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Fashion North: creating a sustainable fashion ecosystem in Northern England



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

LEEDS SCHOOL OF ARTS

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AIMS & OBJECTIVES

AIM

- To create a self-sustaining creative fashion ecosystem in the North of England as a contribution to cultural sustainability

OBJECTIVES

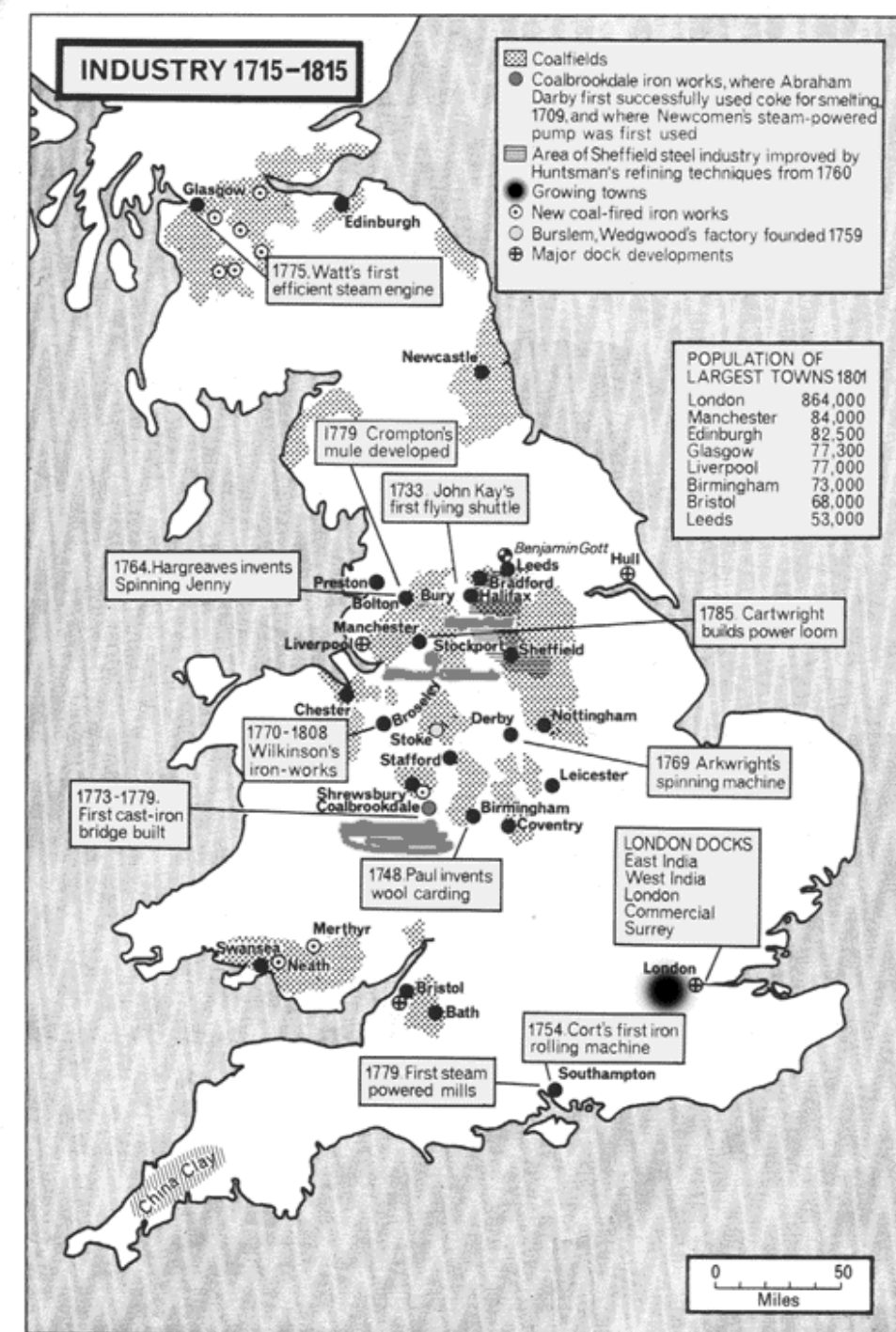
- To produce outputs for FABRICATE: Leeds Beckett's Fashion and Architecture research cluster
- To develop a Graduate Fashion North event to rival London's Graduate Fashion Week
- To facilitate collaboration and creative knowledge exchange between leading fashion schools in Northern England
- To prevent the 'creative drain' of talent to London
- To celebrate the unique fashion cultures of Northern England.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How can we build a sustainable fashion ecosystem in the North of England?
2. What is unique to Northern English fashion cultures?
3. How does Northern English fashion contribute to 'creative placemaking'?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Industrial Revolution (1760-1840)
- The culture and tradition of textile production are deeply rooted in Northern England.
 - Leeds = Wool / Flax;
 - Manchester = Cottonopolis;
 - Bradford = Textile trade;
 - Batley = Shoddy and Mungo;
 - Sheffield & Derby = industrial machinery
- Described in Marx and Engels *Capital* (1867) and Engels' (1845) *Conditions of the Working Class*
- Regional identity is constructed from the cultural memory of generations of textile labourers / working class fashion subcultures



SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

- 1970s: the offshoring of labour decimates UK production
- 1990s – Present: Fast Fashion (offshoring, cultural standardisation, centralisation and monopolies)
- 2010s: Reshoring in the 'dark factories' of Leicester
- London Centrism (David 2013) of the UK Fashion Industry
- Perception of fast fashion in the North / high fashion in London
- Precarity of fashion employment (Fashion Praxis Collective 2017)
- Fashion Industry = second most polluting after oil
- 2019 onwards: UK govt Levelling Up Agenda



Northern Culture APPG Levelling-up Inquiry: The Case for Culture (2021)

- NC APPG established in 2021 to provide a strong voice in Parliament for Northern Culture and heritage.
- The report also notes that the UK creative industries make a greater contribution to the UK economy than to any comparable nation, with an annual GVA of £115bn, providing 2.1m jobs, and growing at three times the rate of the economy overall since 2008.
- The NC APPG aims to promote the economic contribution of the North's cultural sector, generate debate on boosting skills and promoting diversity, level-up investment in Northern culture, and build back the North's cultural potential.
- The report emphasises that “levelling up” should be more than just an economic mission, and that culture plays a vital role in improving how people feel about the places where they live.
- The report suggests that the North has a ‘once in a generation’ opportunity to increase diversity, sustainability, accessibility, and resilience in its talent pipeline.



The Case for Culture

What Northern Culture Needs to Rebuild, Rebalance and Recover

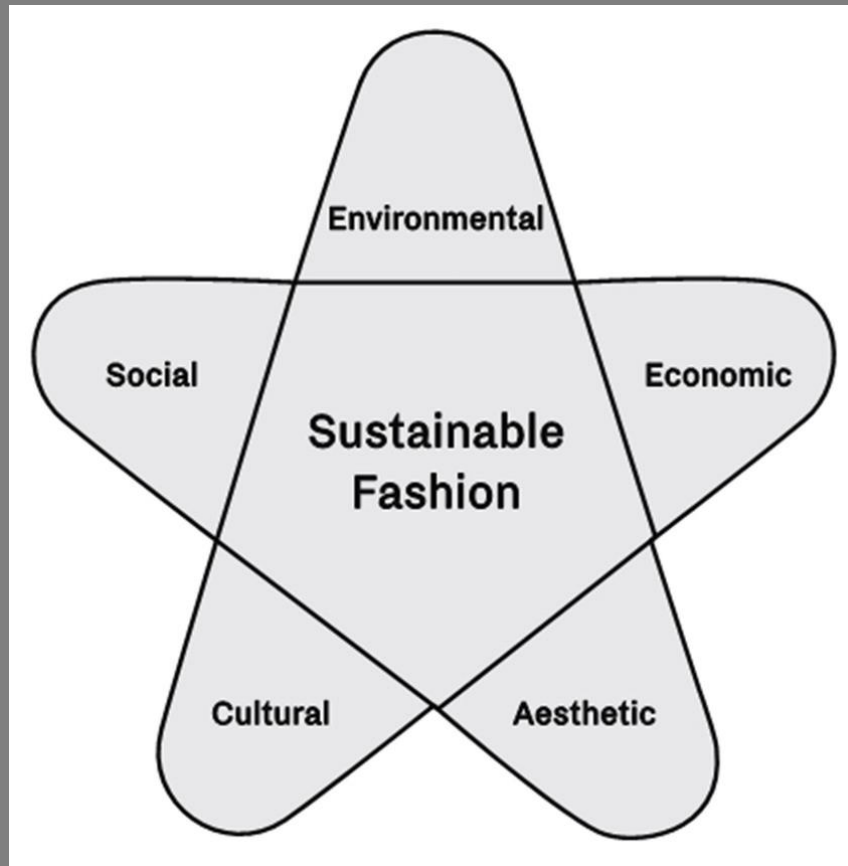
Levelling-up Inquiry

Report and Recommendations

January 2022

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Creative Placemaking (Warren and Jones 2016; Markusen and Gladwa 2010).
- Place Branding (Julier 2013).
- Slow Fashion / Circularity (Fashion Revolution 2019; Fletcher 2015, 2014; Minney 2016).



Kozłowski, A., Bardecki, M., & Searcy, C. (2019). Tools for sustainable fashion design: An analysis of their fitness for purpose. *Sustainability*, 11(13), 3581.

10 Principles of Slow Fashion

- 1. *Seeing the big picture:*
 - 2. *Slowing down consumption:*
 - 3. *Diversity:*
 - 4. *Respecting People:*
 - 5. *Acknowledging human needs:*
 - 6. *Building relationships:*
 - 7. *Resourcefulness:*
 - 8. *Maintaining quality and beauty:*
 - 9. *Profitability:*
 - 10. *Practicing Consciousness:*
- <https://www.notjustalabel.com/editorial/slow-fashion-movement> [

A woman is lying on her back on a large Union Jack rug. She is wearing a black, short-sleeved, form-fitting dress with a subtle pattern. Her arms are resting on her stomach, and her legs are slightly bent. The background is a wooden floor. In the top right corner, there is a semi-transparent white circle containing text.

THE BUILDING OF A SUSTAINABLE FASHION ECOSYSTEM

Catalyst: co-creative project: *the 50p LBD*

(*Dewsbury as nucleus for 'creative placemaking'*)

- Project Lead: Sam Hudson-Miles, from Dewsbury, still living and working in the region
- Photographer: Johnny Carr, from Dewsbury, still living and working in the region
- Model 1 : Natalie Liddle, founder of Eyewood Vintage, vintage, preloved, and dead-stock clothing and accessories, retro homewares, collectables, vinyls, books – based in Dewsbury, opposite the old Machell Bros. Shoddy & Mungo rag mill
- Model 2: Inaya, resident of Dewsbury and representative of the town's South-Asian community
- The 'Little Black Dress': purchased from a flea market in Dewsbury in 1996, for 50p





DEWSBURY IN YORKSHIRE RECOGNISED AS 'GREENEST TOWN' OF THE 1800s





D-2245



Women sorting rags in Dewsbury during WW1







The Ripple Effect:

Contributions to Creative Placemaking

- The Arcade Project, Dewsbury
- ASBO Magazine / ASBO Leeds
- Re:Pair Lab, Leeds
- Graduate Fashion: North



The Arcade
Dewsbury





Share
Launch

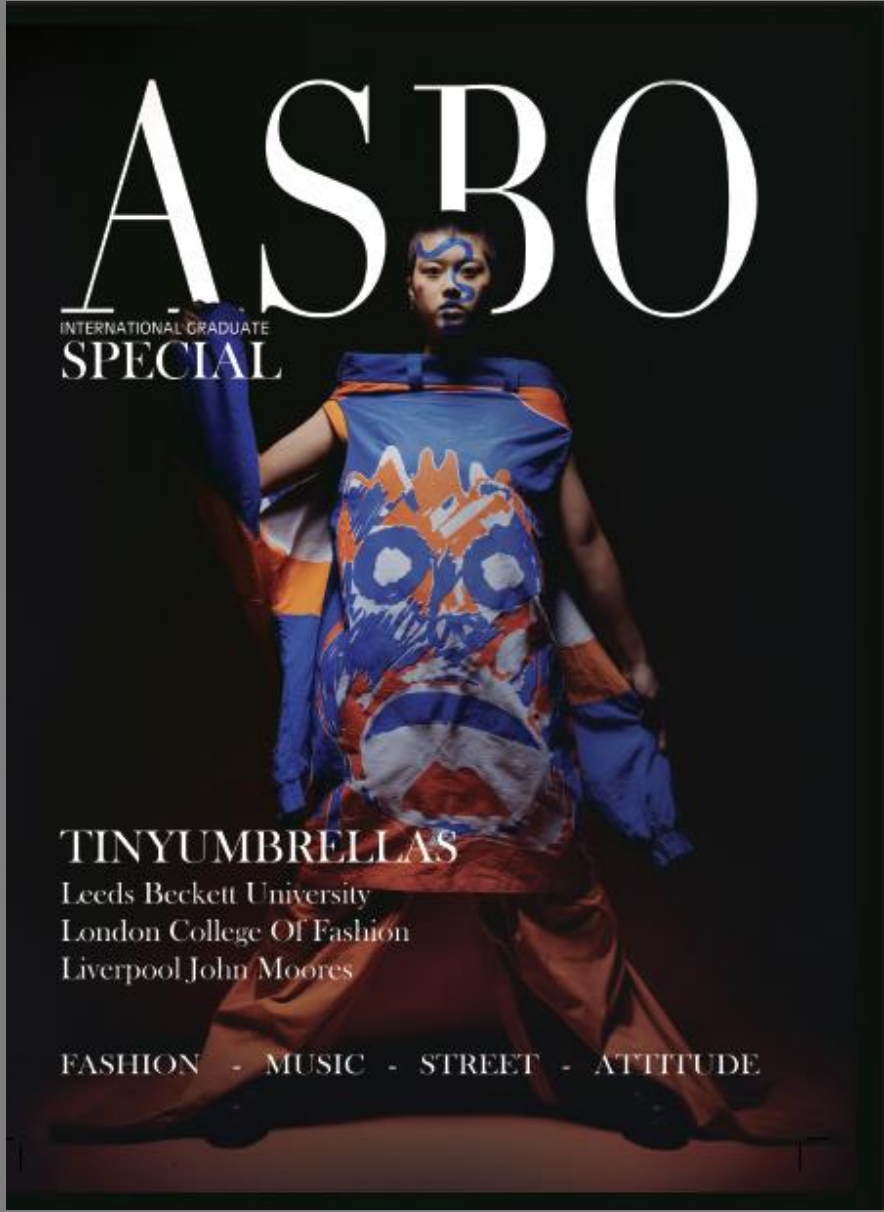
This Tharday, 12th Oct,
Dewsbury Town Hall,
6pm

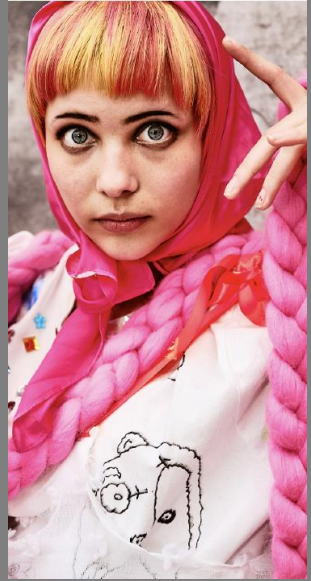


Join the
launch of
our
community
share offer

THURS OCTOBER 12TH 6PM
DEWSBURY TOWN HALL

FOOD AT START





WORDS: **SAM HUDSON-MILES**
 IMAGES: **COURTESY OF NATHAN JONES**

muted or hampered due to not having the cultural grounding of their middle-class peers, who are often raised with an innate sense of self-assurance due to having been immersed in, and influenced by, culture from a young age. There is an emptiness of confidence, a void which, with the right cultural influence and investment, can be changed and transformed to bring working-class youth up to the standard of their middle-class peers, but it is always a game of catch-up. At Sheffield Hallam, Nathan and his team encourage students to reflect on the emotions of their past, on their ethics, and their value systems. This gives the student agency of their environment, thus strengthening the urge and drive to shape their world view, the spirit to embrace the new, and to become self-assured protagonists in their chosen sphere.

All of these images of Nathan's 'Class of 2023' represent the work of those of his students from working-class backgrounds, predominantly from Yorkshire and the surrounding regions.

'Even when working-class young people show ambition in the arts and the confidence to present themselves in a formal educational setting, this assertiveness can be muted or hampered due to not having the cultural grounding of their middle-class peers'

JOHN MOORES

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

ANDREW IBI

Programme Leader, BA Fashion: Design & Communication
 Liverpool John Moores University

Fashion's changing, there's no doubt about that. The industry we once knew is almost unrecognisable from the remake or the reissue.

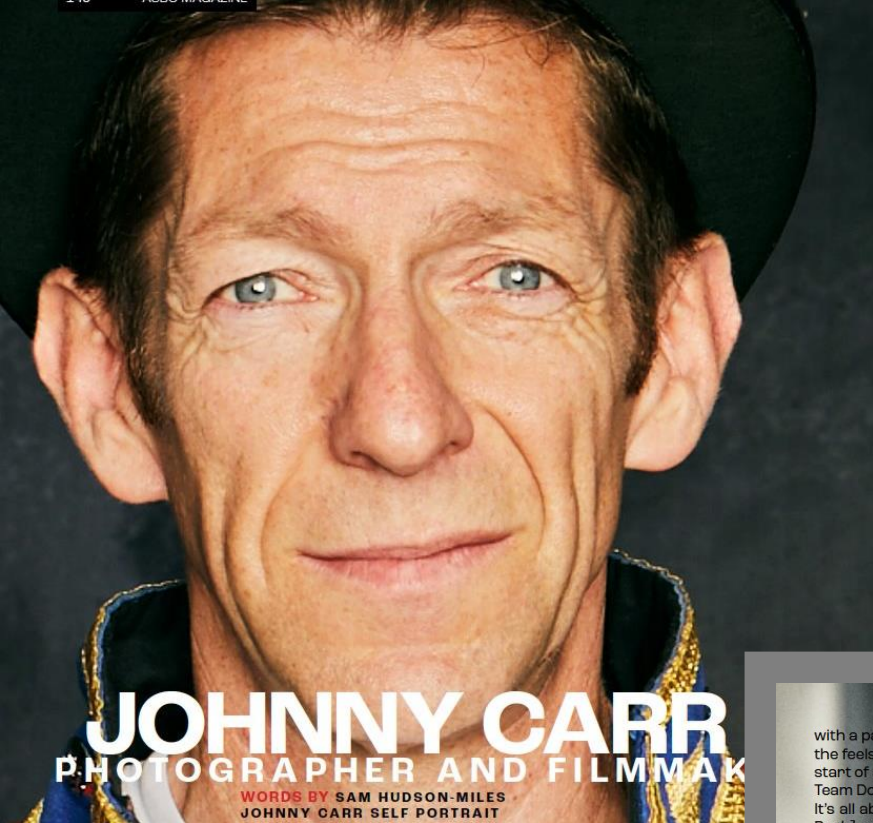
Fashion is just like any other industry, updated for a new generation of participants and observers. Records are covered and remixed, movies are digitally remastered, remade and culturally updated - and fashion is being overhauled by a generation accessing their style needs through new mediums and media platforms.

To be fair, Fashion is simply continuing its journey with the central promise of personal fulfilment at the heart of its endeavours. Fashion has always been popular - but it has never been so accessible to the masses.

Fashion's cultural shift and rejection of its old status is a good thing, it now benefits from being less elitist, more democratic and has a broader audience and a variety of different contributors, from a multitude of different cultural communities.

Fashion finally, has the opportunity to do something good - something positive.

However, as the game changes, institutions and their fashion programmes find themselves caught up in the winds of change. Do we offer a traditional and art-based education with experimental pattern cutting at the heart of practice? Or do we push the 3D avatar and game-changing design software? Is it Tik-Tok or an editorial that looks like it belongs in the 90s? Our educators - are they outdated? Unable to operate software, understand the nuance of social media and defaulting to draping and fashion illustration. Still telling stories about fashion from an old, western perspective - the version that we learned at University - like an old religious document, handed down by a respected member of the high fashion order.



JOHNNY CARR

PHOTOGRAPHER AND FILMMAKER

WORDS BY SAM HUDSON-MILES
JOHNNY CARR SELF PORTRAIT

Johnny Carr (superstar) - Naomi Campbell coined this nickname when they met at Galliano's first show for Dior in Paris, 1997, which he just happened to have been invited to...

Johnny told me this story when he and I first met in the late '90s, during a time when he had temporarily returned from his adventures to Dewsbury, as had I, following almost a decade in London. The phrase has stuck with me ever since, probably to Johnny's annoyance.

Johnny was born and bred in West Yorkshire; born in Bradford, grew up in Dewsbury, schooled in Wakefield. But he's been about, including spending some time in Australia where he met his wife. He's been a photographer and filmmaker for over thirty years; some of his most notable work includes scripting and directing for Joanna Lumley, Michael McIntyre, and King Charles II. Johnny is also the UK cinematographer of choice for award-winning US production company Big Picture Ranch.

introverted character of 'The Life of an Extra'. DT: "Sometimes when I write I like to picture the scene and then start writing. [For this song] I was like, I'm in Paris, and it's so romantic, but I'm there on my own". This bittersweet quality is what makes Tiny Umbrellas music so poignant.

As well as somewhere to dream, the bedroom is also a place of transformation and dressing up. For our photo shoot, DT was transformed into their fantastical alter-ego by Fashion students from Leeds Beckett University. The blue-lit ensemble was designed by Francesca Fell and includes a body suit made from regenerative nylon. The black and white images are also styled using the regenerative body suit by Francesca Fell, covered with a coat by Ed Thonnley. This coat was designed during a 2nd year collaborative project with Alexander McQueen and used deadstock fabrics donated by the brand. DT particularly enjoyed wearing these sustainability-oriented outfits, which resonate with their interests in environmental science which they study at university. The paint covered, expressive, white ball gown was designed by Jade Crosby during a 2nd year project with internationally famous designer, Matty Bovan. Finally, the directional, colour-blocked looks were designed by graduate designer Ali Gohari, who was judged 'Most Creative' designer by Burberry at LBU's graduate fashion show. These radical looks are the antithesis of the understated boho chic which DT sported at Glastonbury. At the same time, they embody the frivolity, fun, and fanciful whimsy that resounds through Tiny Umbrellas' music.

Somewhere to Fall Asleep is out now on Sevenfoursevensix records.

WORDS: RICHARD HUDSON-MILES
GARRY JONES
FRANCESCA FELL
ASHA WILDING
MELISSA SMITH



EVERTON CAMPBELL

Man, founder of Hip and 2nd Academic

Everton since 1987, when I was Hip's 'OG Saturday Girl'. Most evenings, I would be greeted by Ev with a can of Mr Sheen to dust away fond memories of polishing the banisters on the narrow staircase... When I moved to London in 1988, Everton and Umberto sometimes visit me when they opened their store in Hyper Hyper on High Street. Upon my return to Yorkshire in the mid '90s, on the basis that I could get a babysitter, I'd go to the Fruit Cupboard where we've remained good friends over the four decades of knowing and, although we don't see one another very often these days, it's the familiarity of picking up where we left off with an old friend view.

unfamiliar, can you tell us about the vision for Hip? What are you unique? What was its identity?

ounded Hip in Thornton's Arcade, Leeds, in 1987, with a vision of new brands alongside vintage 1950's tailoring and American... What made Hip unique was two teenagers from Jamaican and... backgrounds in 1980's Britain, sticking their neck out on... which unintentionally connected mainstream and people on... of Leeds's society, into a community through alternative forms of... such as the brands and style that we sold, and the music we played

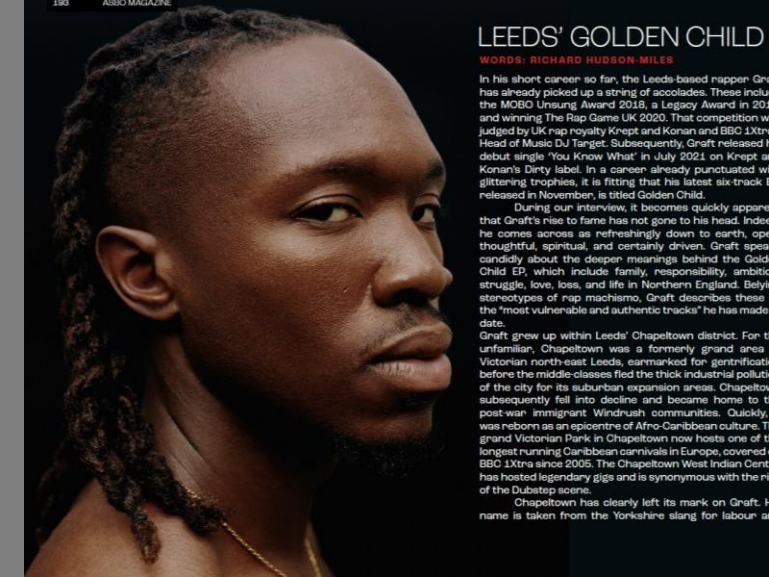


with a particular gaggle of pals, cracking up and having 'a time' gives me the feels. From here on in, I became a fanboy and Madlib completist, the start of a ridiculous phase digging for the tunes the maestro sampled. Team Doyobi: Demons to Diamonds (Skam) 2001.

It's all about the live recording [upstairs at The Library, Hyde Park] on the flip side of this 7" single. Little Plastic Bricks captures the energy & exuberance of 'Team' in full flow. A brilliant documentary artefact of an exciting & creatively unique time. Crunchy, funky and dissonant all at the same beautiful time. It still makes me laugh and smile. Created by the then prolific duo of Alexander Peverett and Christopher Gladwin, this recording demonstrates their unique and underrated take on abstract, 8-bit funk. Three years into our tentative, collective actions, V3ctor began to catalyse into a semi-coherent space. Team went onto tour with the mighty Autechre...

DRS ft. Tyler Daley & LSB: The View (Sou:R) 2015
This recording marks a time of personal reacquaintance, rejuvenation & reunion. Drum & Bass in the mode of a deep, emotional, singalong anthem. It also lays a marker for some new friends I made and a new look at what was happening musically in Manchester. It sums up the family community vibes of the late great Marcus Intalex club night SoulJution, and the musical threads still making a path how many years later? For me it's the sound of up-liftment and inspiration, geographical ties, and a certain attitude that's the North through and through. Footnotes & honourable mentions (from Ed's musical psychogeography) Unique 3: Jus' Unique (Ten) cassette 1990
Nightmares On Wax: A Word Of Science (Warp) cassette 1991 LFO: LFO (Warp) cassette 1991

Word by Richard Hudson-Miles
Image by Steven Taylor



LEEDS' GOLDEN CHILD

WORDS: RICHARD HUDSON-MILES

In his short career so far, the Leeds-based rapper Graft has already picked up a string of accolades. These include the MOBO Unsung Award 2018, a Legacy Award in 2019, and winning The Rap Game UK 2020. That competition was judged by UK rap royalty Knept and Konan and BBC 1's Top Head of Music DJ Tenga. Subsequently, Graft released his debut single 'You Know What' in July 2021 on Knept and Konan's Dirty label. In a career already punctuated with glittering trophies, it is fitting that his latest six-track EP, released in November, is titled Golden Child.

During our interview, it becomes quickly apparent that Graft's rise to fame has not gone to his head. Indeed, he comes across as refreshingly down to earth, open, thoughtful, spiritual, and certainly driven. Graft speaks candidly about the deeper meanings behind the Golden Child EP, which includes family, responsibility, ambition, struggle, love, loss, and life in Northern England. Belying stereotypes of rap machismo, Graft describes these the "most vulnerable and authentic tracks" he has made to date.

Graft grew up within Leeds' Chapeltown district. For the unfamiliar, Chapeltown was a formerly grand area Victorian north-east Leeds, earmarked for gentrification before the middle-classes fled the thick industrial pollution of the city for its suburban expansion areas. Chapeltown subsequently fell into decline and became home to a post-war immigrant Windrush communities. Quickly, it was reborn as an epicentre of Afro-Caribbean culture. The grand Victorian Park in Chapeltown now hosts one of the longest running Caribbean carnivals in Europe, covered 680 acres since 2005. The Chapeltown West Indian Centre has hosted legendary gigs and is synonymous with the rise of the Dubstep scene.

Chapeltown has clearly left its mark on Graft. His name is taken from the Yorkshire slang for labour at

***Re:Pair Lab** is an initiative by Wayne Hemingway MBE, co-founder of fashion brand, Red or Dead, and, more recently, HemingwayDesign.*

This is an innovative 3-month pop-up project aimed at promoting sustainability, creativity, and community engagement by pairing designer-makers with charity retailers to repair and remake second-hand items. The project involves rotating residencies of designer-makers and a curated selection of online Depop and Vinted sellers, who collaborate with charity retailers to upcycle and sell second hand, surplus, and donated clothing and accessories.

Re.PairLAB





The Ambition

GRADUATE FASHION: NORTH

- Symposium
- Multi-institutional event launch

CONTRIBUTIONS to the UNIQUENESS of NORTHERN FASHION CULTURES

- Cultural histories and its influence on fashion
- Class and fashion
- The North/South divide
- Northern fashion education
- The relationship of the North to global fashion capitals
- Fashion as the 'The Northern Powerhouse'
- The style-languages of local subcultures
- The changing nature of fashion and its relationship with local urban ecologies
- The culture of materials and research into new materials
- Stories of local consumers, usership, upcycling, and slow fashion
- The histories of fashion in the North, including textile manufacturing
- The histories of fashion consumerism in the North
- The relationship between fashion brands to the North
- Fashion films, photo-essays, photography, or oral histories

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