




Mad About The Boy

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Mad About The Boy explores fashion's obsession with the young male, focusing on the way ideas of the teenage boy are constructed through specific collections and images. It presents the work of a variety of designers and photographers – current as well as select examples from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s – who have shaped fashion's ideal of the young male or for whom the boy provides a constant source of inspiration.

Fashion has long been preoccupied with youth – from its preferred lithe body shape to the consistent and unwavering references to subcultures and street movements. Although the teenage years are both a time of transformation and open to reinterpretation themselves, generation by generation, year by year, fashion's relationship with youth is cyclical and repetitive – the same tropes and signatures appear regularly: school, fandom, gangs, firsts. Established creative practitioners, reflecting on their own youth, often draw on the same ideals as new graduates for whom a youthful existence is a reality. It is these recurrent themes that are explored here.

While this exhibition approaches ideals of the young male through eight distinct sections – hangouts, rebellion, gender fluidity, sexual exploration, street culture, education, revelry, and the line between boy and man – there are common threads that run through all depictions of the boy. The fluidity and possibility of the teenage years seem to unite fashion's preoccupations, sparked, perhaps, by a strange belief in the precious genius of youth – a time of infinite opportunity and spontaneous, innate coolness, mixed with liberating naivety. Designers, young and old, return to these notions, constructing, rehashing and shaping the dream male, season in, season out.

Audio installation

Mad About The Boy is accompanied by an audio installation that includes testimony on youth and masculinity from select designers, commentators and image-makers.

Soundtrack by Younji Ku including Michel Gaubert's Raf Simons Spring/Summer 2016 show music, courtesy of Michel Gaubert and Raf Simons.

Featured Designers, Image-makers and Commentators include:

David Sims, interviewed for SHOWstudio's *In Fashion* series, March 2015, courtesy of SHOWstudio.

Charlie Porter, interviewed by Lou Stoppard, December 2015.

Nasir Mazhar, interviewed for SHOWstudio's *In Fashion* series, September 2014, courtesy of SHOWstudio.

Nick Knight, interviewed by Lou Stoppard, November 2015.

Alex Bilmes, interviewed for SHOWstudio's *In Fashion* series, March 2014, courtesy of SHOWstudio.

Benjamin Kirchhoff, interviewed by Lou Stoppard, November 2015.

Glen Luchford, interviewed for SHOWstudio's *In Fashion* series, April 2015, courtesy of SHOWstudio.

Gosha Rubchinskiy, interviewed for SHOWstudio's *In Fashion* series, October 2015, courtesy of SHOWstudio.

Peter Saville, interviewed for SHOWstudio's *In Fashion* series, May 2015, courtesy of SHOWstudio.

Dylan Jones, interviewed for SHOWstudio's *In Fashion* series, May 2013, courtesy of SHOWstudio.

Editorial installations

Mad About The Boy includes editorial installations by Tony Hornecker, highlighting the plethora of fashion images depicting the male teenager. These include tear sheets from titles such as *Man About Town*, *AnOther Man*, *i-D*, *Dazed & Confused* and *Arena Homme+*, featuring the work of photographers and stylists such as David Sims, Alasdair McLellan, Jamie Hawkesworth, Benjamin Alexander Huseby, Alister Mackie, Benjamin Bruno and Max Pearmain.

This exhibition has been curated by Lou Stoppard
Commissioned by Ligaya Salazar, Director
Assistant Curator: Polona Dolzan
Project Assistant: Kat Thiel

Set Design: Tony Hornecker
Graphic Design: Lauren Chalmers

Special thanks to all of the designers and photographers who have generously lent their work for display and contributed to the events programme.

Thanks also to Nick Knight and all at SHOWstudio for their support, and to Charlie Porter, Rob Nowill and Adam Murray for the great advice.

For a full schedule of accompanying events please visit: www.fashionspacegallery.com.

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In His Space

A mix of sombreness and joy ran through the Spring/Summer 2013 presentation of now-defunct London label Meadham Kirchhoff, a part of which is restaged here by Tony Hornecker, the original set designer. The show, titled *(Br)Other By Proxy*, drew heavily on Benjamin Kirchhoff's own upbringing and interest in the moment one realises youth is over. Toying with themes of nostalgia, Kirchhoff sought to create a display that suggested teenage environments and squats, through pizza-box props and discarded duvets, without fetishising youth.

Earlier, in 1995, photographer Adrienne Salinger accessed the teenage bedroom for *In My Room*, a picture book of 43 teen environments. For Spring/Summer 2015 designer Christopher Shannon used the work as a reference. Rather than a place of mundanity, routine and frustration, the teenage bedroom was interpreted in this context as a cultural centre – a sacred space, a hub of dreams, passions and freedom of expression. The impertinence of the scrawled graffiti, the commitment behind the carefully arranged walls and the sense of pride visible in the subjects appealed to Shannon, who frequently toys with everyday elements – clipper lighters, plastic bags, cigarette packets – to create collections that are both political and dryly witty. Shannon drew on similar themes with the invitation for his Autumn/Winter 2015 show, which featured a shot of three male youths reclining in a domestic room, the jubilation of the cluttered posters behind them a firm contrast to the dreariness of the net curtains and littered beer cans.

It is not only the teenager's room that has captured the imagination of image-makers and designers. Numerous humble hangouts, from the supermarket to the playing field, can be spotted as backdrops to fashion images. Recently, rising image-maker Jamie Hawkesworth used the unassuming setting of Preston Bus Station to make portraits that distanced him from typical polished imagery and won him a reputation for bringing a sense of quiet beauty and unassuming stillness to fashion photography.

(Br)Other By Proxy, Meadham Kirchhoff,
Spring/Summer 2013, presentation restaged
by Tony Hornecker. Garments courtesy of
Philip Ellis, Charlie Porter and Dan Thawley.

Jamie Hawkesworth/Adam Murray/Robert
Parkinson/Aidan Turner Bishop/Preston is My
Paris, *Preston Bus Station*, 2010.
Courtesy of Adam Murray.

Christopher Shannon, Spring/Summer 2014,
show invite. Courtesy of Charlie Porter.

Sharna Osborne, (Br)Other By Proxy,
Meadham Kirchhoff Menswear, Spring/
Summer 2013. Courtesy of Sharna Osborne.



As Outsider

Writing in *The Boy*, a 2003 work that explores depictions of the young male in art history, Germaine Greer states, “Boys are volatile, unpredictable and vulnerable. A male teenager is more likely to attempt suicide than not, more likely than anyone else to write off a motor vehicle, almost certain to experiment with drug experiences of one kind or another, and at great risk of committing and/or suffering an act of violence ... His vulnerability is made more acute by his own recklessness and spontaneity.”

Fashion is enamoured with the bad boy Greer describes. Designers constantly reference anti-heroes, such as those depicted in Larry Clark’s film *Kids* and Nick Knight’s photographic series *Skinhead*, on display here, creating their own rebels through collections inspired by subcultures. For his Spring/Summer 2015 collection for Undercover, Japanese designer Jun Takahashi – a punk obsessive who collected and chronicled clothing from Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood’s *Seditionaries* range – looked to New York punk band Television for inspiration. One garment, a hooded jacket, the staple item of the 21st-century rebel, came embellished with a lyric from the band’s 1977 track *Marquee Moon*: “I remember how the darkness double[d].” The song seems to touch on youthful pain and the sense of being misunderstood, angry and confused, yet somehow close to understanding the world. Elsewhere the lyrics read, “I spoke to a man / Down at the tracks / I asked him how he don’t go mad / He said ‘Look here junior, don’t you be so happy / And for heaven’s sake, don’t you be so sad.’”

The issue of vulnerability is central; while the boy is in the wrong, he is forgiven and ironically applauded for his transgressive behaviour. He is beautiful because he is bad, not despite it. Underpinning fashion’s relationship with the male outsider is the cliché that “boys will be boys”, and that violence, insolence and rebellion are essential facets of masculinity, and therefore somehow desirable, attractive and even aspirational.

Larry Clark, *Kids*, 1995. Courtesy of Shining
Excalibur Pictures. All Rights Reserved.

Nick Knight, *Skinhead*, 1982.
Courtesy of Nick Knight.

Undercover, Spring/Summer 2015.
Courtesy of Undercover.

Undercover, Autumn/Winter 2015.
Courtesy of Undercover.

Carine Roitfeld, *CR Men's Book*, Issue 1, Fall/
Winter 2015. Courtesy of London College of
Fashion Library, University of the Arts London.



Between Genders

While typically times of transition and change are emotionally and physically distressing for the real-life teenager, the fashion industry has come to fetishise those who exist between states, and defy definitions and expectations. Numerous designers, including J. W. Anderson, have been celebrated for creating collections that explore distinct themes of gender fluidity, androgyny and genderless dressing.

Though it was perhaps Hedi Slimane who first redefined the fashionable male silhouette by recruiting extremely slim boys to model his skinny tailoring at Dior Homme from 2000 to 2007, recent seasons have offered more overt examples of androgyny: frills, fluff, jewels and sensual details usually restricted to womenswear now litter menswear catwalk shows. In editorials, such as the one by Brett Lloyd shown here, we see the androgynous quality of the boy's youthful beauty heightened by feminine styling that deliberately suggests prettiness.

Much acclaim has surrounded Alessandro Michele, who was appointed creative director of Gucci in January 2015, for his work in bringing genderless fashion into the mainstream luxury arena. In campaigns shot by Glen Luchford, the male depicted appears fragile and at points even childlike, such as in the image shown here in which his brogues are fastened by a female model. For journalist and critic Tim Blanks, it is not just Michele's liberating attitude to sex and gender that is interesting, but his approach to age as well. "Everybody talks about the gender-less nature of his clothes, but my more immediate response is that they are generation-less. It's so subversive to relate – as he has – the freedom of youth to the liberation that comes with old age, and then to put them together. People say it's a boy wearing a girl's clothes, but imagine if it's actually a boy wearing a granny's clothes, and a granny wearing a boy's clothes."

Indeed, the sense of "freedom" that surrounds youth – the boy's ability to transform, mould, and adapt his identity, social group and sex – is seductive to an industry that prides itself on change.

J. W. Anderson, Autumn/Winter 2013.
Courtesy of J. W. Anderson.

Francesco Bonami/Raf Simons/Maria Luisa Frisa, *The Fourth Sex – Adolescent Extremes*, 2015. Courtesy of London College of Fashion Library, University of the Arts London.

Brett Lloyd, *Novembre Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2013. Courtesy of Brett Lloyd.

Glen Luchford, *Gucci*, Autumn/Winter 2015.
Courtesy of Glen Luchford.

Glen Luchford, *Gucci Cruise*, 2016.
Courtesy of Glen Luchford.



As Sexual Object

While the sexualisation of young females and girls in fashion contexts is now widely criticised, even if it is ever present, the overt sexualisation of the male youth is not scrutinised to the same levels. Often the boy becomes an object of fantasy within editorials, playing out numerous roles, from the boy next door or cheeky Jack the lad to the awkward, shy, inexperienced teen. Sexual fancies are sometimes seemingly reconstructed, as the boy becomes handsome, sexually charged, inquisitive and testosterone-filled before the lens. Often these images appear in documentary photography – albeit mostly captured with a tender treatment of the subject – such as in the work of American image-maker Joseph Szabo, who spent decades capturing the habits and hangouts of his teenage students at Malverne High School, or more recently in designer Gosha Rubchinskiy's photographic publication *Youth Hotel*, which features semi-naked Russian youths reclining and socialising around Moscow.

Similar imagery appears in fashion titles, most unashamedly in the likes of *Fanzine137* and *EY! Magateen* by Spanish photographer Luis Venegas, who makes no secret of using fashion image-making as a tool to celebrate the objects of his attraction, frequently boys in their late teens. Photographers Brett Lloyd and Alasdair McLellan have also explored the boy as attractive and sexual being within a fashion context, making pictures that comment both on menswear movements and also on their personal ideals of male beauty. In mainstream titles, “firsts” seem to be particularly intriguing to image-makers – portrayals of nervous kisses, stolen moments and urgent embraces turn the reader from fashion consumer into voyeur.

Brett Lloyd, *Measuring Up*, 2012.
Courtesy of Brett Lloyd.

Brett Lloyd, *Dario And Laurence, Dust Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2012.
Courtesy of Brett Lloyd.

Brett Lloyd, *CockSucker MJ, Paris Fashion Week*, Spring/Summer 2012.
Courtesy of Brett Lloyd.

Alasdair McLellan, *The Perfect Kiss (12-inch Version)*, 2012. Courtesy of Alasdair McLellan.

Joseph Szabo, *Almost Grown*, 1978.
Courtesy of Central Saint Martins Library,
University of the Arts London.

Minoru Shimizu and Wolfgang Tillmans,
Truth Study Centre, 2005. Courtesy of
Fashion Space Gallery.

Gosha Rubchinskiy, *Youth Hotel*, 2015.
Courtesy of IDEA.



In The Street

Fashion designers and image-makers have long mined counterculture movements for inspiration. In the work of numerous designers, including Raf Simons, Gosha Rubchinskiy and Nasir Mazhar, and image-makers such as stylist Simon Foxton and photographer Jason Evans, one sees an interest in the innate authenticity of the teenager's wardrobe, and numerous references to well-worn basic staples, uniform elements and sportswear.

The rise of street casting, championed by the likes of Evans in the mid-nineties, as well as the prevalence of "straight-up" photography in magazines such as *i-D*, have resulted in casual culture, streetwear or anti-fashion elements becoming fashionable. Just as the rules, styling and details of sportswear have become increasingly referenced by high-fashion designers, a "thrown-together" approach – a look often related to teenagers – has also come to be synonymous with style, and is accompanied by an inclination to eschew traditional luxury or overt emblems of high fashion.

Musician Skepta, who collaborates with Mazhar and modelled the Spring/Summer 2015 look on display here at Mazhar's show in London, championed a lack of desire for traditional luxury labels in favour of brands that actively promote street culture and style in his 2014 track *That's Not Me* (featuring JME), with the lyrics, "I used to wear Gucci / I put it all in the bin 'cause that's not me / ... / I used to wear LV / I put it all in the bin 'cause that's not me."

Indeed, the desire to shun what is perceived as fashion has penetrated the industry, with Rubchinskiy, one of the most discussed menswear designers of recent years and the recipient of financial support from Comme des Garçons, stating in a 2015 interview with SHOWstudio, "I don't think I'm a fashion designer ... I'm interested in youth, not fashion."

Nasir Mazhar, Spring/Summer 2015.
Courtesy of Nasir Mazhar.

Kim Jones, Spring/Summer 2007.
Courtesy of Kim Jones.

Gosha Rubchinskiy, Spring/Summer 2015.
Courtesy of Gosha Rubchinskiy.

Gosha Rubchinskiy, Spring/Summer 2015.
Courtesy of Gosha Rubchinskiy and Fashion Space Gallery.

Gosha Rubchinskiy, Autumn/Winter 2015.
Courtesy of Gosha Rubchinskiy.

Jason Evans, *Untitled*, C-type, 1991–1996.
Courtesy of Jason Evans.



In Education

The schoolyard and classroom offer countless themes to the fashion photographer or designer: bonding, group identity, routine, and rules and regulations. On an aesthetic level, uniform is one of contemporary menswear's greatest references, but it is often the more emotive or sensitive aspects of school life that spark the imagination.

When Raf Simons sent coats scrawled with rushed graffiti and cluttered wording down his Autumn/Winter 2015 catwalk he reminded viewers of the sense of community enjoyed and, in turn, struggled with at school, referencing the “leavers’ shirts” covered in classmates’ signatures that numerous graduates hold on to even into adulthood. Simons’ was citing a Belgian-specific tradition from his childhood – a “celebration” of a youth’s first 100 days at college, when boys from the older years engage in “hazing” rituals to test the younger boys’ physical and mental limits. For Simons, this meant having his feet buried in buckets of plaster that set, forcing him to stand upright for an entire day before being handed a hammer to smash his way out. The coats were an ode to the long white garments worn by the persecutors, a nod perhaps to how we can even be nostalgic for the most painful aspects of youth – failure, embarrassment, unrequited love or unfulfilled potential.

School-inspired fashion conjures up a sense of rites of passage: memories of development, change and early significant achievements. These routines and traditions are captured in Ian Macdonald’s *Eton*, shot during his year as artist-in-residence at the Berkshire-based independent school, one of many studies that focus on the rites and rituals of traditional British education, and the significance of school dress and hierarchies. There are few pieces of clothing so closely tied to life progression and human growth than school uniform – a prefect’s badge can turn a boy to a man and a new blazer may ignite a fresh confidence in a way no future garment ever can.

Raf Simons, Autumn/Winter 2015.
Courtesy of Raf Simons.

Ian Macdonald, *Eton*, 2007.
Courtesy of London College of Fashion
Library, University of the Arts London.



In The Club

For Spring/Summer 2016, Raf Simons paid tribute to British artist Mark Leckey's film *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore*, referencing the uniform of Northern Soul revellers with crop tops, hand-me-down knits and wide flared trousers. Simons is one of many designers who have drawn on night-time pursuits and teenager revelry. From Gareth Pugh's odes to Leigh Bowery, to the frequent references to the now-infamous Manchester music scene and the Hacienda venue, club culture is one of the most pervasive inspirations in fashion.

The pastimes of the male youth dominated fashion imagery in the years around and after Leckey's original film, in work by the likes of photographer Jason Evans, who documented the style of UK clubbers in the nineties, often while street casting for other image-makers, and designers Martine Rose and Christopher Shannon, who treat the habits and hangouts of youth as something complex, beautiful and nuanced.

In fashion magazines, particular attention is paid to the figures and movements that youths deem interesting – from the bands they listen to, to the dance floors they frequent. Many creative practitioners obsessively revisit their own teen interests, conjuring for themselves a new kind of access to the clubs and parties they idolised. When reviewing Jun Takahashi's Spring/Summer 2015 Undercover collection, Tim Blanks noted, "the fanboy situation in fashion is endlessly mesmerizing. Marc, Raf, Hedi – all these grown men given huge resources to flex their adolescent fascinations." The preconception of culture with targeting and obsessing over the young is both explored and, ironically, upheld by fashion's commitment to keeping the party alive on the catwalk.

Mark Leckey, *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore*,
1999. Courtesy of Mark Leckey.

Raf Simons, Spring/Summer 2016.
Courtesy of Raf Simons.

Christopher Shannon, Spring/Summer 2016.
Courtesy of Christopher Shannon.

Judy Blame, *Embellished Pins For Christopher
Shannon*, Spring/Summer 2016.
Courtesy of Judy Blame.

Martine Rose, Spring/Summer 2015.
Courtesy of Martine Rose.

Jason Evans, *Untitled (at "Anokha" at
The Blue Note, London)*, C-type, 1996.
Courtesy of Jason Evans.

Jason Evans, *Untitled*, C-type, 1996.
Courtesy of Jason Evans.



Between Man And Child

For the March 1985 cover of the *The Face* stylist Ray Petri recruited a thirteen-year-old boy, Felix Howard, to model a hat emblazoned with the word “Killer”, a reference to Jamaican slang. Howard stares firmly into the camera; his rounded cheeks are obviously those of a child, but he has the swagger of a grown man. Later, members of the eighties Buffalo movement revealed he was chosen because he “had the face of an elder person”. Thus, the image toys with the line between man and boy.

While most see the end of boyhood being tied to physical changes, fashion designers and image-makers have played with the real meaning of growing up; they pin abstract concepts to boyhood – freedom, insolence, irreverence – and similarly intangible ideals to manhood – strength, poise, resilience. Depictions of the man as boy and boy as man can move beyond subversion into fetish. Childlike emblems, from fairytale details to cartoons, are placed on otherwise adult attire, which can sexualise the wearer. These are regular themes in the work of Walter Van Beirendonck. The image shown here of his Autumn/Winter 1986 *Bad Baby Boy* collection, by Patrick Robyn, shows this interest in contrasts – the serious persona of the adult model is undermined by the ribbons, pompoms and teddy bear. Similar bear motifs appeared in the Autumn/Winter 2015 collection of London knitwear label Sibling – whose collections tend to explore masculinity through groupings, gangs, factions and clubs – and the Spring/Summer 2013 collection of J. W. Anderson.

Fashion photography is full of examples of the confident, coquettish man-child. We see youth that is aware of the power of youth. When a fifteen-year-old Brooklyn Beckham appeared on the cover of *Man About Town* magazine's Spring/Summer 2014 issue, the strapline read “Drop The Boy”. Yet, while we are encouraged to view him as a newly mature handsome male, the images revel in childlike norms: he appears as if in a bedroom and plays with the classic teen prop, a PlayStation. He is attractive because of his inexperience – a man because of his boyishness.

Tyrone Lebon, *A Rush And A Push, Arena Homme+*, September 2014. Courtesy of Tyrone Lebon.

J. W. Anderson, Spring/Summer 2013.
Courtesy of J. W. Anderson.

Sibling, Autumn/Winter 2015.
Courtesy of Sibling.

Patrick Robyn, *Bad Baby Boy*, Walter Van Beirendonck, Autumn/Winter 1986.
Courtesy of Patrick Robyn.

Mitzi Lorenz and Jamie Morgan, *Buffalo: Ray Petri*, 2000. Courtesy of Ligaya Salazar.