

Hardy Amies with a model

A new exhibition celebrating the life and legacy of fashion designer and tailor Sir Hardy Amies (1909-2003) opens its doors to the public on Saturday, thanks to HLF support.

Best known as official dressmaker to HM the Queen, Amies created some of the monarch’s most iconic outfits during his tenure from her ascension in 1952 to his retirement in 1989.

The fuchsia pink dress he designed for the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 is one of the stars of the exhibition - Hardy Amies: A Dagenham Designer.

Curated by Create London and Valence House Museum, the exhibition focuses on the couturier’s connection to his childhood home of Dagenham. Photographs, letters and film footage will reveal the little-known history of Amies’ childhood growing up in 1920s East London.

World-famous couturier

As well as his contribution to royal fashion, the designer also had a significant impact on popular culture, designing the outfits for the futuristic film *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the strip for the World Cup-winning 1966 England team. He released a book about the etiquette of men’s dress, *The ABC of Men’s Fashion* (1964), and designed diffusion lines for high street stores.

A Teddy Boy outfit Amies made in collaboration with high street retailer, Hepworths, will go on display, on loan from Brighton Museum. There will also be vintage suits on loan from a local collector, alongside tailoring from Amies' own wardrobe, most of which he designed himself, on loan from UAL's Central St Martin's archive.

Local participants and volunteers have collected oral histories and archived materials relating to Amies, his childhood home, The White House, and the local area. His school cap from his time at Brentwood School in Essex will also be on display.

Interpreting the heritage of Hardy Amies

The new exhibition is part of a wider project to interpret the heritage of Hardy Amies in Dagenham, which is supported by a £46,000 grant from HLF.

Create London, a registered charity helping artists to connect with communities in East London, is holding a series of workshops, trips and talks in partnership with the London College of Fashion and the William Morris Gallery. Participants will draw inspiration from the Crown wallpaper designed by Amies and learn about fabric design and reproduction, along with sessions on furniture covering, embroidery and design skills.

These events will take place at The White House, which Create London has transformed into a new space for public art and communal activity.

The exhibition at Valence House Museum runs from 3 December 2016 to 25 February 2017.

Investing in Barking and Dagenham

We believe all communities should benefit from National Lottery funding for heritage; however we receive fewer applications for funding from some parts of the UK. For this reason, Barking and Dagenham is a key priority area for HLF.

If you are interested in delivering a heritage-focused project in the area, please get in touch with our development officer who can work with you on developing an idea.