

SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE



HAIR BY SAM MCKNIGHT

Embankment Galleries, Somerset House

2 November 2016 – 12 March 2017

Tickets: £13, £10.50 concessions (including booking fee)

A major exhibition celebrating 40 years of fashion's most iconic hairstyles

- **Exploring the transformative role of hair in image-making**
- **Unveiling the little-known creative process behind the craft of hair styling**
- **Tracing the legacy of hair styling from the 1970s to today through the career of Sam McKnight**

This winter, Somerset House is proud to host a major exhibition celebrating the remarkable 40-year career of the master hairstylist Sam McKnight.

Featuring iconic fashion photographs, couture garments, wigs, hairpieces and film and audio installations, the exhibition will unveil the little-known creative process behind the craft of hair styling and explore McKnight's relationships with key, long-term collaborators.

Throughout his career, McKnight has worked with the most celebrated image-makers, collaborating with designers, photographers, stylists and make-up artists to create some of the most recognisable images of the past 40 years. He has worked with fashion legends like **Karl Lagerfeld** and **Dame Vivienne Westwood**, photographers such as **Nick Knight** and **Patrick Demarchelier**, and make-up artists including **Mary Greenwell** and **Val Garland**.

Hair and fashion react to and reflect the moods and events of our times, and this exhibition traces different styles created by McKnight from Hollywood glamour to androgynous, romantic to sexy, and fantasy to natural, cataloguing the transformative nature of hair within the image.

McKnight has created some of fashion's most recognisable styles such as **Princess Diana's** slicked back bob, **Tilda Swinton** channeling David Bowie and **Kate Moss'** trademark 'done/undone' look. He has created over 100 Vogue UK covers and over 190 Vogue covers internationally, and styled models, stars and musicians ranging from **Linda Evangelista** to **Cara Delevigne**, **Cate Blanchett** to **Uma Thurman**, and **Lady Gaga** to **Björk**.

The exhibition is curated by Shonagh Marshall and the exhibition design is by Michael Howells.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a book of the same name, published by Rizzoli and available for £35. Richly illustrated, *Hair by Sam McKnight* will also feature texts from Karl Lagerfeld, Amanda Harlech, Nick Knight, Camilla Morton, Anna-Marie Solowij and a commentary from Sam McKnight.

Nick Knight has said: "*Sam is really one of the true greats of hairdressing! He has total mastery over his craft and combines that with an enthusiasm and commitment to push the boundaries of fashion. The affection, admiration and devotion he has for the models he works with, makes his presence on my shoots so valuable. Nobody else can make those women feel as special as Sam does.*"

Kate Moss has said: "*I love working with Sam.... Not only do I know I am going to have fabulous hair.... It's usually our only time to catch up... We laugh all day long.*"

Exhibition Overview:

Hair by Sam McKnight will be grouped into thematic sections, exploring different elements within McKnight's creative process, including his collaborative relationships and his ability to transform his subject, whether a model, actress or pop personality.

Backstage

As a session stylist working exclusively within fashion, Sam McKnight is constantly immersed in the backstage world of catwalks and photoshoots. The first stage of the exhibition transports visitors backstage at a major catwalk show

through the use of seven, specially-commissioned films shot at this September's Spring/Summer 2017 fashion shows, including Fendi and Dries Van Noten. Set in a vanity table where the mirror would ordinarily be, the films show McKnight's hands at work creating unique looks for each catwalk, with audio recordings recreating the hubbub of backstage life.

It is in these intimate moments that Sam builds incredible relationships with the world's most famous women. As a stylist, Sam uses his hands to put the finishing touches to a model's hair, creating a particularly strong personal bond. Throughout the exhibition, there will be informal photographs of these recognisable faces, from polaroids to selfies, holiday snaps to Instagram posts.

Vivienne Westwood & Chanel

Throughout his career, Sam has worked with a number of respected fashion houses, with two of his key collaborators being Dame Vivienne Westwood and Karl Lagerfeld. Both double-heightened spaces within the exhibition are home to nine Bonaveri mannequins apiece, each dressed in couture and ready-to-wear looks and topped with specially recreated wigs by Sam McKnight. These sections highlight how a hairstyle rounds out an ensemble, and how McKnight has contributed to the visual identity of some of Westwood and Chanel's most famous looks. In the Westwood section, there will also be a series of three process wigs, which track the creative process of styling and producing the rick-rack technique often used by McKnight at Westwood catwalk shows.

Transformation

Over the years, hair's role within image-making has been largely overlooked. It is a key factor in creating and reshaping a personal identity and Sam's work with four famous fashion chameleons – Karlie Kloss, Kate Moss, Tilda Swinton and Stella Tennant – is explored in a section dedicated to hair's transformative potential in which large-scale photographs of four iconic looks created for each of these models will be displayed.

Collaboration

An important part of Sam McKnight's creative process is collaboration. He works closely with designers, photographers, stylists, and make-up artists to create iconic images that will stand the test of time. At the heart of exhibition, 10 of Sam's closest collaborators are identified by a single image personally selected by McKnight that he feels captures the way he works with them. The contributors for this section include the photographers, Patrick Demarchelier, Nick Knight, Craig McDean, and Tim Walker; the make-up artists, Mary Greenwell and Val Garland; and the stylists, Edward Enninful, Kate Phelan, Lucinda Chambers and Carine Roitfeld.

Exhibition Programme:

For the first time, Somerset House will be opening late on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings until 8pm with a 'LATES' programme in partnership with THE OUTNET.com. This will include a special programme of events entitled 'Fashionably Lates' taking place on four Tuesdays throughout the exhibition run.

These Fashionably Lates take the form of an 'in-conversation' discussion; speakers will include model Jeny Howorth with fashion critic Tamsin Blanchard (6 December), Sam McKnight with co-founder of BeautyMART Anna-Marie Solowij (20 December), renowned make-up artist Mary Greenwell with beauty columnist Sali Hughes (10 January) and curator Shonagh Marshall with Elle UK magazine's Culture Director, Lena de Casparis (7 February).

Alongside this, visitors can expect a full programme of tours, talks, screenings, workshops and demonstrations. A real highlight will be the symposium entitled 'The personal, fashionable and archival spaces of Hair' from the Fashion Research Network. Chaired by Dr Sarah Cheang from the Royal College of Art on 25 November, the symposium will include talks and presentations.

Ends

For press enquiries, please contact:

Francesca Hughes, Senior Press Officer on Francesca.hughes@somerset.org.uk / 0207 845 4624

To view the trailer for the exhibition: <https://youtu.be/IIOQO-TwTvE>

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Dates: 2 November 2016 – 12 March 2017

Open: Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sundays 10am-6pm, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 11am - 8pm* check website for occasional early closures

Tickets: £13, £10.50 concessions (including 50p booking fee)

Address: Embankment Galleries, Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA

Transport: Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail: Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Website: www.somerset.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook: www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouseLondon

Exhibition hashtag: #HairBySamMcKnight

About Somerset House

A unique part of the London cultural scene, Somerset House is an historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming to all and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries. Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with an extensive learning programme attached. It is one of the biggest community of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses. It currently attracts approximately 3.2 million visitors every year. www.somersethouse.org.uk

About THE OUTNET

Launched in 2009 by the people behind NET-A-PORTER.COM, THE OUTNET has established itself as the go-to destination for the global, style-conscious shopper looking for the best designer products at great prices. THE OUTNET stocks an unparalleled selection of previous-season designer fashion from over 350+ brands, as well as exclusive collaborations with high-profile designer labels and its in-house label, Iris & Ink. With express worldwide shipping to 170 countries (including same-day delivery in London, Manhattan and Connecticut), a seamless shopping experience across mobile, tablet and desktop and a Customer Care team fluent in 16 languages, available 24/7, 365 days a year, THE OUTNET is the most fashionable fashion outlet. www.theoutnet.com

About Bonaveri

Established in 1950, Bonaveri is the world leading manufacturer of high quality mannequins. The ability to combine manufacturing excellence with visionary research on forms and shapes has allowed Bonaveri to participate in and influence the birth, definition and growth of the fashion industry in Italy and around the world. The support of young talents, as well as the cooperation with fashion schools is part of the Bonaveri DNA, which has developed specific programs to spread the culture of good shapes and together with helping new designers to emerge onto the market. www.bonaveri.com