

THE SECRET LIFE OF SCISSORS

9 February – 6 May 2018 | ftmlondon.org | #fashiontextile

The Fashion and Textile Museum announce their Spring 2018 display, accompanying the exhibition, T-Shirt: Cult - Culture - Subversion.



From antiquity to modern times, scissors have remained irreplaceable and indispensable tools, universal to all cultures. Acting as an extension of the hand, scissors reflect an intimate human bond, their worn 'bows' (handles) bearing the imprint of the user. Scissors empower us, allowing us to perform a range of tasks, from the mundane to the extraordinary.

They are silent witnesses to everyday lives; their scratched and worn surfaces tell personal stories. To this day, the manufacture of scissors requires great skill and painstaking precision, to create a perfect cutting edge. Each pair of scissors is unique, demonstrating a perfect melding of form and function.

However, forgotten at the back of the drawer or the bottom of the sewing basket, more noticeable by their absence than their presence, it is only when we need scissors and fail to find them that they demand our full attention. As two individual blades, scissors are unremarkable; joined together they become a technological tour de force, with a double life, both creative and destructive, ambiguous objects surrounded by superstition, myth and symbolism.

The Secret Life of Scissors traces the path of scissors from their 'craft' production in the workshop where, motionless, they embody the skill and dexterity of the Sheffield craftsman, to their 'consumption', when they come to life in the hands of the user. This display creates narratives and themes that constantly mirror the double-edged nature of this familiar yet mysterious object:

- Scissors as Everyday Objects: a plain tool that becomes a heavily embellished object
- Evolution of Scissors: the craft of scissor making
- Life and Death: the cutting of the cord and the 'thread of life'
- The First Cut: scissors in the hands of children, as the first tool they are given
- Scissor 'People': scissors come 'alive' in children's literature
- Once Upon A Time: scissors become symbolic, 'magical' objects in traditional fairy tales
- Scherenschnitte: the positive and negative of paper cutting
- The Tailor: the importance of bespoke tailoring and Saville Row
- The Seamstress: professional vs domestic
- Power to The People: scissors and craft
- Fashion: from couture and designer fashion to the DIY aesthetic of punk
- Haircutting: from Vidal Sassoon to Merovingian kings and Japanese Manga
- Scissors v Man: Struwwelpeter and Edward Scissorhands
- The Perfect Murder Weapon: Hitchcock, Pulp Fiction and Frankie the Tailor
- Scissors taken 'captive' in the collector's cabinet

Each of these often surprising and subversive narratives highlights one of the many facets of this habitually overlooked item, detailing their historical and cultural significance within the home, the workplace and beyond. The display will be presented in the style of a shop of curiosities, referencing the scissor showrooms of the 19th century, where all manner of scissors were displayed as items of great societal importance and value.

The Secret Life of Scissors will be displayed in the Fashion and Textile Museum's ground floor gallery from 9 February – 6 May 2018. Entry to the display is included in the price of a ticket to the exhibition, T-shirt: Cult – Culture – Subversion.

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Notes to editors:

1. The Fashion and Textile Museum is at 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF
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2. For further information, or to keep in touch with the Museum, please visit:

www.ftmlondon.org

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3. Museum opening times: Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–6pm; Sunday, 11am–5pm; Late night Thursday until 8pm; Last admission 45 minutes before closure. Ticket prices: £9.90 adults*, £8.80* concessions, £7 students and free entry for under 12s (*including Gift Aid).

4. This display accompanies the exhibition T-Shirt: Cult - Culture - Subversion and the photographic display, T: A Typology T-Shirts, all of which are on display from 9 February – 6 May 2018.

About Fashion and Textile Museum:

The Fashion and Textile Museum is the only museum in the UK solely dedicated to showcasing developments in contemporary fashion, as well as providing inspiration, support and training for those working in the industry. Founded by iconic British designer Zandra Rhodes in 2003, the museum is part of Newham College London – one of Europe's largest further education colleges. The Fashion and Textile Museum offers an exciting programme of exhibitions and displays throughout the year, alongside an array of talks, events and workshops with industry professionals. Recent exhibitions at the Museum have included 'Liberty in Fashion', 'Josef Frank Patterns – Furniture - Painting', '1920s Jazz Age Fashion & Photographs' and 'Missoni Art Colour'.