

*The Vulgar**Fashion Redefined*

Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK

13 October 2016 – 5 February 2017

Media View: Wednesday 12 October, 10am – 1pm

Supported by Agent Provocateur

#thevulgar

*"Vulgarity exposes the scandal of good taste" – Adam Phillips*

Potent, provocative and sometimes shocking, the word vulgar conjures up strong images, ideas and feelings in us all. *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined* is the first exhibition to consider this inherently challenging but utterly compelling territory of taste. It both questions notions of vulgarity in fashion while revelling in its excesses, inviting the visitor to think again about exactly what makes something vulgar and why it is such a sensitive and contested term. Drawn from major public and private collections worldwide, with contributions from leading modern and contemporary designers such as **Walter Van Beirendonck, Manolo Blahnik, Christian Dior, Iris van Herpen, Pam Hogg, Marc Jacobs for Louis Vuitton, Stephen Jones, Christian Lacroix, Karl Lagerfeld for Chloé and CHANEL, Alexander McQueen for Givenchy, Prada, Jeremy Scott for Moschino, Philip Treacy, Viktor & Rolf and Vivienne Westwood.** *The Vulgar* opens at Barbican Art Gallery on 13 October 2016.

Conceived by exhibition-maker **Judith Clark** and psychoanalyst **Adam Phillips**, the exhibition takes fascinating literary definitions of 'the vulgar' as a starting point and includes a wealth of over 120 stunning exhibits from the Renaissance through to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Weaving together historic dress, couture and ready-to-wear fashion, textile ornamentation, manuscripts, photography and film, this carefully crafted installation illustrates how taste is a mobile concept: what was once associated with vulgarity is reconjured by designers to become the height of fashion. Encompassing a 500 year timeframe, *The Vulgar* showcases historic works alongside a roll call of contemporary fashion. The exhibition demonstrates how fashion through the ages actively breaks with and revises taste to create new expressions of style, often celebrating, courting or exploiting so-called vulgarity and its possible pleasures.

**Jane Alison, Head of Visual Arts**, said *"I am so thrilled that we are staging The Vulgar at the Barbican. With such a bold and brilliant concept, Judith Clark and Adam Phillips have created a highly original, redefining and hugely enjoyable exhibition about fashion past and present. Playing with juxtapositions, different themes and vistas, they've set the stage for visitors to wonder, ponder, question, reflect or just revel in why some costumes are considered vulgar, how that changes through time, context and experience. The exhibition builds on previous Barbican exhibitions such as Jam: Style+Music+Media in 1996, The House of Viktor & Rolf in 2008, Future Beauty: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion in 2010 and more recently The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier: From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk in 2014."*

As a product of popularisation and commerce – seemingly always a poor imitation of a superior object – fashion itself is shown to be inherently vulgar; but more especially when it is perceived to be too popular, excessive, sexualised, kitsch or camp. Visitors are taken on a journey through these thought provoking categories. The exhibition looks at fashion's enduring fascination with vulgarity's excesses, featuring moments in dress history of extravagance, ostentation and exhibitionism; such as a pair of 18<sup>th</sup> century mantuas, with overskirts of nearly 2.5 metres in width, a selection of exquisite 18<sup>th</sup> century stomachers and a collection of intricately decorated fans from The Fan Museum in Greenwich. One of the exhibition's themes directly explores the relationship of fashion to the body; both through over exposure using lace and body stockings to simultaneously reveal and conceal the body in looks from Louis Vuitton and Pam Hogg; and the exaggerated body, where the body is explored and its erogenous zones are amplified in looks such as Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren's tiits top and Belgian avant-garde designer Walter van Beirendonck's elephant skirt outfit with Stephen Jones' oversized hat. Some installations are devoted to certain materials, accessories, fashion labels and embellishments that have come to embody, at different times, the supposedly vulgar; such as gold, velvet, pearls and spangles.

The history of exhibiting fashion, as opposed to fine art, is tainted with accusations of vulgarity – for example, the relationship between the gallery and the department store – something which the exhibition explores by revisiting historically significant displays that were received as outrageously vulgar when first shown. Based on new research into the origins and loaded interpretations of ‘the vulgar’, the exhibition runs together Clark’s installations of dress and Phillips’ commentary. Drawing on voices as disparate as **Jonathan Swift** and **Coco Chanel**, **Samuel Johnson** and **Diana Vreeland**, the exhibition exposes ‘the vulgar’, like its counterpoint ‘good taste’, to be ultimately all about perspective – something to fear and something to enjoy.

**Designers in the exhibition include:**

**Michael Barnaart van Bergen, Walter Van Beirendonck, Manolo Blahnik, Hussein Chalayan, Courrèges, Christian Dior, Erdem, John Galiano, John Galiano for Dior and Maison Margiela, Jean Paul Gaultier, Rudi Gernreich, Nicolas Ghesquière for Louis Vuitton, Madame Grès, Iris van Herpen, Pam Hogg, Marc Jacobs for Louis Vuitton, Charles James, Stephen Jones, Mary Katrantzou, Sophia Kokosalaki, Christian Lacroix, Karl Lagerfeld for Chloé and CHANEL, Lanvin, Andrew Logan, Maison Martin Margiela, Malcolm McLaren, Alexander McQueen for Givenchy, Alessandro Michele for Gucci, Miu Miu, Takashi Murakami, Paul Poiret, Prada, Agent Provocateur, Gareth Pugh, Zandra Rhodes, Russell Sage, Yves Saint Laurent, Schiaparelli, Jeremy Scott for Moschino, Raf Simons for Dior, Riccardo Tisci for Givenchy, Philip Treacy, UNDERCOVER (Jun Takahashi), Viktor & Rolf and Vivienne Westwood.**

## ENDS

### Notes to Editors

#### Press Information

For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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#### Full press pack available online from the Barbican Newsroom:

Links to all documents can be found in the ‘Downloads’ box on the top right-hand side of the page from [www.barbican.org.uk/TheVulgarNews](http://www.barbican.org.uk/TheVulgarNews)

#### Public Information

Barbican Art Gallery, London, 0845 120 7550, [www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery](http://www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery)

#TheVulgar @barbicancentre

Opening hours: Saturday to Wednesday, 10am – 6pm

Thursday & Fridays, 10am – 9pm

Bank Holiday Mondays: 12noon – 6pm, Bank Holiday Fridays: 12noon – 9pm

#### Ticket info:

**Standard:** £14.50 / **Concessions (OAP and unemployed):** £12 / **Students/14-17:** £10

**Young Barbican:** £5 (no booking fee) / **Art Fund Members:** £12 / **Membership Plus:** Unlimited free entry + guest / **Membership:** Unlimited free entry

#### Exhibition

*The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined*, 13 October 2016 – 5 February 2017 is curated by Judith Clark and Adam Phillips and organised by Barbican Art Gallery.

The exhibition is made possible through support from Agent Provocateur.

It travels to the Winterpalais in Vienna from 3 March to 25 June 2017.

For more information please contact [press@belvedere.at](mailto:press@belvedere.at) or visit [www.belvedere.at](http://www.belvedere.at)

(Himmelpfortgasse 8, 1010, Vienna)

#### Book

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated book published by **Koenig**, designed by **Charlie Smith Studio**, featuring essays by **Judith Clark** and **Adam Phillips**, transcripts from interviews with designers in the show including **Walter van Beirendonck, Manolo Blahnik, Hussein Chalayan, Pam Hogg, Stephen Jones, Christian Lacroix** and **Zandra Rhodes**.

## Guest Curators

**Judith Clark** is a curator and exhibition-maker based in London. She is currently Professor of Fashion and Museology at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London. Clark has curated numerous acclaimed exhibitions including *Spectres: When Fashion Turns Back*, V&A, 2005; *Anna Piaggi: Fashion-ology*, V&A 2006; *Chloé. Attitudes*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2012; and recently the inaugural exhibition at La Galerie, Louis Vuitton, Asnieres. She lectures widely on issues of dress display and fashion and her latest book, *Exhibiting Fashion: Before and After 1971* was published in 2014.

**Adam Phillips**, formerly Principal Child Psychotherapist at Charing Cross Hospital in London, is a psychoanalyst and writer. He is the author of many celebrated books including *Side Effects*, 2006; *On Kindness*, 2009; *Missing Out: In Praise of the Unlived Life*, 2012; *One Way and Another*, 2013 and *Unforbidden Pleasures*, 2015. He is the Editor of the New Penguin Freud translations, and a regular contributor to the London Review of Books.

Clark's practice interrogates the form of the exhibition and challenges conventional modes of display and interpretation of dress. Together with Phillips, she has explored the rich connections between language and objects to striking and provocative effect. Their first formal collaboration, *The Concise Dictionary of Dress* (commissioned by Artangel, 2010) invited visitors into Blythe House, the Victoria and Albert Museum's vast archive. Conceived as a walk-through dictionary of dress, in which definitions re-described clothing in terms of anxiety and desire, visitors encountered a magical series of tableaux, objects and installations in unexpected spaces throughout the building.

## Creative Learning & Events

A series of talks, tours and workshops accompany the exhibition. Check the website for full listings: [www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery](http://www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery)

### The Fashion Biennale:

**An In Conversation with Judith Clark and Luigi Settembrini**

**Tue 18 Oct, 7pm**

**Frobisher Auditorium 1**

**£5 - 15**

Celebrating the 20 year anniversary of the first Biennale of fashion, *Il Tempo e la Moda*, curator Judith Clark joins the Co-Director of the Biennale Luigi Settembrini, Raffaello Napoleone from Pitti Immagine and Linda Loppa from Polimoda for a discussion surrounding the relationship between fashion exhibitions and the museum past and present. A drinks reception on the Conservatory Terrace follows the talk.

### Exhibition Tour with Sinéad McCarthy

**Thu 27 Oct, 7pm**

**Art Gallery**

**£5 – 14.50 (includes same day entry to the exhibition)**

Associate curator Sinéad McCarthy focuses on key pieces from the show and explores ideas of vulgarity, fashion and taste.

### Hand Beading Workshop with The London Embroidery Studio

**Sat 12 Nov, 10am – 4.30pm**

**Art Gallery**

**£60 (includes same day entry to the exhibition and all materials)**

An all-day workshop introducing basic hand-beading techniques, inspired by *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined*. Participants are invited to bring a garment to decorate with their newly learnt techniques.

**Exhibition Tour with Tatjana LeBoff**

**Thu 17 Nov, 7pm**

**Art Gallery**

**£5 – 14.50 (includes same day entry to the exhibition)**

Barbican Exhibitions Assistant Tatjana LeBoff discusses the exhibition and what vulgarity means in fashion.

**Exhibition Tour with Young Visual Arts Group**

**Sat 19 Nov, 12 noon**

**Art Gallery**

**£5 – 14.50 (includes same day entry to the exhibition)**

A guided tour of *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined* designed and delivered by members of our [Young Visual Arts Group](#).

**Exhibition Tour with Judith Clark**

**Thu 24 Nov, 7pm**

**Art Gallery**

**£5 – 14.50 (includes same day entry to the exhibition)**

Judith Clark, curator of *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined*, delves into the many definitions of the sensitive and contested word 'vulgar', as written by **Adam Philips** and animated by her carefully selected exhibits.

**Audio Described Tour of *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined***

**Tue 6 Dec, 6.30pm**

**Art Gallery**

**£5 Ambulant Disabled concession plus one free companion if requested**

A tour of *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined*, suitable for blind and partially-sighted visitors, led by an expert tour guide who will describe key artworks on display in the exhibition.

A guide is available to meet visitors requiring assistance at either Barbican or Moorgate London Underground Stations.

Booking in advance is essential for this tour. Please book tickets in person or contact the Barbican Centre Box Office 020 7638 8891 (10am-8pm daily).

A booking fee applies for telephone bookings. There is no booking fee when tickets are purchased in person from the Box Office.

**Goldwork Embroidery Workshop with The London Embroidery Studio**

**Sat 17 Dec, 10am – 4.30pm**

**Art Gallery**

**£60 (includes same day entry to the exhibition and all materials)**

This one-day workshop introduces goldwork embroidery techniques inspired by the exhibition. Participants will tour the show with teacher Alice Richardson, learn some basic skills and produce a design for a badge or brooch.

**Fabric Manipulation and Macramé with The London Embroidery Studio**

**Sat 28 Jan, 10am – 4.30pm**

**Art Gallery**

**£60 (includes same day entry to the exhibition and all materials)**

A one-day workshop consisting of a gallery tour hosted by tutor Alice Richardson, looking at the elements of beadwork within the exhibition, followed by an introduction to the fabrics, equipment and processes involved in manipulating and 'knotting' fabrics. Participants will use their newly learnt skills to design and apply techniques to a tote bag, provided by Alice for the class.

## Family Drop-in Workshops

Sat 19 Nov & Sat 10 Dec 2016 and Sat 14 Jan 2017, 1 – 4pm

### Art Gallery

A series of hands-on workshops for families are offered in the Art Gallery Workshop. For full listings and further information please visit [barbican.org.uk/education](http://barbican.org.uk/education)

**Barbican Creative Learning** continues collaborating with local schools for the fifth year running with '**Barbican Box, Visual Arts**', an ambitious education programme that encourages and mentors art students, culminating in the publication and exhibition of their creative work inspired by *The Vulgar*. Barbican Art Gallery is also running a **School Tours** programme for school groups with experienced and trained tour guides, free for exhibition ticket holders. Further details and bookings at [groups@barbican.org.uk](mailto:groups@barbican.org.uk).

## Children's Activity Sheet

A free children's activity sheet is available at the Art Gallery ticket desk.

## Online resources

Download *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined* resources, further information, texts and creative learning by visiting [barbican.org.uk/talkingvulgar](http://barbican.org.uk/talkingvulgar)

## Barbican Film Season

*Cheap Thrills: Trash, Movies and the Art of Transgression*

28 October – 6 November 2016

From famously grubby origins as a fairground attraction, film now respectfully sits alongside other art forms. The esteemed critic Pauline Kael once said that we are essentially running from "good taste" when we go to the movies. In this spirit, and to complement *The Vulgar* exhibition taking place Barbican Art Gallery, this major new film season invites the viewer to a veritable orgy of 'bad taste'. Curated by the Barbican Cinema team it features some of the finest examples of 'good trash' from around the world.

Screenings include *Fat Girl* (dir Catherine Breillat), *Terminal Island* (dir Stephanie Rothman), *Stella Dallas* (dir Henry King), *Southland Tales* (dir Richard Kelly), *Fox and his Friends* (dir RW Fassbinder), *The Boxer's Omen* (dir Kuei Chih-Hung), *Dolemite* (dir D'Urville Martin), *The Night Porter* (dir Liliana Cavani), *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (dir Werner Herzog), *Erotikon* (dir Gustav Machatý), *X, Y, & Zee (aka Zee & Co.)* (dir Brian G Hutton), *Female Trouble* (dir John Waters), *Magnificent Obsession* (dir Douglas Sirk), *Boogie Nights* (dir Paul Thomas Anderson). [barbican.org.uk/film](http://barbican.org.uk/film)

## About Agent Provocateur

Agent Provocateur was founded in 1994 opening its first boutique in Soho, London. Since that time Agent Provocateur has become an iconic, globally recognised brand under the creative direction of Sarah Shotton, breaking new grounds with every collection and rightfully earning its place as a benchmark brand in the world of lingerie. It is a brand that is confident, sensual and irreverent. It is known for its craftsmanship, its fit, its appreciation and use of beautiful fabrics and its playfulness. Agent Provocateur's unique brand image is renowned for being provocative while celebrating and empowering women. *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined* at Barbican Art Gallery showcases the Varvarra playsuit from the brand's couture line. <http://www.agentprovocateur.com>

## Barbican Art Gallery & The Curve

One of the leading art spaces in the UK, Barbican Art Gallery presents the best of international visual art with a dynamic mix of art, architecture, design, fashion and photography. From acclaimed architects to Turner prize-winning artists, the Gallery exhibits innovators of the 20th and 21st centuries: key players who have shaped developments and stimulated change. The Curve is dedicated to a vibrant programme of new commissions, created by leading international artists in direct response to this distinctive gallery space.

## About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.5 million people pass through the Barbican's doors annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, the Pit, Cinemas One, Two and Three, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), and Associate Producer [Serious](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue Entertainment](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). International Associates are [Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam](#), [New York Philharmonic](#), [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#), [Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig](#) and [Jazz at Lincoln Center](#).

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