

THE GUEST LIST

Jo Caird

London enjoys an envied reputation when it comes to arts and culture. But, as Jo Caird discovers, when art and fashion combine something rather special is created. On page 66, Caird celebrates the arrival of a major exhibition that delves into the archive of one of Italy's most iconic fashion houses. Zigzag knits might be synonymous with Missoni, but as Caird uncovers through her interviews with



Angela and Luca Missoni, the influences behind the graphic style so loved by Angela's parents, Ottavio and Rosita, are rooted in 20th-century European art.

Simon Calder

Simon Calder has been *The Independent's* senior travel editor since 1994 and has become one of the UK's most respected travel writers and commentators.



Regularly answering travel queries from readers via his column in the *Evening Standard*, Calder also makes appearances on TV and radio; all of which make him supremely qualified to pen our comment piece on page 14. With a passion for the city he lives and works in, Calder sums up his thoughts on London during summertime. You can also find his views on Twitter @simoncalder.

John Michael D'Sullivan

John-Michael O'Sullivan is a London-based architect and writer, with a special interest in fashion history. As features editor at British menswear bi-annual ARTICLE, and a contributor to The Observer and Esquire's Big Black Book, there are few people better placed to explore this season's fascination with underwear. Not only has the V&A opened an entire exhibition dedicated to fashion's most



intimate ensembles, but Selfridges too is celebrating this new mood with the launch of its largest ever department, The Body Studio. Turn to page 28 and see why lingerie is hot right now.

Beatrice Squires

With a passion for culture, food and travel, Beatrice Squires has more than eight years' experience as a contributor and editor under her belt. With summer dining firmly in her sights, Squires puts



seasonally sourced produce centre stage on page 62 by speaking to the chefs who are masters of creating exquiste dishes from nature's bounty. Elsewhere, Squires travels further afield to profile rental properties with the 'wow' factor (page 78) and indulges in an exceptional safari at the Kwandwe Private Game Reserve (page 84).

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IN LONDON is published by Morris Visitor Publications. Seven pounds where sold. ISSN 1742-0857. Second Floor, Samuel House, 6 St. Alban's Street, London, SW1Y 4SQ, UK. Tel: 020 7242 5222. Fax: 020 7242 4184.

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, ISO 14001 accredited.

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Morris Visitor Publications

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Hina Walia

COLOUR COLOUR

As Missoni opens its first major UK-based exhibition, Jo Caird explores the artistic roots of this bastion of Italian style

ondon means a lot to the Missonis. It was here, in 1948, that 16-year-old Rosita Jelmini met Ottavio Missoni, having watched him compete in the first Olympics after World War II. Five years later they married and launched what would become one of the world's most influential knitwear brands. The family is back this summer – sadly minus Ottavio, who died in 2013 – to celebrate the opening of Missoni's first major UK-based exhibition, MISSONI, ART, COLOUR at the Fashion and Textile Museum. And they couldn't be more delighted to be here.

"When my parents started," explains Angela Missoni, Rosita and Ottavio's only daughter and the brand's creative director since 1996, "the first country that reacted was England – and London especially. When Mrs B [Joan Burstein] opened Browns, one of the first labels she stocked was Missoni. The first assistants my mother had were from the Royal College of Art or Central Saint Martins in the mid-Seventies and we still have English people working for us."

MISSONI, ART, COLOUR isn't a retrospective in the conventional sense. Visitors to the exhibition will, of course, be rewarded with a dazzling array of Missoni outfits, plus swatches and Ottavio's hand-drawn patterns, but that's not all. Also on display are paintings and textile pieces from the brand alongside dozens of abstract works from MAGA, a museum of modern and contemporary art based in Missoni's hometown of Gallarate, outside Milan. The show positions Missoni within the wider context of contemporary art in Italy and Europe in the 20th century. According to Emma Zanella. director of MAGA and one of the curators of the show, while Ottavio's paintings show a clear dialogue with the contemporary art of the period - "their clean, pure lines slot neatly into abstraction", she says - his textiles speak much

MISSONI & ART

more to the world of fashion.

The zigzag is the motif that is most strongly associated with Missoni, but

it is the colours rather than the forms of 20th-century European abstract art that are so apparent in Ottavio and Rosita's work and in that of their children. The understated grey and white walls of the Fashion and Textile Museum pop with colour from the likes of artists Gino Severini and Nino Di Salvatore, influential figures at the time that the Missonis were first making their mark on the fashion world. Her father didn't identify as an artist per se, says Angela – that's a label that other people gave him – but the Missoni home was certainly a creative environment. "He had artist and art critic friends like he had sporty friends and theatre friends. It was an eclectic melting pot," she says.

Colour was also a leading factor in the choices Luca Missoni, creative director of the Missoni Archive, made about which garments to select for display in the exhibition. "The eye has some guidance, with lines of colour through the whole, like a painting or a collage," he explains. While Luca is perpetually inspired by the 16,000-piece archive in terms of creating shows such as this one and its larger incarnation at MAGA last winter, his younger sister looks to it for specific ideas when putting together the new Missoni collection each season. "My mind starts clicking and making links with what I know is in the archive," she says. "I have precise memories of details of the clothes from a very young age."

MISSONI & ARTISANSHIP

Her parents' legacy might have felt like a burden to Angela, but she's never looked at it this way. "I was lucky that I had broad shoulders because I never felt that weight, but I did feel the weight of modernising an old company. Being a designer is something light, but I also have to take care of the business side." But while the concerns of competing in the 21st-century fashion world loom large, Angela never loses sight of the little things, still checking every stitch, cuff and buttonhole herself. Luxury isn't a label that she's overly concerned with. Far more important, she says, is the "preciousness" inherent in Missoni's commitment to artisanship. And it's this that the designer hopes will be clear to visitors to the Fashion and Textile Museum this summer.

MISSONI, ART, COLOUR runs at the Fashion and Textile Museum until September 4.

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