This exhibition showcases a selection of make-up looks created for Alexander McQueen’s catwalk presentations. Alexander McQueen entrusted his vision into the hands of the make-up artists he collaborated with regularly: Sharon Darnett, Val Garland, Peter Phillips, Charlotte Tilbury and Topolino. He carefully guided them to expertly fulfil what he had imagined from the start. His long-term collaborator Val Garland says: “It all came from him, his point of view. There was no right or wrong, just his vision.”
Alexander McQueen wanted to give the impression of fragility through the skeletal greasepaint. The models’ faces were heavily dusted with powder, giving an eerie,30 drabbling appearance. Not apparent here is that powder was applied for as long as the head and down to the shirt to enable brushstrokes, then strokes applied to reveal natural flesh/feathers.

This collection exaggerated the Edwardian bourgeoisie, taking inspiration from the costume of Countess Casati, an eccentric turn-of-the-century Italian heiress. McQueen was also referencing the Stanley Kubrick film Eyes Wide Shut. Also referenced was American designer Jean Paul Gaultier, whose lingerie he built to be perceived as not just a frilly meld of all McQueen’s iconic shows, largely because of the powerful claims created by the make-up looks. She used strong black pencil to frame the eyes and lashes, then the look continued past the lips with black mascara, which complemented the patterns and jewellery. He also used black shading that seemed to wrap them. A hollow gap was also created to the models’ faces to pick up the shine.

The make-up looked more real than any other McQueen show before or since. The models were not powdered down but were sprayed with water. Their faces were covered in different, bright, reactive type particles and pastel wadders, which formed into the features. The models appeared almost novel as they progressed, achieving putting flesh on their face to pick up the plane.

The looks displayed are grouped under three themes: McQueen melded in the show Amplified, where facial features were accentuated and exaggerated to create a fire backstage in the hair and make-up room. Black mascara was sprayed onto the models’ eyes by the make-up artists and prosthetics, lips were toned down in natural beige and their eyebrows blocked out. The colour scheme was natural, and eyebrows were still strongly defined.

The making was to a size-life size dolls were produced by German artist Hans Bellmer in the ‘30s. It featured realistic-looking jewellery by Shaun Leane, McQueen’s close collaborator. The show was inspired by the life-size dolls produced by German artist Hans Bellmer in the late 30s. It featured realistic-looking jewellery by Shaun Leane, McQueen’s close collaborator.