

Van Meter, William. "Alexander McQueen Creative Director Sarah Burton Asked 12 Female Artists to Interpret Her Pre-Fall Collection, With Intriguing Results," Artnet News, 17 June 2022.

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### Alexander McQueen Creative Director Sarah Burton Asked 12 Female Artists to Interpret Her Pre-Fall Collection, With Intriguing Results

The works are currently on view at the brand's London flagship.

**William Van Meter**, June 17, 2022

Alexander McQueen is known for sending art down the runway, and elevating the runway show to performance art.

Many grand instances immediately come to mind: model Shalom Harlow savagely graffitied by robot arms for spring 1999, or spring 2001's fashion mic drop, the "Voss" collection. For the finale, the glass walls of an enormous cube slammed down and shattered. A voluptuous nude model in Renaissance recumbence was revealed, wearing a mask jugged with breathing tubes and swarmed by moths.



The artist and model Guinevere van Seenus. Photo: Ruby Pluhar, courtesy of Alexander McQueen.

The house's current creative director, Sarah Burton, has been working at the company since 1997. She was head of women's when she was tasked with continuing the founder's legacy after his untimely death in 2010. But bombastic spectacle and transgression aren't really her jam: She dwells less in darkness, but artistry, alchemy, and fantasy are still woven throughout the DNA of the brand and her creations.

For this year's pre-fall collection, Burton curated "Process," inviting 12 female artists to select a look from the collection. They were instructed to execute an artwork based on however these garments inspired them—a somewhat Warholian gesture, detached but also brave.

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Marcia Kure stands in front of her abstract portrait. Photo: Annie Powers, courtesy of Alexander McQueen.

"We wanted the artists to have total freedom to respond to the looks, creating bold and thought-provoking conversations with their works," Burton said in a statement. "I hope that viewers will be as inspired as we have all been by witnessing these creative processes."

The resulting works are on display at the brand's London flagship, alongside the garments that served as muses, through June 21. The roster of participating artists includes multi-generational, cross-cultural names such as Bingyi, Judas Companion, Marcela Correa, Ann Cathrin November Høibo, Marcia Michael, Jackie Nickerson, and Beverly Semmes. Each has interpreted the challenge differently: some hewed closely to the source material, others meandered down a different path. Both groups delivered engaging results, though.



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Hope Gangloff paints Caitlin MacQueen (in McQueen). Courtesy of Alexander McQueen.

Cristina de Middel's *Housewife of the New Domestic* is an eerie photograph of a disembodied dress. Guinevere van Seenus has frequently worked for the brand as a model. Her nascent photography practice is compelling and not just because of her fashion pedigree. She employed fashion-shoot tropes by "styling" the actual dress within her piece. Jennie Jieun Lee's molten quagmire of a sculpture is a more roundabout interpretation of the red leather and black lace dress it's memorializing. The Nigerian-born, Philadelphia-based multimedia artist Marcia Kure's showstopper abstracts a graffiti print into a portrait of Queen Amina of Zaria—and arguably improves upon the original motif.

A component of great art is the dialogue with the viewer and how it shapes their individual perspective, how it provokes thought and visceral feeling. It's a testament to the power of Burton's designs that they have inspired this absorbing group show.

*"Process" is on view through June 21, 2022, at the Alexander McQueen London flagship, 27 Old Bond Street, London, W1S 4QE.*