made lace with acetate under-dress
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinberg, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Jenny Fenwick
V&A: T.58-2018
‘TOPLESS’
1965
Worn by Alison Smithson

Architect Alison Smithson wore garments by Quant and other modern young designers such as Foale & Tuffin. Along with her husband Peter, she was a key proponent of the Brutalist school of architecture, reshaping the urban landscape of post-war Britain in the 1960s. This dress design advanced the move towards bold graphic outlines and shorter skirts. The choice of utilitarian jute for a fashionable garment made a striking statement.

Jute, probably woven by Don and Low, Dundee, with viscose trim and metal buckle
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of the Smithson Family: Simon Smithson, Samantha Target née Smithson and Soraya Smithson

Sweater
1973
Machine knitted wool
Labelled ‘Chelsea Girl’
Made in Great Britain
T.110:B-1976
SWEATER DRESS
1966
Worn by Mary Quant

Quant’s minidresses reached their most extreme heights in 1966, with some designs more like long sweaters or t-shirts. Photographs of Quant were all over the media that year when she published her autobiography, launched her cosmetics range, and received her OBE. This liberating wool-jersey minidress was available in many plain colours and a pink-and-silver lurex blend, as modelled by Twiggy.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Mary Quant Archive
MARY QUANT WEARING ‘PEACHY’
1962
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive/ Victoria and Albert Museum, London

MODELS SHOWING MARY QUANT COLLECTION
1962–63
© Trinity Mirror / Mirrorpix / Alamy Stock Photo

MARY QUANT WEARING LACE DRESS
1964
Photograph by Shahrokh Hatami
Image courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum, London
GRACE CODDINGTON AND SUE AYLWIN WEARING ‘TOPLESS’
1965

© Photograph Terence Donovan
Courtesy Terence Donovan Archive

TWIGGY WEARING SWEATER DRESS
1966

Photograph by David Montgomery for Vogue
‘Young Idea’,
15 April 1966
David Montgomery / Vogue © The Condé Nast Publications Ltd.
1955–64
BIRTH OF THE BOUTIQUE

“We knew we had to do things ourselves, or nothing would happen at all.”

The Fantasie, Archie McNair’s coffee bar, is at the heart of Chelsea’s creative scene. When a nearby shop becomes vacant, friends Quant, Plunket Greene and McNair invest in Quant’s fashion sense and become business partners. They strip out the Victorian windows, replacing them with a modern shop front. Quant combs wholesale warehouses and art schools sourcing quirky garments and jewellery to create Bazaar, ‘a bouillabaisse of clothes... and peculiar odds and ends’.

The shop opens with a party. The stock sells out. Exhausted but exhilarated, Quant makes dresses in her bedsit, buying fabric from the grand department store Harrods each morning. Bazaar transforms the formal experience of shopping. Three years later, Quant takes on the fashion giants of Knightsbridge, brazenly opening her second boutique opposite Harrods itself.
Struggling to find exciting wholesale garments to stock in Bazaar, Quant began designing her own pieces. Equipped with basic dressmaking skills, she adapted Butterick clothes-patterns to suit her own style. This spotty pyjama ensemble is a 1973 replica of the first pieces she made. A similar pair of ‘mad housepyjamas’ secured Quant’s first fashion editorial in Harper’s Bazaar magazine in September 1955.

Printed linen
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, *Mary Quant’s London*
Lent by Fashion Museum, Bath/ Gift of Mary Quant Ltd
Model wearing Mary Quant pyjamas
Photograph by Brien Kirley for Harper’s Bazaar, September 1955
Courtesy of Harper’s Bazaar UK
Image courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London
PETTICOAT-SKIRT

c. 1957
Worn by Caroline Montagu-Pollock

Caroline Montagu-Pollock was a model who lived in Chelsea and adored shopping at Bazaar King’s Road where she purchased this delightful petticoat-skirt. With its flounced hem and broderie anglaise trimming the skirt clearly references Victorian underwear. From the earliest days of Bazaar, nineteenth-century fashion was a fruitful source of inspiration for Quant.

Cotton with broderie anglaise trimming
Unlabelled
Made in London
Given by Caroline and Sophie Montagu-Pollock
V&A: PROV.3035-2019
Caroline Montagu – Pollock modelling her Mary Quant party dress
Photograph by Larry Carter, about 1961
Courtesy of Caroline Montagu – Pollock
‘ALEXANDER STRIPE’ DRESS
1960
Worn by Carola Zogolovitch

Carola Zogolovitch was 18 when her parents bought her this pinafore dress as a present. She recalls the King’s Road Bazaar was, ‘by far the most stylish shop in London. The Road at this time was the hangout for a rather louche circle of late-teenage and early-20s people. Quite a few were Trustafarians with no need to work, some were escaping their roots, re-inventing themselves by changing their names and becoming movers and shakers within the social group known as the Chelsea Set’. 

Wool twill ‘Alexander Stripe’
Labelled ‘Bazaar’
Made in London
Given by Carola Zogolovitch
V&A: T.71-2018

Jenny Wilson modelling ‘Alexander Stripe’ dress
Vogue, London,
January 1960
Photographs by Norman Parkinson
V&A: NCOL.445-2018
QUANT WINDOW-DRESSING BAZAAR, KING’S ROAD
1962

Working on the Bazaar window displays was the highlight of Quant’s Saturday evenings. What started off as garments and hats artfully arranged on backboards, evolved into surreal displays intended to shock and intrigue passers-by. Specially commissioned mannequins with the latest haircuts and gawky poses were far removed from those seen in old-fashioned shop windows elsewhere.

Facsimile of a photograph by John Cowan
V&A: NCOL.460-2018
Research scientist Caroline Hooper lived in a Kensington basement flat in the 1950s and bought this blouse straight out of Bazaar’s window to impress her geologist boyfriend returning from Antarctica. ‘The staff were rather cross because they had only just finished dressing the window. [The blouse] never had a label so might be one of those pieces that Mary Quant sewed in the evening to replenish her stock.’

‘Goanna’ printed cotton, designed by Frances Burke, Australia, 1940
Unlabelled
Made in London
Given by C. Hooper
V&A: T.285-2020
Caroline Hooper (right) wearing her Mary Quant blouse, Cambridge, 1960
Courtesy of Caroline Hooper
PARTY DRESS
1958–59
Worn by Penelope Massot

Chelsea resident Penelope Massot was friends with Quant and Plunket Greene. She recalls, ‘Mary was the same size as me, so her clothes always fitted’. The friends shared a love of music and Penelope wore this dress to a concert they attended by jazz-trio Lambert, Hendricks and Ross. ‘I can remember Alexander getting on his knees to worship Annie Ross’.

Glazed cotton with heavily-starched cotton petticoat
Labelled ‘Bazaar’
Made in London
Given by Penelope Massot
V&A: T.57-2018
‘PINAFORE PLEATS’
1960
Worn by Ann Whatham

This dropped-waist pinafore dress is typical of the style regularly worn and designed by Quant in different fabric weights for all seasons, in the early 1960s. The style is indebted to 1920s flappers and schoolgirl uniforms, both frequent inspirations for Quant. The wearer recalled buying it from the Bazaar in Knightsbridge which ‘appeared to have only one member of staff – a motherly, middle-aged lady.’ This was Joan Zimbler who had worked in fashion retail for her whole career.

Linen and polyester
Labelled ‘Bazaar designed by Mary Quant’
Made in London
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Claud and Ann Whatham
1955–66
BUILDING THE BRAND

“Once, only the Rich, the Establishment, set the fashion. Now it is the inexpensive little dress seen on the girl in the High Street. These girls... don’t worry about accent or class... they are the mods.”

The commercial success of Bazaar builds on London’s boutique scene, thriving thanks to the growing affluence and social mobility of young people benefiting from further education and higher wages. Shopping for clothes becomes a leisure activity. Quant meets fashion students at art schools, inspiring younger designers to set up on their own.

Carnaby Street is the epicentre of the menswear revolution, but King’s Road becomes an open-air catwalk, as stylish shoppers come to pick up the latest ideas. Quant commissions bold new designs for her carrier bags, labels and stationery, using large lettering to amplify the strength of her designs and her classless yet catchy name.

Continued overleaf
She collaborates with the new generation of models, fashion editors and photographers to create iconic images. Her clothes are promoted by new magazines like *Honey* and *Petticoat*, aimed at young women who wear her dresses both for business and pleasure.
QUANT’S DESIGN PROCESS AND MANUFACTURING
1965–1967

Duration: 4 minutes

Extracts from:
*Fancy Dresser*, 1965
Footage supplied by BBC Broadcast Archive/ Getty Images

*Mary Export Quant*, 1966
Footage supplied by British Pathé

*Quant and her design and manufacturing process*, 1967
Footage supplied by Mary Quant Archive

Image:
*The offices of Mary Quant Ltd, 3 Ives Street, Chelsea, London, 1971*
Photo by Keystone/Hulton Archive/ Getty Images
1960–63
WORKING WARDROBES

“Fashion is a tool to compete in life outside the home.”

Quant is now the name on the label and the face of the brand. Working from tiny offices in a converted factory on Ives Street, Chelsea, the three original business partners bring different strengths to the team. Quant focuses on design, while Plunket Greene’s flair for marketing and McNair’s financial acumen help build the business.

Mixing social and professional life, their friend, designer and entrepreneur Terence Conran, designs the Knightsbridge branch of Bazaar. Conran opens his interiors shop, Habitat, nearby in 1964. Bazaar and Habitat tap into the market for good design, providing functional, stylish products for aspirational consumers. With two Bazaars and a new wholesale line retailing across the UK, the Mary Quant team grows, recruiting like-minded individuals to help sell the look.
WRAPOVER DRESS
1963–64
Worn by Pamela Howard

Quant’s minidresses reached their most extreme heights in 1966, with some designs more like long sweaters or t-shirts. Photographs of Quant were all over the media that year when she published her autobiography, launched her cosmetics range, and received her OBE. This liberating wool-jersey minidress was available in many plain colours and a pink-and-silver lurex blend, as modelled by Twiggy.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Mary Quant Archive
BAZAAR CARRIER BAG
About 1967

The bold typeface used for stationery, labels and bags from 1961 helped to reinforce the strength of the brand and unify the names of Mary Quant and Bazaar. A third Bazaar shop on New Bond Street opened in 1967, but all three shops were closed in 1969, allowing the company to focus on design and licensing operations.

Printed plastic
Made in London
Given by Lyn Gilbert (née Leech)
V&A: AM/T&F/0003
PINAFORE DRESS
1963–64
Worn by Annabel Mackay (née Taylor)

Annabel Taylor ‘enjoyed every minute’ working for Mary Quant, wearing samples like this pinafore in ‘shrimp’ tweed, a typical Quant fabric in both name and colour. Her experience was ‘an eyeopener’, sartorially and socially, ‘so different from Big Department Store behaviour’. Taylor ran the wholesale showroom, and chose designs to retail in Bazaar from other forward-thinking London designers such as Jean Muir, Gerald McCann and Roger Nelson.

Wool tweed (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by Annabel Mackay
V&A: T.65-2018
Bazaar team, Knightsbridge, about 1966: (left to right)
Alexander Plunket Greene, Annabel Taylor, Joan Zimbler, Mary Quant, Archie McNair and Cathy McNair
Courtesy of Annabel Mackay
INTERVIEW DRESS
1962
Worn by Annabel Mackay (née Taylor)

Annabel Taylor’s family owned the Cambridge department store Joshua Taylor, an early stockist of the Mary Quant wholesale collection. Taylor learned the retail trade at London stores Harrods and Dickins & Jones, before leaving to travel in Africa. Returning to London for her interview at Mary Quant in 1962, she wore this smart flannel dress, a tweed coat and a ‘rather furry ginger Trilby hat’.

Wool flannel
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by Annabel Mackay
V&A: T.63-2018

Hat
About 1962
Sheepskin
Made in Great Britain
Lent by Ruth Lowe
QUANT AND TEAM
1963

This photograph captures the spirit of fun and inclusion of the Mary Quant business. It includes the three original partners as well as van driver Tom Tottham (right), pattern cutter Mikki Katz (with scissors), fitter Pura Garces, model Jill Stinchcombe, shop managers Joan Zimbler and Anne Cossins, together with accountant Robert Peet, business manager George Kersen and Anthony Stanbury of wholesale manufacturer Steinbergs. Annabel Taylor (buyer) can be seen at the very back of the group.

Photograph by David Bailey for the Daily Express, 6 November 1963
Courtesy of the Terence Pepper Collection
Image © David Bailey
FITTED JACKET AND SKIRT
Sample acquired by Dr Lydia Sharman in 1957
Illustrated in Queen, 11 September 1962

Lydia Sharman designed the shopfront display system for the original King’s Road Bazaar in 1957, while working for Conran Contracts. The design of her jacket and skirt combines Edwardian and Russian styles and was a substantial purchase, costing over 32 guineas in 1962 (about £715 today). The jacket could also be worn with a pair of matching breeches.

Wool tweed
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
On loan from the private collection of Dr Lydia Sharman
Celia Hammond (right) and Jean Shrimpton modelling Quant designs, 1962
© John French / Victoria and Albert Museum
COAT-DRESS
1962
Worn by Venetia Pollock

Woollen coat-dresses were ideal for formal outdoor occasions in cool British weather, or cold houses when central heating was a rare luxury. Venetia Pollock wore this scaled-up check tweed coat-dress for a ceremony to launch a refurbished ship owned by her husband, as reported by society magazine, Tatler. She was married to Philip Pollock, a businessman who helped Terence Conran to finance his shop Habitat.

Wool tweed with silk frogging
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by the family of the late Philip Pollock
V&A: T.286-2020
Venetia Pollock wearing her coat-dress
Photograph by Jane Bown for *Tatler*, 23 May 1962
Courtesy of the family of the late Philip Pollock
‘THE GUARDS’
1963–64
Worn by Lyn Gilbert (née Leech)

After training at the Barrett Street School (forerunner to the London College of Fashion), Lyn Gilbert worked as a pattern cutter for Horrockses Fashions which was owned by Steinbergs, manufacturer of the Mary Quant wholesale ranges. She made samples of Mary Quant designs using the dress stand shown here, sometimes buying the finished samples for herself.

Wool flannel
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by Lyn Gilbert
V&A: T.66-2018

Dress stand
About 1960
Wolfform Co.
Made in the USA
Cotton covered papier mâché with metal base
Lent by Lyn Gilbert
‘STEALING A MARCH ON THE GUARDS’
1961

Photograph by John Cowan
© John Cowan Archive
THAI TWO-PIECE
About 1960
Worn by Cathy McNair

As the wife of a Mary Quant co-director, Cathy McNair often wore garments from Bazaar such as this exquisite silk outfit exported from Thailand, bought to complement Quant’s designs on the shop’s rails. Queen Sirikit of Thailand actively revived and promoted the Thai silk industry during her world tour of 1960, helping to develop a market for its handwoven fabrics in Europe and America.

Handwoven silk with machine stitched quilting
Labelled ‘Bazaar’ and ‘Made in Thailand’
Made in Thailand
Lent by the McNair family
Cathy McNair in Quant style top, with Hamish and Camilla McNair, 1959
Photograph by Archie McNair
Courtesy of Hamish McNair and Camilla Mair
1960–63
SUBVERTING MENSWEAR

“Borrowing from the boys.”

Quant takes tailoring cloth intended for city gents’ suits or military uniforms and camps it up into fun, relaxed garments for women, using fashion to question hierarchies and gender rules. Her designs reflect the appetite for satire in the media, mocking traditional British institutions and attitudes, from religion to snobbery. Plunket Greene concocts witty and irreverent names for outfits, taking inspiration from renowned male figures, professions and establishments such as ‘Byron’, ‘Barrister’ and ‘Bank of England’.

Trousers and jeans are popular with students, beatniks and subcultures outside mainstream fashion. They are considered inappropriate for women and are even banned for them to wear in formal settings such as restaurants. Quant’s trousers are smart and practical, and she wears them anywhere she wants.
CELIA HAMMOND MODELLING FOR MARY QUANT ADVERTISEMENT

1962

© Terence Donovan
Courtesy Terence Donovan Archive
WAISTCOAT AND TIE DRESS
1962
Worn by Elizabeth Gibbons

With its tailored waistcoat, pinstriped shirt and spotted tie, this ensemble features a number of familiar masculine motifs that Quant consistently returned to in her designs. It is a key example of her playfully rebellious approach to established gender norms in fashion. It featured in one of the few Mary Quant advertisements, probably commissioned to promote the brand’s new wholesale venture, modelled by Celia Hammond.

Wool tweed, cotton and silk
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
V&A: T.38:1 to 3-2013
V-NECK SWEATER
1963
Worn by Stella Kateb

Sportswear is regularly referenced in Quant’s designs. Made in Scotland, this jumper with a comically exaggerated V-neck takes its inspiration from men’s traditional cricket whites. Stella Kateb bought it from the 21 shop, a boutique for young fashion inspired by Bazaar, at Woollands department store in Knightsbridge, London. Kateb worked at the 21 shop in the 1960s and recalls this style ‘flying off the shelves’.

Wool
Labelled ‘Designed for John Laing, Hawick, Scotland by Mary Quant’
Manufactured by John Laing, Hawick, Scotland
Given by Stella Kateb
V&A: T.1707-2017
'LEGS DOWNWARDS'
1960–62

At a time when most women wore trousers only at very informal occasions or in private, Quant advocated them as a fashion statement. The ‘Alexander Stripe’ wool chosen for this pair was traditionally used for men’s formal tailoring, but they are cut with a flattering hipster-low, cowboystyle waistline. Appropriating trousers remained a strong theme in Quant’s designs throughout her career.

Worsted wool twill
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Mary Quant Archive
Maryrose McNair modelling Mary Quant blouse and trousers, about 1962
Courtesy of the Mary Quant Archive
Famous actor Rex Harrison became synonymous with cardigans as they were a staple part of his wardrobe in the show ‘My Fair Lady’. This cardigan-dress features Quant’s trademark low-slung pockets which sit just above the hemline, rendering them useless as the wearer can’t reach them.

Wool tweed
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition,
Mary Quant’s London
Mary Quant Archive
Jean Shrimpton modelling ‘Rex Harrison’, 1962
© John French / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
‘PLUNKETS’
1963

Originally made in heavy sailcloth, these workmen-style dungarees have been reinterpreted for fashion. The button-apron top was a feature Quant regularly used for dresses as well. The dungarees, named after her husband’s family, cost £6, 12 shillings and 6 pence (almost a week’s wage for a Bazaar shop-assistant), and could be teamed with a black rayon shirt.

Cotton canvas (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, Mary Quant’s London
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Mary Quant Ltd

Jill Kennington modelling ‘Plunkets’
Vogue, 1 March 1963
Photograph by
Terence Donovan
The Tower Library
'CITY SLICKER'
1962–63
Worn by Caroline Montagu-Pollock

With its low scooped neckline, contrasting waistcoatstyle bodice and waist-defining belt, ‘City Slicker’ plays with the proportions of masculine tailoring. The wearer, Caroline Pollock re-called, ‘When Mary burst on to the scene [with] her brilliant clear-cut style, in the most gorgeous materials, it was a revelation.’

Wool and cotton
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by Caroline and Sophie Montagu-Pollock
V&A: T.282:1&2-2020
Celia Hammond modelling ‘City Slicker’, 1963
© Terence Donovan
Courtesy Terence Donovan Archive
Individual case

HIGH-NECKED DRESS
1962

Quant wore a red flannel version of this sleek, minimal dress for a Harper’s Bazaar feature which highlighted her style sense and taste for ‘individualistic clutter’ at home. The article describes her as, ‘the product of this age: intelligent, vital, objective’. With its high collar, and enlarged placket opening and buttons, the dress foreshadows the simple minidresses for which Quant was to become famous.

Wool flannel with plastic buttons
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
On loan from Daniel Milford Cottam

Mary Quant wearing high-necked dress
Harper’s Bazaar, February 1962
Photographs by Richard Dormer
The Tower Library
1960–62
DEATH OF THE DEBUTANTE

“Snobbery has gone out of fashion.”

Fashion editors endorse Bazaar with its distinctive designs, witty window displays and jazzy fashion shows. Quant’s shop becomes a destination for professional women seeking streamlined, modern fashion. Buying a dress there is a new rite of passage for London’s fashionable elite, as aristocratic customs such as ‘deb of the year’ and court presentations become out-dated.

As more young women attend college and earn their own living, Quant’s clothes appeal to both ‘duchesses and typists’, although prices are still expensive. Women’s magazines promote her unconventional look to a wider audience while tabloid newspapers present her as ‘mad’ and ‘way out’.
‘TUTTI FRUTTI’ SUIT AND BLOUSE
1962

‘Tutti Frutti’ came with coloured linings and matching crêpe blouses made in contrasting bright silk. The suit cost 24 guineas (about £528 today), while the blouse at 6 and a half guineas (about £143), cost almost a week’s wage for a Bazaar shop assistant.


Wool flannel and silk
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, Mary Quant’s London
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.104 to B-1976

Jean Shrimpton wearing ‘Tutti Frutti’
Harper’s Bazaar, March 1962
Photograph by Richard Dormer
The Tower Library
‘Tutti Frutti’ fashion show invitation
Cover modelled by Penny Patrick, designed by Tom Wolsey,
Photograph by John Donaldson
Image courtesy of Mary Quant Archive/
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
COCKTAIL DRESS
1960
Worn by Nicky Hessenberg

Nicky Hessenberg was on the fringes of the fading world of the debutante when, after leaving boarding school aged 18, her mother bought this dress as a ‘kind of bribe’ to help her navigate the ordeal of going to grown-up parties. Hessenberg attended secretarial college and later worked for House and Garden magazine.

Silk satin
Labelled ‘Bazaar/ Designed by Mary Quant’
Made in London
Given by Nicky Hessenberg
V&A: T.70-2018
Lieze Denise modelling a Mary Quant cocktail dress
About 1960
Photograph by Woburn Studios
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
‘BEAT THE BEATNIKS’
1960

Queen magazine mainly reported on upper class society, until 1958 when it was transformed into an innovative outlet for London’s creative industries with daring new fashions and bold art direction. ‘Eligible clothes for debs’ promoted London wholesale brands including Susan Small, Horrockses Fashions, and Bazaar. Rather prim looking models stand out against students and beatniks dressed mostly in black, seen partying in the background.

Jenny Wilson modelling ‘Eligible clothes for debs’
Queen, 2 February 1960
Photographs by Norman Parkinson
V&A: PP.500.H / 38041800371791
PARTY DRESS
1960–61

Some of Quant’s earliest designs are surprisingly traditional and feminine. This pretty dress has a waisted silhouette, given definition by the short, loose bodice over a sash to enhance the pattern of the lace fabric. The garment label, redesigned in 1960, gives the shop name while promoting Quant’s role as designer, recognising her position as the face of the brand.

Cotton machine-made lace over a silk underdress
Labelled ‘Bazaar/ Designed by Mary Quant’
Made in London
Lent by Ruth Lowe
PARTY DRESS
1959–60
Worn by Nadine Hauser

Nadine Hauser bought several garments from Bazaar, including this special dress for her parents-in-laws’ golden wedding anniversary party. The pale pink silk and tulip-shaped skirt made it an appropriate choice for a young woman at a formal occasion. After 1960, Quant increasingly designed dresses that could be worn both for day and evening-wear, breaking down traditional dress codes.

Silk satin
Labelled ‘Bazaar’
Made in London
Given by Nadine Hauser
V&A: T.55:1&2-2018
MODEL HOLDING A BAZAAR CARRIER BAG
1959

Image courtesy of Mary Quant Archive/
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
SHOES
1960
Made in collaboration with Rayne

Nicholas Rayne, shoemaker to the Royal Family, invited Quant to contribute to his ‘Miss Rayne’ collection. Quant’s design combined punched-leather decoration with the popular stiletto heel, which were replaced by flatter shoes for Quant-style minidresses in the mid-1960s. The distinctive bold lettering of Bazaar was stamped inside the shoes, an early example of the brand’s fierce marketing identity.

Leather with metal
Labelled ‘Miss Rayne / Bazaar / Collection By Mary Quant’
Made in London
Lent by Tracy Dolphin
1960–64
ENGLISH ECCENTRICS

“Like a good dancer, she accommodates her steps to the changing rhythms of fashion.”

*The Sunday Times, 1962*

Quant brings an entertaining slant to fashion. Repurposing Victorian frills and childrenswear, she plays with colour and silhouettes. Inspired by serviceable cottons and dependable woollens and tweeds, she works directly with weavers and manufacturers in Wales, Wiltshire and Yorkshire, using colourful synthetic dyes, scaled-up stripes and exaggerated checks, finishing dresses with over-sized, functional buttons.

At the same time, Quant revives the boyish look of the 1920s flapper, echoing the dramatic developments in women’s lives and fashion experienced by her parents’ generation. Her bewigged, gawky mannequins strike unusual poses in Bazaar’s window displays, alongside props such as live goldfish, stuffed birds or dead lobsters. Passersby stop to stare.
SAILOR DRESS
1961–62

In the 1800s Queen Victoria dressed the royal princes and princesses in practical sailor suits. These became popular Sunday best for children of all social backgrounds for many decades, as seen in old family photographs. Quant revived this style for the modern, active woman using blue or red striped cotton for simple summer dresses.

Printed cotton
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Leeds Museums and Galleries
Taking a natty striped twill normally used for formal tailoring, Quant makes a striking dress with enlarged collar and cuffs. Like other dresses in the same collection, named after august British institutions, the title ‘Bank of England’ as a dress for a woman seems especially ironic, considering that most women could not open a bank account without a male relative’s written permission.

Cotton twill (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, *Mary Quant’s London*
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Mary Quant Ltd

**Hat**

1960–62
Made by James Wedge
Retailed at Liberty
Straw with organza
Given by Pauline Meyer
V&A: T.249:1&2-1995
BUTCHER-STRIPE DRESS
1961–62

Traditional working clothes for British tradesmen also provided Quant with inspiration. The butcher-stripe apron had already made the leap into middle class kitchens and was sold at fashionable home-ware shops. This humorous striped dress with a large front pocket is made from cotton drill, a stout, durable fabric.

Cotton drill trimmed with woven wool braid
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Lent by Ruth Lowe

Boater
About 1968
Plaited cellophane
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in Great Britain
Given by Caroline Trotter
V&A: T.77-2018
VICTORIAN-STYLE TWO-PIECE
1961

This light-hearted outfit combines a Victorian bathing-costume top with frilly under-drawers or bloomers. From the earliest days of Bazaar, nineteenth-century fashion provided Quant with a fruitful source of inspiration, often resulting in surprising styles which helped to get publicity for the Mary Quant brand.

Cotton with broderie anglaise trimming
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition *Mary Quant’s London*
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Mary Quant Ltd

**Pillbox hat**
**About 1960**
Made by Chez Elle
Leather
Made in London (probably)
Given by Mrs Vere French
V&A: T.289-1982
Melanie Hampshire modelling Mary Quant knickerbockers outfit
Photograph by John Cowan, 1961
© John Cowan Archive
1960–65
INTO THE BIG TIME

“Chelsea ceased to be a small part of London; it became international; its name interpreted a way of living and a way of dressing.”

In 1960, Quant and Plunket Greene fly into New York’s Idlewild airport, just two years after the first commercial transatlantic jet airliner flight. British newspapers publicise Quant’s exciting venture, while American journalists highlight her ‘kooky’ look, increasing her celebrity status.

Quant pitches her clothes and ideas to US buyers in upmarket department stores. She meets fashion editors and tours the garment district, ‘electrified’ by the scale, pace and organisation of the American ready-to-wear system. Her ground-breaking designs are displayed in New York store windows.

Continued overleaf
Manufacturers spot Quant’s unique ‘Chelsea’ style and its appeal to the youth market, recruiting her for their designer collections. While Quant learns about efficiency, pricing and sizing from her American counterparts, in return she offers British ‘cool’ – a quirky individualism which American consumers adore. By 1965, she is regularly commuting between New York and London.
1960–67
THE BRITISH FASHION INVASION

“Hey Luv! Mary’s Here!”

*JC Penney advertisement, 1969*

Quant meets Paul Young, an executive from US chain-store giant JC Penney, appointed to revamp the company’s image. She designs a ‘Chelsea Girl’ line of pinafores and party dresses for the store’s younger customers. The collection is launched at the British Embassy in Washington DC in September 1962, while Quant promotes the look with televised personal appearances. Soon the designs are available by mail order too.

Quant signs a second American deal with clothing corporation Puritan Fashions, resulting in the huge ‘Youthquake’ marketing extravaganza of 1965. Quant creates a mod-style range in mini lengths and tours the US with British band The Skunks and a group of young models. American teenagers, in love with British pop music, slang and humour, snap up the brand.
‘ON TARGET’ DRESS
1962
Worn by Sue Parry-Davies

In early 1962, a buff-coloured version of this Victorian-style dress was taken to New York for a Vogue ‘Young Idea’ photoshoot modelled by Jean Shrimpton. David Bailey’s ground-breaking photographs promote London fashion as modern and effortless, anticipating the success of Quant and other British designers in America.

Wool crêpe
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London (probably)
Given by Sue Parry-Davies
V&A: T.669-1993

‘Young Idea goes West’
Vogue, April 1962
Photographs by David Bailey
V&A: NCOL.446-2018
TOP AND SKIRT
1963
Worn by Angela Bailey

Sociology student Angela Bailey shopped at Bazaar for special occasions, while at Goldsmiths College in the late 1960s. She wore this dropped-waist design in the early 1970s, ten years after it was made, while training to be a teacher, having swapped it for another dress with a friend. She later recalled, ‘It’s just so interesting... and such a pleasure to wear’.

Linen
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London (probably)
Lent by Angela Bailey
Angela Bailey wearing her Mary Quant dress
About 1973
Courtesy of Angela Bailey
WELSH WOOL EVENING DRESS
1964
Worn by Siân Phillips

Quant used unexpected daytime wools and jerseys for evening dresses. The choice of this colourful flannel from Wales was possibly influenced by her family’s Welsh background. Actor Siân Phillips (also from Wales) bought it from the King’s Road Bazaar for 10 and a half guineas (about £195 today). She didn’t wear Quant’s later minidresses as she felt ‘too tall and too grown up!’

Wool flannel with lace trimming
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London (probably)
Manchester Art Gallery
Grace Coddington modelling Welsh wool evening dress
*Tatler*, 18 November 1964
Photograph by Raymond Rathbone
© Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library.
Courtesy of The British Library
CUTAWAY COAT
1964
Worn by Mrs J. Wates

Like her dresses, Quant’s furs were intended for day or night. This example, modelled on a man’s traditional tailcoat, has masculine, plain buttons which contrast with the glossy rabbit fur. It was available at Debenham & Freebody for 220 guineas (about £4,000 today). Quant’s fur collaboration with the department store ended by 1967, as she focussed instead on designing for the mass market.

Persian lamb and coney (rabbit), (modern skirt)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London, possibly by Roat or S. London
Given by Mrs J. Wates
V&A: T.196-1997
Model wearing cutaway fur coat

*Tatler*, 13 January 1965

Photograph by Eugene Vernier

© Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library

Courtesy of *Tatler*
FUN WITH FURS
1965
Worn by Deirdre Bond

Like a string of pearls, a fur coat was a traditional component of a young woman’s wardrobe, demonstrating family wealth. Quant injected her youthful approach into this highly specialised and exclusive branch of the fashion industry. Probably designed for the department store Debenham & Freebody, this coat uses pattern, texture and a masculine shape to make a modern investment piece, combining versatility with weatherproof warmth.

Goatskin painted and dyed to imitate cheetah fur, with leather covered buttons
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in England, possibly by Roat or S. London for Debenham & Freebody
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Deirdre Bond
PARTY DRESS
About 1962, altered late 1960s

Quant’s designs for party dresses were sometimes inspired by 1920s ‘flapper’ styles with swinging pleats, which were perfect for dancing. Using black, a colour traditionally associated with male business dress or mourning clothes in the 1960s, was another typically bold choice.

Silk chiffon
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by Mrs A. Walford
V&A: T.52-1985
Pattie Boyd modelling a fur coat
About 1965
Image courtesy of Mary Quant Archive/Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Celia Hammond modelling ‘Chi Chi’ silk party dress
Published as a Mary Quant advertisement, Tatler and Bystander, 9 September 1962
© Photograph Terence Donovan, courtesy Terence Donovan Archive
‘DOUBLE TAKE’
1965
Made for JC Penney

By 1965, Mary Quant designs featured regularly in JC Penney mail order catalogues, tagged as ‘Designed in England and made in America for the ‘import look’ plus ‘American’ fit!’ However, fabrics were often British, like the wool tweed used here, and some designs were made by Steinbergs. Ginger Group and JC Penney styles were both made in American teen sizes.

Wool and synthetic mix tweed, woven in Yorkshire (possibly)
Labelled ‘Designed for Penneys by Mary Quant’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Jannette Flood (Polly, Dublin)
ZIPPED PINAFORE
1965
Worn by Lucy Archer

Lucy Archer bought this Ginger Group label dress in Britain, but an identical design also retailed in America as part of a range of rust-coloured coordinates. The JC Penney catalogue showed the clothes photographed against a dramatic mountainous backdrop in Arizona. The models, university students from Tucson, have elaborate, coiffed hairstyles compared to their swinging London counterparts.

Wool and synthetic mix tweed (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Given by Lucy Archer

JC Penney mail order catalogue
Fall/Winter 1965
V&A: NCOL.453-2018
POLKA DOT PANTSHIFT
Fall/Winter 1968
Made for JC Penney

Mary Quant separates featured on JC Penney catalogue covers until the late 1960s. This zipped one-piece costing $15.00 (about £82 today) could be worn with an acrylic turtle-neck sweater or a floral-print acetate blouse with feminine ruffles. The scaled-up florals introduce a shift in tone away from straightforward stripes and checks, towards romance, nostalgia and almost clashing patterns.

Flocked wool bonded to acetate tricot (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Designed by Mary Quant for Penneys’
Made in the USA (probably)
Lent by Jannette Flood (Polly, Dublin)

JC Penney mail order catalogue
Fall/Winter 1968
Printed paper
V&A: NCOL.454-2018
WINDOW-PANE CHECKED PINAFORE
1965
Made for Puritan Fashions ‘Young Naturals’ label

As with the JC Penney range, some of Quant’s designs for Puritan were similar to those produced for her Ginger Group label. Versions of this low-scooped pinafore (called a jumper in America) could be bought on both sides of the Atlantic. The woven-wool textile is similar to samples from Salter’s Mill in Trowbridge, England.

Wool tweed possibly woven in Salter’s Mill, Trowbridge, Wiltshire (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Designed by Mary Quant’ and ‘The Young Naturals Ltd’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Ruth Lowe

‘Hey, Luv! Mary’s here!’
20 October 1968
JC Penney advertisement, California, USA (facsimile)
Paper and ink
Mary Quant Archive
YOUTHQUAKE MARKETING
1965

Already working flat out, Quant signed a deal for a second long-distance collaboration for the Puritan Fashions ‘Youthquake’ range. As part of a huge marketing campaign, Puritan opened the Paraphernalia boutique in New York, the name was clearly a nod to Quant’s Bazaar, and organised a tour of department store concessions for Quant and her models to meet their American fans.

Printed paper and card
Printed in the USA for Puritan Fashions (probably)
Mary Quant Archive
'Youthquake' bus with Mary Quant models Sarah Dawson (left) and Sandy Moss (2nd right), Jenny and Pattie Boyd and Puritan Fashion vice president, Paul Young, 1965
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive/Victoria and Albert Museum, London
1963–65
THE WET COLLECTION

“Bewitched... with this super shiny man-made stuff and its shrieking colours... its gleaming liquorice black, white and ginger.”

Quant launches her ‘Wet Collection’ in April 1963 at the Hôtel de Crillon, Paris. The collection features a relatively new material called polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a shiny plastic-coated cotton which reflects increasing fascination with modernity.

The show is attended by influential fashion editors and Quant achieves her first magazine cover for British Vogue. Although many store buyers place orders, issues with sealing the PVC seams in mass-production delay the collection’s launch on the high street. It takes another two years before a collaboration with British manufacturer Alligator Rainwear results in a commercially viable range of Mary Quant PVC raincoats.
‘CHRISTOPHER ROBIN’
1963
Worn by Dinny Pagan

The ‘Wet Collection’ capitalised on the 1960s’ love affair with modern materials and is a key example of Quant’s ability to attract widespread publicity. Fashion editors in London, Paris, New York and Australia promoted her experimental PVC designs such as this ‘Christopher Robin’ rain smock. *Vogue* featured a similar design in red on its October 1963 cover, while Quant credited the success of the ‘Wet Collection’ with winning the *Sunday Times* International Fashion award that same month.

**Rain smock**
PVC
Label removed
Made in London
Given by Dinny Pagan
V&A: T.3-2013

**Tania Mallett modelling rain smock and hat**
*Vogue*, October 1963
Photograph by Brian Duffy
V&A: NCOL.447-2018

**Hôtel de Crillon fashion show programme**
29 April 1963
Printed paper
Lent by the McNair family
MODEL WEARING RAINCOAT
*Vogue*, 15 October 1965

Photograph by Norman Parkinson
The Tower Library
LIGHTNING FLASH OF VINYL
1963

Seen here submerged in water to the knees, wearing a PVC white tabard raincoat and matching sou’wester hat, Jill Kennington was one of five models who first presented the ‘Wet Collection’ at the grand Hôtel de Crillon, Paris. The original programme lists 60 looks which Quant recalled were presented in just 15 minutes. The show was in Quant’s signature high-energy style, set to jazz music and needing a manically-fast rate of outfit changes when compared with conventional, often sedate Parisian couture fashion shows.

Tabard raincoat and hat
PVC (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, Mary Quant’s London
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath /
Gift of Mary Quant Ltd
WET LOOKS
1965

Quant’s progressive designs combined with Alligator’s expertise in manufacturing rainwear resulted in a hugely successful range of colourful raincoats in 1965. This design featured in an article called ‘Wet Looks’ in Vogue, October 1965. Made in ginger-coloured PVC, the colour that Quant adored so much, it featured a giant safety pin belt-fastening which prefigured the punk look by a decade.

Raincoat with safety pin
PVC and metal
Labelled ‘Alligator by Mary Quant’
Made by Alligator Rainwear Ltd, Stockport
Lent by Ruth Lowe
WATER TIGHT FASHION

1965

To ensure PVC garments like this raincoat were secure and waterproof, the seams needed to be tightly sealed. Quant’s first experiments with stitching PVC on a standard sewing machine caused the material to stick, melt or rip because of the perforated seam. She swiftly recognised the need for specialist machinery and consultation with an experienced ‘mackintosh’ manufacturer to produce PVC garments successfully.

PVC, synthetic textile and copper alloy
Labelled ‘Alligator by Mary Quant’
Made by Alligator Rainwear Ltd, Stockport
Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry
Quant wore a version of this bright tartan outfit for her first publicised visit to New York. She and Plunket Greene were photographed tearing down Park Avenue for a report in *Life* magazine which illustrated some of her designs. Further *Life* articles traced the growing impact of Quant and other young British designers, such as Jean Muir, creating iconic images selling the London Look to American consumers.

Woven wool MacLeod dress tartan
Labelled ‘Bazaar’
Made in London
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath/
Given by Mrs R. Robson

‘Brash New Breed of British Designers’
18 October 1963
Life magazine, New York, USA
Photographs by Norman Parkinson
V&A: NCOL.512-2018
Quant and Plunket Greene in a New York dance hall, 1960
Photograph by John Cowan
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive © John Cowan Archive
1961–64
QUANT CUSTOMERS

“A fashionable woman wears clothes; the clothes don’t wear her.”

Quant’s daring but easy to wear style attracts a diverse and loyal clientele. Her clothes are worn by women of all backgrounds and ages, from celebrities to journalists, architects or other professional women at the heart of London’s creative industries, and mothers with young children.

In 1961, two of Quant’s assistants pack samples from the new Mary Quant wholesale range into suitcases, travelling by train across the breadth of the UK to find willing boutique-owners and store-buyers to sell the look to women outside London. The main characteristic that unites all Mary Quant clients is their confidence to sport her unconventional, striking designs, reflecting increased professional opportunities for women and the successful marketing of the brand.
Pauline O’Shea bought this dress from Debenham & Freebody in London as a special treat, just after her 21st birthday. As she was a headmaster’s secretary at a boys’ preparatory school in North Devon, it was an expensive purchase at 19 guineas (about £418 today). It was a prized designer dress that Pauline loved wearing to parties and was later worn by her daughter too.

Rayon crêpe with organza trim
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Pauline O’ Shea

Grace Coddington modelling ‘Columbine’
Photograph by Murray Irving for John French, 1964
Mary Quant Archive
‘GEORGIE’
1962
Worn by Sarah Robinson

Sarah Robinson was 19 and living in Truro, Cornwall (south-west England) when she bought this bold striped wrap-dress from Elizabeth, a local shop which specialised in the ‘latest from London’. She described it as a ‘happy, fun dress to wear, and beautifully made’. It retailed at 12 and a half guineas (about £264 today), and the corresponding fashion drawing shows the style was also available as ‘Rosie’ in a more formal silk chiffon lined with taffeta.

Cotton
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by Sarah E. Robinson
V&A: T.74-2018

Fashion drawing of ‘Georgie’
1962
Pen and ink on transfer paper
V&A: E.255-2013

Model wearing ‘Rosie’, formal version of ‘Georgie’
Photograph by Michael Wallis, 1962
Mary Quant Archive
Quant achieved a publicity coup when celebrated fashion editor Ernestine Carter featured her designs in a double-page spread and on the cover of the first Sunday Times Colour Section, reaching up to 1 million readers. The magazine coincided with the launch of a new collection of Mary Quant wholesale clothes, taking the Chelsea look into ‘the more conservative provinces’.

Printed paper
Photographs by David Bailey
From the collection of Ian Denning
MARY QUANT AND ALEXANDER PLUNKET GREENE ON PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK
1960

Photograph by Ken Heyman for Life Magazine
© Ken Heyman
Dress on the white plinth
(other objects grouped in the case next to it)

‘STAMPEDE’
1962
Worn by Elizabeth Gibbons

Textile collector Elizabeth Gibbons was a devoted Mary Quant customer. She travelled across Asia, with her husband (an architect) and their family in the early 1960s. ‘Stampede’ is one of many, often radical, Quant garments she purchased by mail order while living in Malaysia. Correspondence between Gibbons, Archie McNair and his assistant Shirley Shurville reveal the very personal level of service offered to customers.

Linen and Terylene
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
V&A: T.42-2013

Maryrose McNair modelling ‘Stampede’
1962
Mary Quant Archive

Mary Quant bill
1962
Paper and ink
V&A: AM/T&F/0001/17

Order letter
1962
Paper and ink
V&A: AM/T&F/0001/10

Fashion drawing with fabric sample
1962
Printed paper, ink, linen and Terylene
V&A: E.250-2013
Living on the other side of the world did not prevent Elizabeth Gibbons from getting the latest looks from London. ‘Having seen articles about Mary Quant in magazines from England and the US, I was struck by her vibrant and young style. So when we returned to the UK in 1960, I immediately rushed off [and] bought several outfits from Bazaar on King’s Road, Chelsea’.

Wool, kid-leather and metal
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
V&A:T.34:1&2-2013

‘Dotty’ blouse
1962
Printed silk
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition,
Mary Quant’s London
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Mary Quant Ltd
Celia Hammond modelling ‘Coal Heaver’ (left) and Jean Shrimpton (right)
Photograph by John French, 1962
© John French / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
TUNIC AND SKIRT
1963
Worn by Min Hogg

Writer and editor Min Hogg landed her first job at Queen magazine before graduating to fashion editor of Harpers & Queen in 1974 and co-founding World of Interiors in 1981. Life as a fashion writer required a stylish wardrobe and Quant was one of Min’s preferred designers. She described Quant as ‘the bee’s knees’ and recalling, ‘There weren’t single women [designers] doing that kind of thing then’.

Wool (modern sweater)
Label removed
Made in London
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Min Hogg
Min Hogg wearing her Mary Quant dress
Photograph by Raymond Rathbone, about 1968
Courtesy of Min Hogg
‘GAMEKEEPER’
1963
Worn by Barbara Kimber

As an executive assistant living in Bristol in 1967, Barbara Kimber regularly visited London to go shopping at Harrods. She bought this dress from Bazaar in Knightsbridge to make a good impression when meeting her husband’s sister-in-law for the first time. It became her ‘go to’ dress, never before having ‘had a dress that made her feel so good’.

Wool
Labelled ‘Mary Quant London’
Made in London
Given by Mrs Barbara Kimber and Mrs Fleur Cook
V&A: T.287-2019
Mrs Barbara Kimber wearing ‘Gamekeeper’, about 1963
Courtesy of Mrs Barbara Kimber and Mrs Fleur Cook
1964–65
THE TATTERSALL CHECK DRESS

“Quant gets that boyish look.”
Daily Mail, 1964

In 1964, Quant is one of the first to allow hairdresser Vidal Sassoon to crop her trademark swinging bob into the androgynous ‘five point’ style, creating an iconic image that is reproduced in newspapers across the land. British tabloid newspapers avidly chronicle Quant’s innovations, competing for readers in the thriving newspaper market.

Quant’s new haircut completes her increasingly minimal, casual look which often borrows from menswear. For one photo opportunity, Quant wears a design made from a wool-blend Tattersall check, a traditional pattern originally used for horse blankets, hunting waistcoats and flannel shirts worn by posh country gents. Her trailblazing designs and exacting demands for different effects and colourways help to sustain the British textile industry.
TATTERSALL CHECK DRESS
1964

Evolving from the separate pinafore-and-sweater look, Quant joined them into a single garment. This outfit combines chunky cable-knit sleeves and collar with a Tattersall check dress with a shirt tail, like a man’s oversized sweater and shirt. According to Harper’s Bazaar, the dress was from the exclusive Mary Quant range available only from Bazaar for 15 guineas (about £277 today).

Knitted wool and wool-twill Tattersall check, probably woven in Salter’s Mill, Trowbridge, Wiltshire
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, Mary Quant’s London
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.107&A-1976
PURCHASE ORDER WITH SWATCH
11 November 1965
Annotated by Archie McNair

Purchase orders show that Salter’s Mill, Trowbridge, responded to Quant’s specific requests, matching swatches such as this example from Germany. Mary Quant business manager Archie McNair drove a hard bargain, asking the Mill to bring down prices. Trowbridge was a centre of Britain’s wool trade, known for its high quality and diverse product ranges, with Trowbridge Mills supplying clients in over 70 countries.

Printed paper, ink and rayon textile
Made in London and Germany
Wiltshire and Swindon Archive
Quant’s original design included instructions for the sample-maker to make the collar low at the front, for the flat tie-belt to be made of knitted wool, the shirt-tails to have a small side-gusset and to be top-stitched in cream yarn. The design was too complicated to mass-produce so the dress was not part of the Ginger Group wholesale range.
1965–75
GOING GLOBAL

“Fashion is not frivolous; it is a part of being alive today.”

In 1966, Quant trademarks the daisy emblem which becomes like a badge, instantly communicating her brand’s youthful spirit and connecting with more customers. As one of the first designer logos, the daisy is a valuable device for negotiating licensing deals with specialist manufacturers. In return for a fee and a percentage of sales, Quant allows licensees to use her name, logo and image for marketing campaigns around the world.

Quant’s reputation grows for reinventing tired products like raincoats and sewing patterns. As post-war Britain struggles to modernise and redefine its international role, Quant and her fashion empire represent confidence and optimism.

Continued overleaf
Quant writes her autobiography, Quant by Quant, in 1966, telling her story from amateur beginnings to international jet-set designer. She also explains her theories about street style and the democratisation of fashion, while showing readers how they too could succeed in the industry.
MARY QUANT FASHION SHOWS
1966

Duration: 2 minutes

Extracts from:
QUANTITY
Footage supplied by AP Archive / British Movietone

Unusual Fashion Show
Mary Quant fashions in Australia
Footage supplied by British Pathé
1963–65
GINGER GROUP

“Quant clothes at budget prices to buy a piece at a time.”

Quant strides into new territory with her Ginger Group collection of 1963. The name is a political term for a pressure group, derived from the use of ginger as a verb to pep things up. In this case, Quant’s aim is to change the course of fashion by producing fun, edgy clothing for a wider clientele.

The first Ginger Group collection is based on the American sportswear principle of interchangeable separates. Promoted with a typically high-energy fashion show, the clothes are notable for their unusual colour palette of ‘prune’, ‘ginger’ and ‘putty’. With a new graphic identity and a lower price point, the range provides countless mix-and-match possibilities combined with the cachet of Quant, available in 75 outlets across the UK, which included Lewis’s and House of Fraser in Glasgow and Darling & Co. in Edinburgh.
‘SNOB’
1963

Pinafore dresses were central to Quant’s concept of youthful, modular fashion. They could be smart or more casual, when worn with a sweater. ‘Snob’ was available in ginger, black and deep rich plum, and cost 6 guineas, the same as a blouse from the ‘Mary Quant London’ label.

Worsted wool (dress) and felt (hat)
Both labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, *Mary Quant’s London*
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.105&A-1976

‘Marshmallow’ blouse
1963
Rayon
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Ruth Lowe
Ros Watkins and Paulene Stone wearing ‘Snob’ and striped ensembles by Mary Quant for Ginger Group, 1963
© John French / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
PINAFORE DRESS WITH BELT
1963

Jennifer Opie studied at Chelsea Art School, and remembers ‘tip-toeing into Mary Quant’s shop in my first year and lusting after so much there, none of which could I afford’. A year later, the new Ginger Group designs ‘came just occasionally within my pocket [so] I really felt I’d arrived’. Jennifer Opie worked at the V&A from 1966 to 2004, becoming curator of ceramics and glass.

Wool and synthetic double jersey (modern sweater)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Jennifer Opie
V&A: T.91:1-1986
‘SARDINES’
1963

This long dress may be the longue robe from the 39 Ginger Group designs shown at the Hôtel de Crillon, Paris, on 29 April 1963. Two other long dresses, named ‘Blazer’ and ‘Beans’, are listed in the more expensive range. As the French programme says, it was ‘perhaps presumptuous’ to present young British fashion in France, but the talent of Mary Quant was ‘undeniable’.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, Mary Quant’s London
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.106-1976

Hat
About 1965
George Malyard
Wool felt
Made in London
V&A: T.349-1985
Mary Quant and Alexander Plunket Greene with models promoting the first Ginger Group collection

*Honey*, October 1963

Photographer unknown
DRESS WITH PLEATED SKIRT
1966

At its launch in 1963, Quant’s Ginger Group range was available at 59 different department stores and independent boutiques across the UK including Ash Fashions in Giffnock and Lilian’s in Dundee. This dress was found as unsold stock from Merlyn in Whitechapel, east London, a smart boutique frequented by East End gangsters and their girlfriends.

Wool tweed
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Lina Salmon
V&A: T.87-1982
LONG DRESS WITH BOAT NECK
1963
Worn by Lilian Gethick

Quant played with the normal conventions for evening-wear, creating long dresses in functional fabrics to wear day or night. This design seemed to be especially ahead of its time. Three years later it still featured in her collections, described as ‘ideal for public occasions and things like that… It can go to the opera or a grand dinner party, but won’t look silly in a discotheque’.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Bought at Manchester department store, Kendal Milne
Lent by Manchester City Galleries, given by Lilian Gethic
Ginger Group fashion show, 1966
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive /
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
A-LINE DRESS
About 1966

This jersey dress shows the stark simplicity of Quant’s liberating designs, combining the comfort of stretchy fabric with vibrant colour and minimal yet contrasting trimmings. The shorter length and width of the hem allowed for free movement and suited flat shoes, in total contrast to the high-heeled, straight-skirt look of previous fashions.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton and Hove
STRIPED-TOP PINAFORE
1963

This boldly striped knee-length pinafore, made from thick double-jersey fabric, was an early version of the easy, stretchy minidresses which Quant later turned into her trademark look. Quant found a fabric sample in the USA and her assistant, Shirley Shurville, tracked down a British supplier. The graphic, almost op art effect of the outfit lent itself to the cartoon line drawings for the Ginger Group branding and advertising.

Wool and synthetic jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, Mary Quant’s London
Mary Quant Archive
Quant (left) in the workroom, 1963
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum
© George Konig
GINGER GROUP SHOP DISPLAY CARDS
1965

Cartoon-like fashion drawings gave the Ginger Group label a sense of fun. They were reproduced as display cards in shops which stocked the range. These drawings of stylish young women, complete with Vidal Sassoon style bobs, dark eyes and pale lips, show how Quant’s style moved towards an increasingly mod and minimalist look, captured by the colourful, high-impact brand identity developed for the Ginger Group label.

Printed card
Figures designed by Maureen Roffey
Mary Quant Archive

Swing tags
1963
Figures designed by
Maureen Roffey
Image courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London
MINI-CULOTTES DRESS
About 1969
Worn by Nanna Bjornsdottir

Working as a model in London, Nanna Bjornsdottir was sometimes photographed to promote the Mary Quant make-up range. This delightful party outfit was a particular favourite of her many Mary Quant purchases. Forty years later, it was still being borrowed by her daughters and their friends for special occasions.

Printed and flocked rayon and nylon
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Nanna Bjornsdottir

‘Swiss Miss’ Daisy doll
1973
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong
by Model Toys
Ralph Cade
Nanna Bjornsdottir wearing Ginger Group mini-culottes dress
About 1969
Courtesy of Nanna Bjornsdottir
CALL OUT FOR QUANT
1956–1982

Duration: 11 minutes

Customers wearing Mary Quant clothes, contributed following the V&A’s #WeWantQuant campaign and V&A Dundee’s #SewQuant campaign.

Film by NewAngle

Credits continued overleaf
With special thanks to those who provided photographs for this installation.

Angela Bailey
Anne Howitt
Barbara Grigg
Barbara Tozer
Caroline Heal
Christine Bonell
Christine Dodd
Claire Fiander
Davina Sim
Di Martin
Dwynwen Owen
Estelle Wilson
Georgina Muskett
Gillian Brookes
Gillian Fields
Gillie Mather
Helen Julia Rand
Jackie Pigram
Janet Blencowe
Jean Scott
Jean Thomas
Jillian Holt
Judy Hartley
Julia Meade Davies
Kathleen Giblen
Kathryn Sidpra, given by M. Lees
Katriona Fitzgerald
Linda Compton,
given by Emmy Watts
Linda Parsonage
Lisa Blackburn
Lynn Quiney, given by
Matilda Quiney
Margaret Mardlin, given by
Katherine Alston
Margaret Scott
Margaret Smith
Marie Dorian-Kelly
Marilyn Lownes
Marion Morrison
Min Hogg
Myra Joyce
Nanna Bjornsdottir
Norma Martin
Paula McPake
Penelope Massot
Rosmond Kinsey Milner
Ruth Matthews
Sue Nicholson
Sue Snell
Susan White, given by
Polly White
Susannah Hutchinson
Teresa Hayes
Tereska Peppe
Vivien Wearing
1964–67
QUANTITIES OF QUANT

“Fashion must be created from the start for mass production with full knowledge of mass production methods.”

The Ginger Group range is a collaboration with reputable manufacturer Steinberg & Sons whose other fashion brands include Alexon and Horrocks. They contribute industrial know-how, a network of factories and suppliers, and experience of the export trade, while Quant’s unique brand-appeal opens up their youth market potential. By 1965, Quant is producing four collections of 50 designs a year for Ginger Group alone.

Working six months ahead, Quant’s sketches are translated into samples for assessment by Quant and executives at the Steinberg head office. Once the designs are costed and approved, fabric is ordered and the clothes are made up by seamstresses in Steinbergs’ workrooms in London’s East End and in their huge factory near Pontypridd, South Wales.
‘DADDY’S GIRL’
1964

The ‘Daddy’s Girl’ dress was featured in the *Daily Mirror* on 25 January 1964 as ‘the hit dress of the Mary Quant Ginger Group Collection’. Available in white, pink or blue with wide neck and wrist ruffles, the style is typical of Quant’s dresses of that year: overtly feminine, often using lightweight fabrics such as crêpe and cotton lawn.

Rayon crêpe, ribbon (dress); straw (hat)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, *Mary Quant’s London*
LIBERTY PRINT SMOCKED DRESS
1967
Worn by Claire Fiander

Leaving home in 1967 to enrol at the Cherry Marshall Modelling School in London, Claire Fiander bought this dress from Fenwick department store on Bond Street for 7 and a half guineas (about £138 today). It was a favourite dress, worn for special occasions and cocktail parties. ‘My mother kept it (unbeknownst to me) for 40 years as a memory of my start in life. Mary Quant was an icon to me of that whole scene.’

Liberty printed cotton Tana lawn
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Claire Fiander

Model wearing Liberty print smocked dress
4 February 1967
Petticoat
V&A: 38041800371809

Ginger Group shop interior
1963–64
Mary Quant Archive
Claire Fiander wearing her Mary Quant dress, October 1967
Courtesy of Claire Fiander
‘PRUDE’
1964
Worn by Valerie Thomas

Quant established an informal partnership with Liberty of London from 1964 onwards. Deliberately choosing prints intended for little girls’ dresses, her designs often incorporated other details from traditional children’s clothing such as smocking and rounded Peter Pan collars.

Liberty printed cotton Tana lawn
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Valerie Thomas

Hat
1973
Straw and cotton ribbon
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in Great Britain for the 1973 exhibition, *Mary Quant’s London*
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.109-1976
‘CRASH LANDING’ WITH ORIGINAL BOX
1967

Mary Quant’s Ginger Group designs were sold through a network of department stores and boutiques both in the UK and internationally, from 1963 onwards. This top and shorts ensemble was also part of a range available through mail order firms Kays, Littlewoods and Freemans. After 1966, the Daisy logo was repeated across mail order catalogues, packaging, swing-tags and shop fittings, as an instant symbol of Quant and her brand of style.

Cotton, metal zip and printed card
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Jannette Flood (Polly, Dublin)
Quant with increased export figures, 1963–67
Photo by Jean-Pierre Biot for Paris Match, 1967
© Getty Images: Paris Match Archive,
Photo by Jean-Pierre Biot
WILLIAM MORRIS PRINT SUIT
1967

Quant’s interest in historic textile prints continued throughout the 1960s and ‘70s, as seen in her use of William Morris ‘Marigold’ furnishing fabric for this jacket and skirt. Her choice of material reflects a broader revival of 19th-century William Morris prints that were fashionable at the time.

Printed cotton manufactured by Sanderson
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Louise Brett and Isabella Brogden
V&A: T.8:1t02-2014
Model wearing a Liberty style printed furnishing fabric suit
Photograph by Reginald Davis, 1965
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Reginald Davis
COAT-DRESS
1967
Worn by Judith Gray

This pinstriped cotton coat-dress was one of many Ginger Group garments worn and owned by Judith Gray in the 1960s. An art teacher at a Catholic girls’ school in Newport, South Wales, Judith acquired the garments through her sister-in-law, Shirley Phillips who worked at the Steinberg factory in nearby Pontypridd where Ginger Group clothes were made for 30 years.

Woven cotton ticking
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinbergs, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Jonathan Gray
Judith Gray wearing her Ginger Group coat-dress, 1970
Courtesy of Jonathan Gray
1965–75
LIBERATED FASHION

“I didn’t have time to wait for women’s lib.”

In this time of growing activism and struggle for equal rights, Quant has a visionary take on the role of women, leading by speaking out, working hard and taking risks. Her assertive, liberating minidresses express the changes of post-war Britain, giving women a strong, independent style of their own.

Her designs in the later 1960s and early ’70s continue her favourite theme of challenging traditional stereotypes, while Quant herself wears increasingly androgynous, gently feminised and casual versions of masculine tailoring, as if to prove the point.

However, she credits her King’s Road customers as her inspiration and the ones leading the feminist rebellion. In 1967, she describes the young as, ‘prototypes of a whole new race of women... It’s their questioning attitude that makes them important and different’. Quant designs fun, wearable clothes for this new race, with fashion that enables free movement and self-expression.
MASS PRODUCTION, PROMOTION AND EXPORT
1965–72

Duration: 5 minutes

Extracts from:
Telescope – The Quant Theory, 1968, CBC Licensing

Footage supplied by BBC Broadcast Archive / Getty Images

Swinging Britain Print, 1967
Footage supplied by British Pathé

Mary Quant Fashions – Colour, 1972
Footage supplied by AP Archive / British Movietone

Chelsea, about 1967
Footage supplied by Framepool

Models wearing Mary Quant designs, 1972
Video supplied by BBC Motion Gallery Editorial / BBC Archives / Getty Images
UNDERWEAR

“Foundation garments needn’t be surgical. Get a birthday suit and be your own sweet self (minus six pounds).”

The silhouette of Quant’s dresses requires a new kind of underwear or ‘foundation garment’. Corsets with metal boning and clasps are all wrong. Partnering with manufacturer Weingarten Brothers and their ‘Youthlines’ brand, she creates the ‘Q-Form’ underwear range, utterly different from anything else on the market. Her garments use Lycra for comfortable yet barely-visible support.

Magazines aimed at adventurous young women feature ‘Q-Form’ worn by models in dynamic poses. The images promote unrestricted movement and the new ideal for a lithe, childlike physique. The first range includes tummy-flattening girdles and suspender belts for stockings. Later, these are replaced by Quant’s simple ‘booby traps’ and knickers, knitted on the machines that already produce her coloured tights.
ROLL-ON GIRDLE AND SUSPENDERS
1966-7

Made with ‘girl loving Lycra’, Quant girdles were designed to flatten tummies and create a streamlined silhouette. The Q-Form range included flesh tones as well as stark stripes and colours which toned with Quant’s signature clothing. A company in Sweden made similar styles. Other options were available, such as a stretch-fabric with a woven spot-pattern.

Girdle
Nylon and elastane (Lycra)
Labelled Mary Quant by Grace
Made in Sweden
Given by Barbro Westman Tullus
V&A: T.24-2019

Suspender
About 1966
Nylon and elastane (Lycra)
Labelled ‘Youthlines / Q-Form for Mary Quant’
Manufactured by Youthlines, (Weingarten Brothers), Portsmouth
Lent by Ruth Lowe
Models wearing ‘Q-Form’ underwear, 1966
© ullstein bild / Getty Images
PANTY CORSELETTE AND PANTY GIRDLE  
About 1966  
Worn by Mrs M. Wilson MacDonald

Mary Quant lingerie was made in the Weingarten Brothers’ factory in Portsmouth, a well established centre of the undergarment industry. Their ‘Youthlines’ brand was launched during the 1950s, responding to demand for more natural-shaped undergarments. However, stockings rather than tights were the norm until the late 1960s, so suspender belts remained an essential part of the early ‘Q-Form’ ranges.

Panty corselette  
Nylon and elastane (Lycra)  
Labelled ‘Q-Form for Mary Quant’  
Manufactured by Youthlines, (Weingarten Brothers), Portsmouth  
Given by Mrs M. Wilson MacDonald  
V&A: T.442-1988

Panty girdle  
Nylon and elastane (Lycra)  
Labelled ‘Youthlines Qform by Mary Quant’  
Manufactured by Youthlines, (Weingarten Brothers), Portsmouth  
Lent by Ruth Lowe
‘ANATOMY OF A HONEY GIRL’
1965

New magazines catering for the youth market, such as Honey (from 1960) and Petticoat (from 1966), promoted Quant’s underwear range with models in active, dynamic poses. Here, a ‘Q-Form’ advertisement appearing alongside a feature on the ‘anatomy of a Honey girl’ shows models in ‘Q-Form’ underwear, highlighting the energy and independence of both Mary Quant customers and Honey readers.

_Honey_, London, October 1965
Printed paper
V&A: NCOL.452-2018
'BOOBY TRAPS'
About 1972

Mary Quant lingerie was made in the Weingarten Brothers’ factory in Portsmouth, a well established centre of the undergarment industry. Their ‘Youthlines’ brand was launched during the 1950s, responding to demand for more natural-shaped undergarments. However, stockings rather than tights were the norm until the late 1960s, so suspender belts remained an essential part of the early ‘Q-Form’ ranges.

Nylon and elastic
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by the Nylon Hosiery Company, Nottinghamshire
V&A: T.93:1to2-2018 and T.94:1to2-2018

‘Brighton Belle’ and ‘Bo Peep’
About 1972
Printed nylon and elastic
Manufactured by the Nylon and Hosiery Company, Nottinghamshire
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Mary Quant Ltd
Courtesy of Maggie Hunt
NEGLIGÉE
1966

Quant designed this light-hearted negligée during the early days of Bazaar. It remained a favourite garment, both as a product in the shops and for Quant personally, as seen in this photograph taken ten years later, when she wore one while sitting under a hair dryer in her dressing room.

Silk and marabou feather trim
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London
(probably)
Mary Quant Archive
Mary Quant at her dressing table
Photograph by Reginald Davis, 1966
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive/ Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Reginald Davis
1965–67
ALLIGATOR RAINWEAR

“Since when did raincoats go wild?
Since Mary Quant designed for Alligator.”

Quant’s fascination with shiny, waterproof PVC is realised through her collaboration with Alligator Rainwear. Based in a mill in Stockport, near Manchester, for decades the company has produced traditional weatherproof coats in black, brown and beige to suit the British climate. By signing a licensing deal with Mary Quant, the brand takes on a new lease of life.

Alligator’s manufacturing expertise resolves the issues associated with her 1963 ‘Wet Collection’, allowing Quant to develop a bright new range of waterproofs in primary colours with capes, zips and contrasting collars and cuffs which combine functionality with striking visual effects. She also pushes Alligator to try innovative synthetic materials like nylon to produce exciting new looks.
COAT AND CAPE
1967
Worn by Patricia Jones

Quant also designed coats as part of the Ginger Group range, including this neat, brightly-coloured style which came in a range of colours and patterns. The design features a practical, detachable cape which may have been a light-hearted take on a Sherlock Holmes’ overcoat. It also includes Quant’s signature circular zip-pull tab, achieving a slender fit at the sleeve.

Wool and metal zip
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinberg, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Patricia G.M. Jones, Oxford

Yellow rain cape
Weatherproof cotton canvas
Labelled ‘Alligator by Mary Quant’
Made by Alligator Rainwear Ltd, Stockport
V&A: T.89-2018
SWINGING CAPES
1967

Quant designed a range of these bold rain capes for Alligator Rainwear in a rainbow of the ‘season’s snappiest shades’. The paired-back and fun design in ‘showerproof cotton canvas’ featured slash pockets, a central zip front, metal studs and Quant’s signature colour-contrast top-stitching at the hem. The Alligator advertisements proclaimed, ‘Quant girls take shelter under this swinging cape.’

Orange rain cape
Weatherproof cotton canvas
Labelled ‘Alligator by Mary Quant’
Made by Alligator Rainwear Ltd, Stockport
Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton and Hove
HANDBAGS BY QUANT – THEY’RE QUAIN’T
1966

An exclusive range of small PVC handbags, produced for Bagcraft in 1966, completed the overall Mary Quant-PVC look. The handbags came in black, white and red with high-impact, colour-contrast designs, including stripes, spots and checks. One design featured the Daisy motif which Quant registered as a trademark that same year. Retailing at just under £3, the bags cost about a third of the price of a typical Ginger Group dress.

Chequered bag
PVC
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by L.S. Mayer Ltd for Bagcraft, London
Lent by Jannette Flood
(Polly, Dublin)

Spotted bag
PVC
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
 Manufactured by L.S. Mayer Ltd for Bagcraft, London
Lent by Ruth Lowe

Striped bag
PVC
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by L.S. Mayer Ltd for Bagcraft, London
V&A: T.17-2019
PINSTRIPED RAINCOAT
1965-67
Worn by Linda Griffiths

As an aspiring mod in Cwmbran in the 1960s, Linda Griffiths recalls, ‘Boutiques were unheard of in Wales, so I had to resort to knocking up [Mary Quant] lookalikes during the school needlework classes’. Later, she trawled vintage fairs and flea markets in London for the Mary Quant garments she so desired as a teenager. This raincoat is her ‘prized possession’.

PVC
Labelled ‘Alligator by Mary Quant’
Made by Alligator Rainwear Ltd, Stockport
Private collection
RAINCOAT WITH CONTRAST COLLAR AND CUFFS
1966
Worn by Beryl Davies

Beryl Davies worked for London listings magazine *What’s On* in the 1960s. Attending Mary Quant fashion shows, she became a regular customer and bought this raincoat from Bazaar, King’s Road. Beryl appreciated the smaller sizes offered by Mary Quant which fitted her perfectly with no need for adjustments. She recalls, ’Other designers followed with smaller sizes, but I remember Quant as the first’.

PVC
Labelled ‘Alligator by Mary Quant’
Made by Alligator Rainwear Ltd, Stockport
Given by Beryl Davies
V&A: T.95-2018
CARRIER BAGS
About 1966

Self-taught designer Nigel Quiney produced silk scarves that sold in London boutiques and department stores, as well as stationery made by his family’s printing firm. Quant used some of his vibrant, psychedelia-inspired carrier bags for a window display at the Bazaar at 113 New Bond Street, which opened from 1967 to 1969.

Printed paper
Given by Nigel Quiney
V&A: NCOL.105 to 114-2019
Bazaar, New Bond Street window display
Photograph by Nigel Quiney, about 1966
Courtesy of Nigel Quiney
1964–74
HOME DRESSMAKING

“Mary Quant home patterns come to town!”

An army of home dressmakers can make their own Mary Quant designs when she signs a deal with Butterick. Costing little more than a copy of Vogue, the sewing patterns make it possible to stitch Quant’s shift dresses in either cheap and cheerful or luxury fabrics, depending on taste and budget. Just ten years earlier, Quant adapted Butterick patterns for home-made dresses to fill the rails of Bazaar.

For home knitters, Quant designs patterns for skinny jumpers and socks to promote Courtelle, an acrylic yarn produced by textile company Courtaulds. Later, she produces a range of Crimplene dressmaking fabrics with chemical company ICI. Such high-profile collaborations ensure that Mary Quant targets more consumers, while enabling traditional manufacturers to keep their products relevant in a competitive, globalising market.
MARY QUANT HOME SEWING

Dressmaking was a skill practised by many in the 1960s. A range of Butterick dressmaking patterns, produced from 1964 to 1973, enabled Mary Quant fans to reproduce some of her most popular designs for a fraction of the cost of an original. Quant was the first British designer to be commissioned by Butterick. Her patterns successfully sold in the USA, Canada, UK and Australia, highlighting the global appeal of the brand and the cultural cachet of the ‘London Look’.

Continued overleaf
Butterick pattern 4578
1967
Printed paper
Manufactured by Butterick, Pennsylvania, USA
V&A: NCOL.439-2018

Butterick pattern 4621
1967
Printed paper
Manufactured by Butterick, Pennsylvania, USA
V&A: NCOL.440-2018

Butterick pattern 5277
1969
Printed paper
Manufactured by Butterick, Pennsylvania, USA
V&A: NCOL.441-2018

Butterick pattern 5643
1970
Printed paper
Manufactured by Butterick, Pennsylvania, USA
Given by Heather Tilbury Phillips
V&A: NCOL.442-2018

Butterick pattern 5912
1970
Printed paper
Manufactured by Butterick, Pennsylvania, USA
V&A: NCOL.443-2018

Butterick pattern 6243
1971
Printed paper
Manufactured by Butterick, Pennsylvania, USA
V&A: NCOL.444-2018

Starlet 354 portable electric sewing machine
1974
Plastic and metal
Made by Singer
Lent by Janine Adair
‘MISS MUFFET’
1964
Made and worn by Sheila Hope

‘Miss Muffet’ was one of Quant’s most iconic designs and the first to be adapted for her range of Butterick dressmaking patterns. Sheila Hope made this version for her 21st birthday and recalled, ‘I used the finest quality Liberty wool. At the time I was at Bournemouth College of Art and with only my grant to support me, I made all my clothes the entire time and for many years afterwards. This dress is my prized possession!’

‘Mirabel’ Liberty printed Varuna wool
Designed by Thalia Perceval, 1963
Lent by Sheila Hope

**Butterick pattern 3287**
Printed paper
Manufactured by Butterick, Pennsylvania, USA
V&A: NCOL.438-2018
Patti Boyd modelling ‘Miss Muffet’, with the Rolling Stones
Photograph by John French, 1964
© John French / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
ICI CRIMPLENE FABRICS
1974–75

A range of Crimplene dressmaking fabrics, available in over 500 UK stores, for about £3 per yard (about £23 today), completed the toolkit for devotees to produce their own Mary Quant wardrobe. Crimplene was a polyester-based, synthetic fabric, popular in the 1960s thanks to its easy-care properties. When it fell out of fashion in the 1970s, replaced by better-ventilated, lighter-weight synthetic fabrics, British chemical company ICI commissioned Quant to rescue Crimplene’s fading image.

‘Tiger Lily’ fabric
Crimplene
Manufactured by Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI),
Leek, Staffordshire (probably)
Lent by Ruth Lowe

Ditsy floral fabric
Crimplene
Manufactured by Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI),
Leek, Staffordshire (probably)
Lent by Ruth Lowe

Paisley fabric
Crimplene
Manufactured by Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI),
Leek, Staffordshire (probably)
Lent by Ruth Lowe
MARY QUANT HAND-KNITS
1966

A range of knitting patterns enabled home-knitters to wear Mary Quant designs. Courtelle yarn made from acrylic fibre was designed to feel like wool but was stronger and easier to wash. It was promoted by brands such as Patons, Lister and Sirdar which licenced Mary Quant designs and sometimes the Daisy logo to promote their knitting patterns. Quant used contrasting colours to create bold, fun garments, often with matching bonnets or socks to complete the overall look.

Lister knitting pattern N1780
Paper and ink
Manufactured by Lister & Co., Yorkshire
Given by Sue Robertson
V&A: AM/T&F/0002/2

Patons knitting pattern 9531
Paper and ink
Manufactured by Patons & Baldwins, Yorkshire
V&A: NCOL.457-2018

Coats knitting pattern 129
Paper and ink (facsimile)
Manufactured by J & P Coats Ltd, Glasgow
V&A: NCOL.459-2018

Lister knitting pattern 2495
Paper and ink
Manufactured by Lister & Co., Yorkshire
V&A: NCOL.455-2018

Patons knitting pattern 9527
Paper and ink
Manufactured by Patons & Baldwins, Yorkshire
V&A: NCOL.456-2018

Patons knitting pattern 9530
Paper and ink
Manufactured by Patons & Baldwins, Yorkshire
V&A: NCOL.458-2018
‘CANDY TWIST’
1966
Worn by Sue Robertson

Sue Robertson’s mother Rose made this t-shirt style dress with a daisy motif pocket from a Sirdar knitting pattern designed by Quant. It was modelled on the pattern cover by Jill Kennington. Sue described it as ‘a real labour of love, illustrating the way Mary Quant’s work sat at a crossroads between post-war domestic traditions of making, and a new era of design’. Over the years, it has stretched a little!

Handknitted from Courtelle synthetic yarn
Made by Rose Robertson
Given by Sue Robertson
V&A: T.56-2018

Sirdar knitting pattern 2353
1966
Paper and ink
Manufactured by Sirdar, Yorkshire
Given by Sue Robertson
V&A: AM/T&F/0002/1
Rose Robertson knitting, about 1980
Courtesy of Sue Robertson
1966–67
THE JERSEY DRESS

“I want free-flowing, feminine lines that compliment a woman’s shape... I want relaxed clothes, suited to the actions of normal life.”

Quant discovers a new type of wool jersey that is heat-bonded to an acetate backing and available in the brightest, deepest colours. Previously used in underwear and for rugby or football kit, jersey’s smooth, fluid qualities are perfectly suited to Quant’s signature sporty minidresses produced in many different permutations, worn with matching berets, tights and shoes – giving a total top-to-toe block of colour.

Machine-knitted jersey is revolutionising the textile industry. From America, Quant brings to Britain the idea of ‘intimate apparel’ and jersey loungewear, to be worn only at home. Pushing at traditional boundaries of taste, she designs minidresses with matching undershorts, to be worn on the streets.
‘FOOTER’
1967

Quant’s quest for fun, simplicity and comfort reached its ultimate expression in the ‘Footer’ jersey shift dress, available in several bold bright colours with contrasting white details, like the team strip worn by footballers. Seen here modelled by Grace Coddington, with cropped hair, it gave women a chance to express a tomboy side.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Mary Quant Archive

Beret
1967
Wool felt
Labelled ‘Mary Quant / Kangol, England’
Manufactured by Kangol in Cleator, Cumbria
V&A: T.5-2019
GRACE CODDINGTON MODELLING ‘FOOTER’
1967

© Getty Images: Hulton Archive
SKATER-STYLE DRESS
1967

Quant drew her jersey dress designs on figures in animated poses in keeping with the relaxed, functional nature of the garments. Her annotations give different colourways and instructions to the sample makers, revealing her working methods. Here she specifies her ‘pet bodice with 1” roughly edge contrast or top stitched twice yellow’ and she asks to see the effect first on a half-collar shape.

Pencil, pen, with fibre tip colours
London
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: E.520-1975
‘BANANA SPLIT’
1967

Quant’s jersey minidresses in their multiple variants and colourways became her own signature look. Simple and practical, they illustrate her philosophy of clothing being a foil for the wearer’s individual style, ‘strong enough to echo her personality, but never dominating or inhibiting it. They must live and work for her… and have the throwaway comfort of blue-jeans.’

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London
(probably)
Mary Quant Archive

Beret
1967
Wool felt
Labelled ‘Mary Quant/Kangol, England’
Manufactured by Kangol in Cleator, Cumbria
V&A: NCOL.304-2019
V-NECK JERSEY DRESS
1967
Worn by Mary Quant

Quant achieved notoriety in Italy as the inventor of the miniskirt. She was lauded by the media when she travelled to Rome for the opening of a London-styled boutique on Via Margutta, with Carnaby Street menswear-pioneer John Stephen. The miniskirt was considered especially shocking by older generations in Catholic countries such as Italy and Spain.

Bonded wool jersey
Unlabelled
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Mary Quant Archive
Mary Quant and Carnaby Street retailer John Stephens at a Rome reception, 1967
Image courtesy of John Stephen archive, V&A
Archive of Art and Design
JERSEY DRESSES
1966–67

Quant played with the jersey dress format, designing multiple options: round or high collars, with zips or buttons, pocket logos, different sleeves and skirts, and even hoods. With her brightly-coloured wool berets, matching tights and even shoes, Quant customers could recreate the complete look.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’ or ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London or the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales
Mary Quant Archive and V&A: T.86-1982
Given by Lina Salmon

Peter Pan collar dress
Bonded wool jersey
Unlabelled
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Mary Quant Archive

Peter Pan collar dress
Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.353-1974
Mary Quant, 1967
© Getty Images: Rolls Press / Popperfoto
‘PENNY WISE’
1966
Worn by Deborah Cherry

With romper-suit straps, round collar and a patch pocket, this minidress is a literal expression of Quant’s borrowing from children’s garments. Worn while a schoolgirl, Deborah Cherry later said, ‘these were clothes for a young generation: bold, striking, easy to wear – they had a really strong feel-good factor for young women “walking tall”, with a style of our own’.

Cotton drill
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinberg, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Deborah Cherry
V&A: T.61-2018

Beret
1967
Wool felt
Labelled ‘Mary Quant /
Kangol, England’
Manufactured by Kangol, Cleator, Cumbria
V&A: T.83-2018
1966–73
GIRLS WILL BE BOYS

“I didn’t want to grow up, perhaps that’s something to do with it.”

From 1966, tomboyish models like the teenaged Twiggy promote the minidress-look in typical Quant style: knock-kneed in gawkish poses, often sporting cropped hair and resisting the constraints of adult stereotypes. Quant’s sporty tracksuits and loungewear allow wearers, ‘to run, to jump, to leap, to retain their precious freedom’.

Quant’s designs of the late 1960s are simultaneously childlike and androgynous. Familiar masculine tropes of waistcoats, suits, trousers and flat caps are made for the Ginger Group label, alongside little-girl dresses with ribbon and lace, romper suits and bloomer-style hot pants. These often provocative styles reflect increasingly relaxed attitudes in society towards sexuality in all its forms, reinforced legally by the decriminalisation of homosexuality in England in 1967.
SHIRTDRESS WITH SHORTS
1966

This pyjama-like shirtdress was part of a Mary Quant loungewear range produced in jewel-coloured satins, described as a ‘slipper-satin party dress... with pocketed pants to match’. Photographer Brian Duffy captured model Kellie Wilson wearing it for the Sunday Times’ fashion pages. Wilson’s relaxed, almost suggestive, stance reflected the playfulness of this ensemble and the ease of movement it allowed the wearer.

Synthetic satin
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, Mary Quant’s London
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Mary Quant Ltd
DRESS WITH HOTPANTS

1972

Rickrack-braid and smocking with cotton seersucker fabric recalls old-fashioned summer dresses, brought up to date with bright 1970s colours. Fifteen year-old Hazel Collins modelled a similar outfit, wearing Mary Quant platform-soled shoes, in a pose which revealed baby bloomer-style hotpants. Quant’s Daisy doll wardrobe of 1978 featured a strikingly similar red dress with contrast-colour stitching (displayed nearby).

Cotton seersucker and rickrack braid
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in London (probably)
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.133-1976

Shoes

1972
Leather, plastic and metal
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by Mary Quant shoes, Bristol
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.113A&B-1976
‘BO PEEP’ DAISY DOLL
1978

Quant moved into the toy market in 1973 with Daisy, ‘The best-dressed doll in the world’. This enabled the next generation to connect with her brand, buying miniature versions of Mary Quant designs for the jet-setting, independent doll. The launch at Harrogate Toy Fair featured Quant’s regular models dancing down the catwalk wearing life-size versions of Daisy’s wardrobe.

Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured by Model Toys,
Hong Kong
Ralph Cade
HAZEL COLLINS WEARING MARY QUANT DRESS WITH HOTPANTS
1972

© Getty Images: Popperfoto
‘PURELY PURITANICAL’
1967
Worn by Patricia Lowe

While an art student living in Swansea, Patricia Lowe bought this minidress on a trip to London. It was part of the ‘Calico Collection’, inspired by Quant’s discovery of Edwardian dustcoats and overdresses in an attic. Quant described how the resulting ‘smock dresses, low-waisted frocks with flounced skirts, and provocative hotpants with matching broderie anglaise frills… sold faster than we could make them’.

Cotton with broderie anglaise trimming
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent for exhibition by Mrs Patricia Lowe

‘Derby Day’ Daisy doll
1974
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Made by Model Toys, Hong Kong
Ralph Cade
TWIGGY AND MODEL WEARING ‘PURITANICAL’ DRESSES
1967

_Vogue_ featured two ‘Purely Puritanical’ cream calico dresses, teamed with strappy little-girl style shoes and risqué fishnet tights. Waifish models like Twiggy with doll-like faces, short, boyish haircuts, and awkward, child-like poses, emphasised the new youthful ideal represented by Quant’s designs.

_Vogue_, June 1967
Photographs by Just Jaeckin
The Tower Library
‘X-CERTIFICATE’

1969

This wet-look catsuit with jeans-style top-stitching and matching fly-cap were made from a new stretchy synthetic fabric, perfect for emphasising an athletic body. Quant’s designs were sometimes considered provocative, as she adapted her style for the approaching decade and new, younger customers.

‘Helanka’ or stretch nylon and PVC
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, *Mary Quant’s London* (replica cap)
Lent by Fashion Museum Bath / Gift of Mary Quant Ltd
Amanda Lear (right) modelling ‘X Certificate’, 1969
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
This image is an orphan work. Attempts have been made to contact the owner. The image is held by the London College of Fashion and Woolmark Archive (The Woolmark Company Pty Ltd).
HAVOC DOLL
1973

Quant’s exploration of more progressive identities for girls can be seen in her choice to give Daisy a ‘fearless, fiery’, crime-fighting, super-agent sister. ‘Havoc’ was a motorbike-riding tomboy who Quant joked was her own alter ego.

Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
Ralph Cade
Quant with Daisy and Havoc dolls on motorbike, January 1974
© Getty Images: SSPL
At the end of the white plinth

**TOWELLING LOUNGEWEAR**

1967

In 1966, Quant discovered stretch-towelling and velour, both of which could take dyed colours ‘like boiled sweets’. These fabrics provided ultimate comfort and allowed free movement, being perfect for her loungewear range which included both short and long body-suits, as modelled by Grace Coddington.

Jumpsuit
Cotton stretch-towelling
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by Heinzelmann, Germany
Mary Quant Archive

‘Look Lively’ Daisy Doll

1979
Plastic, synthetic hair and textiles
Made by Model Toys, Hong Kong
Ralph Cade on behalf of Leila Johnson

‘On The Quant Wavelength’

*Honey*, June 1967
Photographs by Peter Mullett and Jan Whitecross
V&A: NCOL.528-2018
Grace Coddington (right) and another model wearing towelling jumpsuits, 1966
© Bokelberg
1966
QUANT MEETS THE QUEEN

“Odd Gear at the Palace.”

*Daily Mail, 1966*

One chilly November afternoon in 1966, Mary Quant arrives at Buckingham Palace with her husband Alexander Plunket Greene and their business partner Archie McNair. A few hours later they emerge with Quant’s OBE (Officer of the British Empire), a medal awarded for her contribution to the UK fashion export trade, supporting the British economy.

Dressing with press photographers in mind, Quant’s bright cream outfit stands out in the crowd. She reinterprets formal protocol – her hat is a schoolgirl’s beret, her gloves have revealing cut-out backs. She promotes her own designs from top to toe: lipstick, dress, underwear, tights and shoes can all be bought in UK shops and, increasingly, in other countries. This potent media opportunity for the Mary Quant brand results in newspaper headlines across the world.
THE OBE DRESS
1966
Designed and worn by Mary Quant

Quant’s OBE dress is one of her many designs using jersey fabric, modelled on sports clothing but with a miniskirt length. The dress makes a feature out of functional details like her favourite circular zip-pulls and contrasting top stitching. The simple style became her signature look.

Bonded wool jersey (modern beret)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.354-1974
Alexander Plunket Greene, Mary Quant and Archie McNair at Buckingham Palace, 15 November 1966
© Hulton Deutsch / Corbis Historical / Getty Images
INTERVIEWS

2019

Duration: 11 minutes

Industry insiders and a customer describe their experiences of the Quant brand

Brigid Keenan
Fashion editor

Jill Kennington
Quant model

Tereska Peppe
Quant customer

Joy Debenham-Burton
Quant cosmetics consultant

Film by NewAngle

Credits continued overleaf
IMAGES:

Model wearing Balenciaga ‘sack’ dress, 1958
Photo by Tom Kublin / Balenciaga Archives, Paris

Norman Hartnell with models, about 1960
Photo by Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images

Norman Hartnell backstage at a fashion show, 1965
Photo by Terry Fincher/Express/Getty Images

Contact sheet, portraits of Brigid Keenan
Photo by Norman Eales / Courtesy of Brigid Keenan

Portrait of Brian Duffy
Photo Duffy © Duffy Archive

Diana Vreeland in the Vogue magazine offices, New York, 1966
Photo by Rowland Scherman / Getty Images

Sunday Times Colour Supplement, 4 February 1962, front cover and centre spread, illustrating designs by Mary Quant
Image courtesy of The Sunday Times © David Bailey

David Bailey and Jean Shrimpton, 1964
Photo by Terry O’Neill/Iconic Images/Getty Images

David Bailey and Jean Shrimpton, about 1963
Photo by Terry O’Neill/Iconic Images/Getty Images

‘Cry Baby’ waterproof mascara advert, 1967
Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

‘To the Naked Eye it’s a Naked Face’ Starkers advert, 1968
Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

Credits continued overleaf
Image courtesy of Patricia Gahan
Mary Quant and Vidal Sassoon, 1964
© Trinity Mirror / Mirrorpix / Alamy Stock Photo

Jill Kennington modelling ‘Bank of England’ dress by Mary Quant
Photo by John Cowan for Elle, 1963
© John Cowan Archive

Jill Kennington modelling PVC rain tunic and hat by Mary Quant
Photo by John Cowan, commissioned by Ernestine Carter for Sunday Times in 1963 © John Cowan Archive

Tereska and Mark Peppe, about 1960
Courtesy of Tereske Peppe © Mark Peppe. Photo by Mark Peppe

View of Chelsea rooftops, about 1960
Courtesy of Tereske Peppe © Mark Peppe. Photo by Mark Peppe

Sailor style dress by Mary Quant, about 1960
Image courtesy of Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum

Tereska Peppe wearing Reed Crawford hat and Mary Quant denim dress, both bought from Bazaar, 1960
Courtesy of Tereske Peppe © Mark Peppe. Photo by Mark Peppe

Bazaar, 138 King’s Road, Chelsea, 1966
Photo by HABANS Patrice/Paris Match via Getty Images

Credits continued overleaf
Bazaar window display, 138 King’s Road Chelsea, 1960
Courtesy of Tereske Peppe © Mark Peppe. Photo by Mark Peppe

Bazaar, 138 King’s Road, Chelsea, 1966
Photo by Bob Thomas / Getty Images

Joy Debenham Burton with Mary Quant
Image courtesy of Joy Debenham-Burton/
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Joy Debenham-Burton with Pat Mash, known as ‘Smash’
at cosmetics launch, Macy’s Wichita, Kansas, USA, November 1966
Image courtesy of Patricia Gahan

‘Starkers’ and ‘Face Lighter’ cosmetics
Courtesy of Janette Flood / image © David Bickerstaff

‘Mary’s Great Idea’ cosmetics instructions leaflet
illustrated by Jan Parker, 1966
Image courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Footage extracts:
Mary Quant shows off her latest boot and shoe designs, 1967
Footage supplied by British Pathé

Fashion show at Osterley Park house for Queen Elizabeth
and Princess Margaret, 1960
Wazee Archival / Getty Images

Mary Quant Show Autumn Collection Wool and
Make-up News from Australia, 1967
Footage source: Reuters via British Pathé

Credits continued overleaf
Telescope – The Quant Theory, 1968
CBC Licensing

Timeshift: Art School, 2008 and Fancy Dresser, 1965
Footage supplied by BBC Broadcast Archive/Getty Images

Mary Quant fashion show in Hamburg, 1967
Footage supplied by British Pathé
FASHION FOR EVERYONE

“Fashion, as we knew it, is over; people wear now exactly what they feel like wearing.”

By the late 1970s, Quant works increasingly in Japan. She publishes books on cosmetics, opens her Colour Shops, and designs a special edition Mini car. She receives many awards in recognition of her unique and on-going contribution to fashion, including a Dame of the British Empire medal in 2015.

Quant and her business partners anticipate the future dominance of visual branding and marketing and her brand helps to shape the global identity of fashion in Britain today, a centre of street style, creativity and innovation.

Meanwhile, the fashion industry, transformed by offshore manufacturing and digital technology, is only now beginning to adapt to meet the challenges of fast fashion and sustainability.

Continued overleaf
Quant’s greatest legacy for today is her vision of fashion as a means of communicating new attitudes, ideas and change for women. By bending the rules and testing different gender roles and identities with affordable, well-made clothes to enjoy, empower and liberate, she predicted the opportunities and freedoms of future generations.
1968–73
WORKING WARDROBES

“Mary Quant... blasted an opening in the wall of tradition through which other young talents have poured.”

Ernestine Carter, 1973

Still operating from the tiny head office in Chelsea, Quant designs for her own label and for Ginger Group, while also developing products made under license. She closes the Bazaar shops in 1969 to focus on the profitable licensing trade. To manage the volume of work, Quant employs and supervises graduates from London’s prestigious design schools.

Women working for Mary Quant are given opportunities to excel, with some promoted to co-direct alongside Quant, Plunket Greene and McNair. The business is fast-paced and exciting, involving frequent travel within the UK and abroad. A perk of the job is being able to buy unique samples from the workroom.
DRESS WITH EPAULETTES AND TIE
1966

With striped tie and epaulettes, this simple shift dress shows Quant using fashion to play with masculine and military conventions at a time when the Vietnam War was being fought. Quant wore a dress of this style, as did her cosmetics consultants in shops like Selfridges, until the ties proved impractical, getting in the way of make-up demonstrations.

Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales
(probably)
V&A: T.28-2018
Kellie Wilson with Chelsea Pensioners
Photograph by Gunnar Larsen, 1966 © Gunnar Larsen
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
‘SHOWBIZ’ DAISY DOLL
1975

Like Quant’s womenswear designs, some of Daisy’s outfits, such as this ringmaster’s uniform, challenged conventional gender stereotypes by referencing traditionally masculine professions.

Plastic, synthetic hair and textiles
Made by Model Toys, Hong Kong
'OVERDRAFT’ WAISTCOAT AND ‘CHEQUE BOOK’ SKIRT

1967

Worn by Frances Arter

Frances Arter enjoyed wearing this outfit at the television company near Carnaby Street, where she worked. The garment names reference the masculine world of finance and banking while emphasising the irony of gender inequality. Although the first credit card was introduced to Britain in 1966, most women were unable to access credit without a male relative acting as guarantor.

# WANT QUANT

Wool; Acrilan jersey (modern shirt and bow tie)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinberg, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Frances Arter
V&A: T.75:1&2-2018

Ginger Group Advertisement

1967
Photographs by Richard Avedon
with art direction by Tom Wolsey
Mary Quant Archive
Twiggy modelling waistcoat and shorts ensemble
© Photograph Terence Donovan, courtesy Terence Donovan Archive
*The Sunday Times*, 23 October 1966
SPORTY TRACKSUITS
1966

*Vogue* fashion editor Marit Allen included this tracksuit in her ‘Young Idea’ pages, the first time such an outfit had become part of high fashion. She described the look as ‘lighter than light’ although, at 25 guineas, it wasn’t cheap. It shows Quant’s advanced ideas, anticipating the dominance of sportswear as fashion 50 years later.

‘Surprise Packet’
Bonded wool jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom for the 1973 exhibition, *Mary Quant’s London*
Given by Mary Quant
V&A: T.111&A-1976

‘Huckleberry’ Daisy Doll
1973
Plastic, synthetic hair and textiles
Made by Model Toys, Hong Kong
Ralph Cade

Model wearing ‘Surprise Packet’ tracksuit
*Vogue*, 15 October 1966
Photographs by David Bailey
V&A: NCOL.448-2018

Beret
Wool felt
Labelled ‘Mary Quant / Kangol, England’
Manufactured by Kangol, Cleator, Cumbria
Given by Mary Quant
V&A: T.111B-1976
This is one of several photoshoots of Mary Quant models posed among groups of retired army veterans at the Chelsea Hospital, not far from the King’s Road Bazaar. Quant’s designs follow her familiar theme of incorporating traditional menswear such as ties, trouser suits and cowboy outfits. These ensembles are presented against the male British institution of the Chelsea Pensioners in their uniforms, highlighting the novelty of Quant’s clothes, the Britishness of her brand and the international appeal of the London-look.

Photographs by Gunnar Larsen
Mary Quant Archive
‘RASPBERRY RIPPLE’ JACKET
1973
Worn by Janie Ranger

Design assistant Janie Ranger, a fashion and textile graduate from Ealing Art School, contributed towards Mary Quant embroidery details, dressmaking fabrics and even mugs. She recalls that Quant was, ‘brilliant at looking at something and saying, “That’s not right, but I know what we need to do to it.” She had a really really good eye and a good way of thinking things through’.

Acrylic jersey with dyed pile
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Given by Janie Ranger, V&A: T.68-2018

T-shirt and skirt
About 1974
Biba
Cotton and synthetic crepe
Given by Jan Sage, V&A: T.85-2013 and T.81-2013

Shoes
1973
Leather, plastic, rubber and metal
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by Mary Quant shoes, Bristol
Given by Janie Ranger, V&A: T.69:1&2-2018
JACKET AND SKIRT

1972
Worn by Pamela Howard-Mace

As Quant’s personal assistant in 1968, Pamela Howard-Mace earned an enviable salary of £2,600 a year and drove a Ford Cortina as her company car. She later became design director of Mary Quant and exerted a forceful influence over the look of the brand in the 1970s, maintaining Quant’s high standards of quality and design.

Printed viscose crêpe (modern blouse)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Linda Kirby in memory of her godmother, Pamela Howard-Mace
V&A: T.31:1&2-2013
TUNIC AND KNICKERBOCKERS
1971

As shown in the nearby photograph, Pamela Howard-Mace, like other Mary Quant employees, wore the company look well. Quant enjoyed the broad range of coloured and patterned knitted textiles available in the early 1970s, often combining them with hotpants or popstyle knickerbockers like these.

Acrylic and wool mix, machine knitted
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London
(probably)
Given by Linda Kirby in memory of her godmother,
Pamela Howard-Mace
V&A: T.28:1&2-2013
Pamela Howard-Mace (centre) with Mary Quant models
1971
Courtesy of Linda Kirby
‘MANHATTAN’
1970
Worn by Heather Tilbury

Heather Tilbury joined the Mary Quant team in 1970, coming from Kangol, the company which made Mary Quant berets from 1967. Tilbury became a co-director of the company, working closely with Plunket Greene on managing public relations. This skyscraper printed kaftan-like dress was one of many outfits worn by Tilbury before she left to establish her own company in 1976.

Printed viscose crêpe designed by Eddie Squires
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Lent by Heather Tilbury Phillips and Eileen Piggott
Heather Tilbury outside the Ginger Group office, 9 South Molton Street, 1973
Photograph by Tony Boase
Courtesy of Heather Tilbury Phillips
1966–75
STYLE EVOLUTION

“Switching to the sounds of the seventies.”

Having created the minimal look which defined the 1960s, Quant’s style becomes eclectic and retrospective amid the economic and political uncertainties of the 1970s. Still combining Victorian details with bright colours and a clean, modern finish, Quant’s designs retain her characteristic sense of fun. As well as reinvented Liberty prints, Quant exploits new patterned synthetics and launches a range of platform shoes to complete her outfits.

She applies her designer’s eye to home furnishings, helping to popularise duvet covers, with industry collaborations that capitalise on her celebrity and flair for marketing. Changes in UK manufacturing lead to the closure of the Ginger Group label in 1975, but Mary Quant designs continue to sell through boutiques and department stores, acting as a banner for the lucrative cosmetic and hosiery markets.
SQUIGGLE DRESS
About 1968
Worn by Mary Quant

Quant responded to the changing mood of the late 1960s designing garments with more flowing silhouettes, sometimes achieved using the 1930s technique of bias-cutting. This minidress of patterned jersey has the ‘swing and cling’ which characterised the period.

Bonded wool jersey, casein buttons
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Mary Quant Archive
Quant wearing squiggle patterned jersey dress
Photograph by Paul Anthony, 1968
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
‘ARUNDEL’ SEPARATES
1973

Mary Quant designed the ‘Arundel’ range of coordinating separates for her mainline collection. The blouse and top could be mixed and matched with a sleeveless vest, jacket and a pair of checked trousers as well as the skirt shown here. The name of the outfit, inspired by Arundel Castle, emphasised the classic appeal of this Mary Quant design.

Wool and synthetic jersey (top and skirt); rayon (shirt), leather and suede (shoes)
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in the Mary Quant sample workroom, London (probably)
Given by Mary Quant Ltd
V&A: T.114 to E-1976

‘Charlie Girl’ Daisy doll
1973
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
Ralph Cade

Alexander Plunket Greene
and Mary Quant with model Amanda Lear
Sunday Telegraph magazine,
25 May 1973
© Photograph Terence Donovan, Courtesy Terence Donovan Archive
Mary Quant designs were popular in 1970s America. This dress was bought at the Chicago department store, Marshall Field. Made out of co-ordinated fine wool prints by Liberty, this versatile dress retailed for £20 (about £150 today). On Decimal Day, 15 February 1971, guineas and shillings were finally abolished and replaced with the UK monetary system used today.

Liberty printed Varuna wool
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
V&A: T.84:1&2-2018

‘Marrakesh’ daisy doll
1973
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
Ralph Cade

Daisy’s Fashion Show 3
1973
Printed paper and card
Printed in Great Britain
Mary Quant Archive

Promotion for Mary Quant’s Ginger Group and the International Wool Secretariat
Harper’s & Queen, Mid-October 1971
V&A: NCOL:450-2018
Continue along the row of objects on the white plinth

**TARTAN DRESS**

1967

This sparkly dress from Ginger Group combines old and new sensibilities. With Victorian inspired tartan and feminine frills, it has a modern hemline and is made in newly available, fun, synthetic materials. It would have been ideal for parties and special occasions and demonstrates the retrospective turn taken by fashion in 1967.

Rayon with lurex thread and plastic buttons  
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales  
Lent by Ruth Lowe

‘Razzle Dazzle’ Daisy doll

1973  
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile  
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys  
Ralph Cade
HALTERNECK MAXIDRESS
1970

By 1970, Quant embraced the full-length option for evening dresses. The high-waisted silhouette and deep frill at the hem of this dress is loosely inspired by Victorian styles but modernised by the use of bold monochrome stripes, one of Quant’s signature looks.

Printed rayon
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Ruth Lowe

‘Knickerbocker Glory’ Daisy doll
1974
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
Ralph Cade
TWO MODELS WEARING STRIPED ENSEMBLES
Spring 1973

Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive /
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
PLATFORM SHOES
1972–73
Worn by Ann Berryman

Ann Berryman worked as an audio typist at a Bradford insurance company. She later wrote, ‘During my lunch hour I would browse the city shops [where] I saw the Mary Quant shoes. Mary Quant was THE name at that time and as I now had money of my own, I could pay for them myself. I remember going back to work and proudly showing off my latest purchase’.

Leather, plastic and metal
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by Mary Quant shoes, Bristol
V&A: T.67:1&2-2018
‘YUM YUM’

1975
Worn by Francesca Makins (née McInnes)

A Mary Quant devotee from the age of 14 when she was bought a ‘glorious tweedy coatdress’, Francesca Makins later lived opposite King’s Road Bazaar while training as a florist. She always treasured this ensemble purchased from Bonds in Norwich (now part of John Lewis), which was, ‘always greatly admired or became a talking point’. The kimono-style reflected Quant’s interest in Japanese culture.

Liberty Lantana printed cotton with quilting
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made in Great Britain
Given by Francesca Makins
V&A: T.6:1&2-2019

Hat

1977
Made by Herbert Johnson
Wool felt
Made in London
Given by Jill Ritblat
V&A: T.720-2000
Platform Mules
1972–73

Quant worked with Bristol shoe manufacturer GB Britton & Sons to create her ‘Quant Afoot’ range of plastic shoes and boots in 1967. Six years later, she appears to have licenced a factory in the same location to make a brightly-coloured range of platform-soled shoes under her own name, complete with a new graphic style of branding and packaging.

Leather, plastic and rubber
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by Mary Quant shoes, Bristol
Costume and Textile Collection, Norwich Castle Study Centre (Norfolk Museums Service)
‘MERINGUE’
Autumn/Winter 1969

Originally worn with a belt, this zipped minidress was part of a collection in ‘clove’ and cream, anticipating the ubiquitous brown palette which dominated 1970s fashion. ‘Meringue’ cost 9 guineas (about £133 today) and could be worn with the contrasting longline overdress and trousers named ‘Éclair’. There was also a pinafore dress named ‘Gravy Train’ as a nod to all things brown.

Machine-made, synthetic-fibre lace
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinberg, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
V&A: T.90-2018
Amanda Lear (right) wearing ‘Meringue’ and another model wearing ‘Éclair’, 1969
Image courtesy Mary Quant Archive / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
This image is an orphan work. Attempts have been made to contact the owner. The image is held by the London College of Fashion and Woolmark Archive (The Woolmark Company Pty Ltd).
Commercial artist Joan Corlass perfectly captured the spirit and style of Daisy doll for a series of children’s activity books. She trained in Melbourne, Australia, before coming to London in 1958 where she worked in the advertising department of high street fashion retailer C&A, and as a magazine freelancer. Originally responsible just for the Daisy doll logo, the collaboration between Quant and Corlass eventually lasted for six years.

Printed paper and card
Printed in Great Britain
Lent by Joan Corlass

‘Meadow Sweet’ Daisy doll
1973
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
Ralph Cade

‘Whizz Kid’ Daisy doll
1973
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
V&A: B.6:1 to 6-2018
Vivien Wearing chose this design as her ‘going away’ outfit after her wedding in 1972. She had worked as a house model for wholesale label Verona Fashions on Berners Street, London, before her marriage. She later explained that Mary Quant had been a particular influence on her interest in clothes as a teenager, and that this dress ‘was a joy to wear’.

Printed cotton
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinberg, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Given by Vivien Wearing
V&A: T.62-2018
Vivien and David Wearing on their wedding day, with Vivien in Mary Quant, 1972
Courtesy of Vivien Wearing
PLAYSUITS

1971
Worn by Brenda Lowe and Liza Monks

Originally bought at the Ogilvy department store in Montreal, Canada, this playsuit has been worn by two women in different cities and decades. Pam Wilson bought it for her friend Brenda Lowe who had studied at Liverpool Art School at the same time as John Lennon. Brenda in turn gave it to her niece Liza, who wore it as a fashion student in the late 1980s.

Printed cotton jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made by Steinberg, Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Liza Monks, Brenda Lowe and Freya Webley

‘Peppermint Rock’ Daisy doll
1973
Plastic, synthetic hair and textile
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
Ralph Cade on behalf of
Marianna Hawksworth

Daisy’s Fashion Wardrobe 2
1973
Printed paper and card
Printed in Great Britain
Mary Quant Archive
Ika Hindley (right) wearing Mary Quant playsuit
Photograph by Jean-Claude Deutsch for *Paris Match*, 1971
© Getty Images: Paris Match Archive. Photo by Jean-Claude Deutsch
‘DAISY GOES TO MARKET’
STICKER BOOK
1973

Selling at 30 pence, the same price as a paperback, a series of sticker books with Joan Corlass’s exuberant illustrations brought Daisy doll’s glamorous style to life. Showing her at home in her pine and gingham kitchen, trying on a new dress, or dashing about town in her pink Mini car, the book’s pages were aimed at young girls.

Printed card and paper
Printed in Great Britain
Lent by Joan Corlass

‘Frou Frou’ Daisy doll
1973
Plastic with synthetic hair and textiles
Manufactured in Hong Kong by Model Toys
Ralph Cade
FRILLED MAXIDRESS

1973

This halter-necked style dress was one of many of Quant’s designs replicated in miniature for the Daisy doll wardrobe. Simple and classic, this full-sized version comes from the collection of Ruth Lowe, a private collector who has been a fan of 1960s fashion and Mary Quant’s work for many years.

Polyester taffeta
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’s Ginger Group’
Made at the Steinberg factory Pontypridd, Wales (probably)
Lent by Ruth Lowe
PLATFORM SHOES
1972
Worn by Christy Kingdom-Denny

These brightly coloured shoes were found in a charity shop by Christy Kingdom-Denny’s mother in the 1990s, about twenty years after they were designed. In recent decades, collectors and vintage clothing enthusiasts have expanded the market for second-hand clothes and shoes, a trend fuelled by online shopping sites.

Leather and plastic
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Made by Mary Quant shoes, Bristol
Lent by Mrs Christy Kingdom-Denny
Ika Hindley models the new collection of Mary Quant shoes
Photograph by Roger Jackson, 6 April 1972
© Roger Jackson / Stringer/ Getty Images
1966–75
A PAINTBOX OF IDEAS

“I aim to create a total look but one with so many variations that each girl can select and reject, to find her own permutation.”

In a fortuitous meeting of minds, Quant finds a manufacturer to develop an expanding range of stockings and tights in quirky colours to complement her clothes. These are sold alongside new products like plastic-moulded shoes and PVC bags. She even joins forces with the thriving toy industry to create Daisy, a doll with miniature Quant outfits at pocket-money prices.

After years of research, Quant launches a range of cosmetics, enabling customers from Stockbridge to San Francisco to buy into the Mary Quant brand with a daisy-logoed eyeliner brush or silver-cased lipstick. Using clever marketing and high-visibility packaging, Mary Quant becomes one of the first and most varied lifestyle brands to inspire a generation of shoppers.
SEAM-FREE MICRO-MESH STOCKINGS
About 1966

Along with the miniskirt, colourful, comfortable tights, stockings and socks are perhaps Quant’s most significant contribution to fashion. Until the late 1950s, women were limited to fiddly suspender-belts and stockings in nude colours. Warm pantyhose, the forerunners to tights, were an option in winter, but most women preferred stockings. Quant persuaded the Nylon Hosiery Company run by the Curry family, first generation immigrants from India, to manufacture her ideas.

Nylon, printed paper and card
Made by Nylon Hosiery Company, Nottinghamshire
V&A: T.9:1&2-2019
‘THE LEG SHOW’
1966–75

Quant worked closely with the Nylon Hosiery Company to create a myriad of stockings, tights and socks in bright colours, stripes and patterns. The packaging was usually very simple, with bold lettering and the Daisy logo, although this changed as graphic design developed to reflect new fashions. An affordable way to wear Mary Quant style, the tights were sold worldwide for three decades.

All made by the Nylon Hosiery Company, Long Eaton, Nottinghamshire

Continued overleaf
'Sparkle’ socks
1967
Nylon, lurex and printed card
Lent by Ruth Lowe
V&A: T.7-2019

‘Highball’ stockings
1966
Nylon, lurex, printed paper and card
Given by Diane Harris
V&A: T.72:1&2-2018

‘First Love’ tights
1967
Nylon, printed paper and card
Lent by Ruth Lowe

‘Neet Feet’ footless tights
About 1968
Nylon
V&A: T.8-2019

‘Silver lining’ footless tights
About 1968
Nylon, printed paper and card
Lent by Ruth Lowe

‘Daisy lace’ net tights
About 1967
Nylon and printed card
V&A: T.705-1995

Sheer stockings
About 1970
Nylon, printed paper and card
V&A: T.10:1&2-2019

‘Starkers’ tights
About 1968
Nylon, printed paper and card
V&A: T.11-2019

Chevron pattern tights
About 1972
Nylon, printed paper and card
V&A: T.12-2019

‘Hazy Daisy’ spotty tights
About 1975
Nylon, printed paper and card

Mary Quant tights
About 1972
Nylon, printed paper and card
V&A: NCOL.115-2019

‘Dotty’ tights
About 1975
Nylon, printed paper and card
V&A: T.13-2019
‘HIGHBALL’ STOCKINGS
1966

With shorter skirts and dresses, stockings and, increasingly, tights were a focal point for any outfit. Quant’s sparkly stockings in different colours were perfect for wearing with a minimal evening dress. A pair cost 19 shillings and 11 pence in 1966 (approximately £16 today). These sometimes represented a special purchase: this pair given to the V&A by Diane Harris were originally a Christmas present from her husband.

Nylon and lurex
Made by Nylon Hosiery Company, Nottinghamshire
Given by Diane Harris
V&A: T.85 to 88:1&2-2018, T.73:1&2-2018
QUANT AFOOT SHOES AND BOOTS
1967

Advertised with the slogan ‘Quant takes that brilliance to boots!’, the ‘Quant Afoot’ range was made by the same manufacturer of ‘Tuf’ work shoes. The range was originally made in five different styles, in shiny colours that ‘zoom into fashion’s orbit’, and ‘shrug off wear and weather marks’. Although fun to wear, the shoes were sweaty and impractical despite the soft lining.

Plastic bonded to coloured synthetic lining
Made by G. B. Britton & Sons, Bristol
Lent by Ruth Lowe
Lent by Northampton Museums and Art Gallery
Lent by Jannette Flood (Polly, Dublin)
Manchester Art Gallery
Given by Susanna Lob; V&A: T.59:1&2-1992
‘DADDY LONGLEGS’
1967

Designed for the ‘Quant Afoot’ range, these boots feature Quant’s signature daisy motif molded into the heel, allowing the wearer to leave a trail of daisy footprints. The zip-off ankle feature allows them to be worn as knee-high boots or shoes, at the wearer’s discretion.

Plastic bonded to coloured synthetic lining
Made by G. B. Britton & Sons, Bristol
Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry
V&A: T.91:1&2-2018
BERETS
1967–70

The Kangol beret was cosy and adaptable, worn by both soldiers and schoolgirls in sober workwear colours. Quant appropriated it for her top-to-toe look. It was manufactured by Kangol in 12 colours, retailing at 12 shillings and 6 pence (about £9 today). Advertised with confrontational slogans such as, ‘Is this just another fad?’ in magazines from Vogue to Petticoat, Jackie and 19, they were an inexpensive way of achieving the Mary Quant look.

Wool felt
Made by Kangol, Cleator, Cumbria
Lent by Ruth Lowe
V&A: T.15-2019, NCOL.524-2018
QUANT UNIFORMITY
1966

The cosmetics sales force also received the Quant treatment. Joy Ingram was one of six young consultants who wore Mary Quant minidresses as their uniform. They were far more approachable than the traditional ‘dragon-like women’ who had little in common with younger customers.

Quant Cosmetics’ First Uniform
1966
Wool bonded jersey
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
All from the collection of
Joy Debenham-Burton

Daisy bag
1966
PVC
Labelled ‘Mary Quant’
Manufactured by L.S. Mayer Ltd
for Bagcraft, London
Lent by Jannette Flood Polly, Dublin)
SUNGLASSES
1972–75

With holidays abroad becoming more affordable, sunglasses became a necessity for the Mary Quant woman to complete her summer wardrobe. Quant collaborated with British manufacturer Wiseman to create these early examples of designer sunglasses. The range came in the ubiquitous oversized style typical of the 1970s.

Plastic
Made by Wiseman
Lent by Heather Tilbury Phillips
‘DAISY’S FASHION WARDROBE’
1973–75
Illustrated by Joan Corlass

Collaborating with illustrator Joan Corlass, Quant created a whole lifestyle for Daisy with a series of cutout dolls and sticker books, showing her at home, out shopping, or having a holiday in a gipsy caravan or on a barge. A series of vocational titles including *My Exciting Life as a Reporter* and *My Glamorous Life as a Ballerina* increased the aspirational appeal of Daisy for young consumers.

Printed paper
Given by Jane Wright
V&A: B.202, 203-2009

‘Daisy’s Gipsy Caravan’
1973
Sticker book
Printed paper
Lent by Joan Corlass
DAISY DOLL
1973

Daisy doll was the brainchild of entrepreneur Sir Torquil Norman, and was cheaper to buy than the well established Sindy doll. Daisy’s head was modelled by mannequin-sculptor Adel Rootstein. Daisy’s accessories were highly collectible miniature versions of grown-up Mary Quant designs, available on the high street starting at 30 pence (around £2.30 today) for a pack of platform boots, a hat and a bag.

Continued overleaf
‘Flossie’, ‘Huckleberry’, ‘Fancy Free’ and ‘Tuck’
1973
Plastic, synthetic textile and printed card
Mary Quant Archive

‘Walk-Along Daisy & Spot’
About 1975
Plastic, synthetic textile and hair, printed card
Mary Quant Archive

Daisy doll range poster
1973–74
Printed paper
Given by Torquil Norman
V&A: B.144-2017

‘Dashing Daisy’s very own horse: Archie’
About 1975
Printed cardboard
Given by the Palitoy Company

‘Daisy’s Dressing Table’, ‘Daisy’s Bed’, ‘Daisy’s Table and Chairs’ and ‘Daisy’s Boutique’
About 1975
Plastic and synthetic textile
Mary Quant Archive

‘Daddy’s Girl’, ‘Tinkerbell’ and ‘Bumper Jumper’ Daisy dolls
1974–78
Plastic, synthetic textile and hair
Ralph Cade
V&A: Misc.94:1 to 4,6,7,9

‘Daisy’s Own Bike’ and ‘Daisy’s Garden Furniture’
About 1975
Plastic and synthetic fabric
Mary Quant Archive

‘Singing In The Rain’
1973
Plastic, synthetic textile and hair
Ralph Cade
All made by Model Toys, Hong Kong
THE QUANT BEAUTY BUS
1973–74

Mary Quant cosmetics were promoted worldwide, selling in 104 countries by 1973. The most spectacular means of driving sales abroad was the Mary Quant Beauty Bus: a bright red (later yellow) London Routemaster fitted with tables, mirrors and stools for make-overs. Bus driver Quincy Connell was part of the promotional team, touring Europe and the Americas, from Paris to Venezuela via Quebec. He parked near Mary Quant cosmetics stockists and wore a Mary Quant tie while demonstrating the products.

Photographic paper
Mary Quant Archive

Cosmetics launch in Penang, Malaysia
October 1973
Photographic paper
Mary Quant Archive

Quincey Connell’s Beauty Bus tie
1974
Woven wool
Given by Quincy Connell
V&A: T.76-2018
‘MARY’S GREAT IDEA’ – COSMETICS
1966 –67

Quant applied her radical approach to cosmetics. With monochrome, logoed plastic packaging, easy-to-follow instructions, and amusing advertising campaigns, the range took her modern ‘London’ look to fans around the world. ‘Starkers’ formed the base of the ‘barely there’ look which followed the principle of shading and highlighting to enhance features, while emphasising eyes, lashes and pale lips. The range was far removed from the heavy, pancake make-up popular before the 1960s.

Starkers Face  Plastic, card, cosmetics
Lighter Face Lent by Jannette Flood (Polly, Dublin),
Shaper Face London College of Fashion
Final Eye and Mary Quant Archive
Shaper
Liquid liners
Smudge liners
Eyeshades
Block Mascara
Quant paintboxes
Nail Polish

Make-up instructions
1966
Printed paper
Illustrations by Jan Parker
V&A: NCOL.195-2019
‘THE MISSING LINK IN MAKE-UP’
1966

Journalists and buyers received intriguing jigsaw puzzle pieces in the post. The final piece arrived the following day with details of the Mary Quant cosmetics launch party.

**Jigsaw invitation**
1966
Printed paper and wood
Photograph by Donovan

**Photograph**
*April or May 1966*
Photographic paper
Joy Ingram (left) and Mary Quant at one of the first make-up promotions at Rackham’s department store, Birmingham
COLOURING BOX FOR MEN

1974

In the era of Glam Rock when male pop stars regularly wore make-up, Quant’s range of cosmetics, moisturisers and tanning products for men met with outrage, generating a huge amount of publicity. An advertisement for American Cosmopolitan read, ‘YOU OWE it to yourself to look as good as you can. And that means both sexes. A little black Stick smudged around the eyes. A brushful or two of Tearproof Mascara... And a man still looks like a man, only better.’

Plastic, cosmetics, printed card
Lent by Ruth Lowe
PERFUME
1966 and 1974

Quant travelled to Grasse, the home of traditional French perfume, to realise her vision of a scent for the modern woman. She eventually arrived at two options, AM for day and PM for night. She wanted her fragrance to be ‘open and confident like men’s scents, but also female, sexy, daring and complex’. Havoc was released in 1974, a perfume and cologne for ‘girls who like to play it’.

Glass, plastic, printed card, metal and perfume
Lent by Jannette Flood (Polly, Dublin), London College of Fashion and Mary Quant Archive

AM Potion
PM Potion
AM perfume
PM perfume
Havoc perfume
Havoc perfume with lipstick
Havoc ‘All Her Life’ (sample)
NEW RANGES
1967–73

Innovative products were continually added to the cosmetics range, with tongue-in-cheek names like ‘Cry Baby’ tearproof mascara, ‘Jeepers Peepers’ and ‘Loads of Lash!’ – a long strip of false lashes that could be cut to length. Other lines followed including ‘Skin Think’ skincare, vitamin pills, tanning products like ‘Tan Trap’, and ‘Special Recipe’ which featured Victoriana-style packaging in keeping with the 1970s taste for nostalgia.

In 1973, Quant Crayons were launched in 20 colours. They were, Quant claimed, ‘the best idea’ she’d ever had.

Continued overleaf
Lashings
Reel of Real Lashes
Cry Baby Tearproof mascara
Blush Baby
Jeepers Peepers
Brush lipstick

Skincare products
1968–70
Come Clean
Skin Saver
Get Fresh
Maxi Vitamin pills
Vitamins pills
Sunshine Oil
Tan Trap
Dry Up deodorant spray
Kit bag

Special recipes
1972
Toning lotion
Morning Moisture
Liquid Foundation Pamphlet
Cream rouge
Dusty Powder eye shadows

Quant crayons
1973
Crayons
Pastel Crayons
Jelly Babies gel mascara
Jelly Babies gel skin colour
Eye tint
Cheeky
Greasepot
Solo Shadow
Eye paints
Blush stick
Body Gleamer

Plastic, printed card, cosmetics
Lent by Jannette Flood (Polly, Dublin), London College of Fashion,
Mary Quant Archive and
Susanna Brown
V&A: NCOL.461 & 462-2018
INTERVIEWS
2019

Duration: 12 minutes

Female designers working today reflect on Mary Quant’s legacy and reveal how they built their brands.

*Orlagh McCloskey and Henrietta Rix*
RIXO, London

*Florence Adepoju*
MDMflow, London

*April Crichton*
La Fetiche, Glasgow

Film by NewAngle

Credits continued overleaf
IMAGES:

RIXO collections
Courtesy of RIXO

MDMflow collections
Courtesy of MDMflow

La Fetiche S/S 2019
Photography by Sonia Sieff, modelled by Evangeline Ling, at Éric Lapierre Experience, Architectes, France

La Fetiche A/W 2019
Photography by Sonia Sieff, writers Pauline Klein, Loulou Robert, Oscar Coop-Phane, at Bruther Architectes Centre Culturel et Sportif Wangari Maathai, Mairie de Paris, France

La Fetiche S/S 2020
Photography by Sonia Sieff, modelled by Maeva Marshall, at Université Pierre et Marie Curie Paris, France

La Fetiche A/W 2020
Photography by Sonia Sieff, modelled by Suzie Bird, on Rue Sainte-Marthe, 75010, Paris, France
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For more amazing stories, events and the wider Mary Quant programme, check out vam.ac.uk/dundee/maryquant, pick up a Mary Quant Highlights programme or speak to one of the team.

OUR NEXT SHOW
Our next major exhibition will be Nightfever: Designing Club Culture.

Opening 27 March 2021, this ground-breaking exhibition is the first large-scale exploration of the relationship between club culture and design.

Edited by Jenny Lister
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