

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## How Richard Quinn became the designer every brand wants

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Launched pre-pandemic, Richard Quinn's designs for Moncler Genius highlighted his versatility. Image credit: Moncler

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There is only one designer who has finessed a synergy between statement blooms, black latex and the late Queen Elizabeth II. That is Southeast London-born fashion designer Richard Quinn.

Since graduating in 2016 from Central Saint Martins with an MA in fashion, the independent talent has seen fast-paced growth and a consequent reputation as one of the headline shows at London Fashion Week.

In 2018, Mr. Quinn was awarded the inaugural Queen Elizabeth II Award for British Design, and henceforth his catwalks evolved into dramatic spectacles of live orchestras, choirs and supermodel casts.

Alongside the set of celebrities who frequently don his designs, his strategy of brand collaboration is another core identifier of his industry presence.

So far, Mr. Quinn has worked with Moncler on the Genius series, which debuted during Milan Fashion Week back in 2019. Then in 2022, he launched an unexpected Tommy Hilfiger capsule, merging the all-American classic codes with his own, now-distinct signature textile prints.

Among those two major achievements, Mr. Quinn has also partnered with Scotch whisky brand Royal Salute on a 21-year-old bottle (2021) and designed scarves for food chain Pret a Manger's charity project (2022). And he has even created cases for a line of Jo Malone scents (2022) and worked on The Creative Spot pop-up in collaboration with the British Fashion Council in May at U.K. retail destination Bicester Village.

Despite not currently retailing independently in China the brand is only available to ship from online global stores such as Matches and Browns many of the aforementioned partnerships have contributed to his eponymous label's standing there.

Search the designer on microblogging site Weibo and you will find references to the Tommy Hilfiger collection, or local key-opinion-leaders (KOLs) wearing his looks. Here, *Jing Daily* asks Mr. Quinn about why and how collaboration has become such an integral part of his evolution.

## **How important do you think collaboration is as an independent designer?**

It's really important. It's good to learn from other, bigger companies, to understand how they source everything and make things.

Having an insight even into the materials, too like if they have a sustainable alternative to something. You want to learn but also be in a relevant place.

## **What role does collaboration play in your brand strategy?**

Not back-to-back collaborations. But if the right one comes along, it's a trade-off. You want to learn a lot and give them something in return.

With Moncler, for example, we reached an audience that wouldn't have really known who we were. There's a lot you can gain from collaboration.

[With Bicester Village's Creative Spot BFC collaboration in May 2020], it's nice for us to have people who wouldn't necessarily see our product, to come across it and see it in real life, rather than online. Just to reach different audiences is really nice.

## **What has been the most pivotal partnership of your career so far?**

Moncler, I think. It was really fun but we also learnt a lot in terms of how to do outerwear properly.

Now, we do puffer jackets because we know the correct way to make them. If someone sees that you have made a Moncler puffer jacket then they also trust you to make one yourself. It's strategic to make certain products and learn how to do by doing certain collaborations.

## **What advice would you give to an independent designer who's being approached by a lot of brands to collaborate?**

It has to work in terms of the creativity of it, financially as well. Timing as well. You don't want to do launches that are going to affect the sale of your launches. And obviously the audience, like the audience and the values and things like that line up.

I want to be excited about collaborations. You don't want to do something that's really boring just for the money because it's not going to resonate with people anyway. It's that kind of balance that it has to hit certain pillars for us.

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