

## **Selling London: mapping the relationship between supply chains, shop displays and the changing symbolic capital of London fashion after WW2**

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Fashion retail and production are usually separated in historical accounts of fashion, ignoring the fact that both are part of interconnected systems and processes. However, tracing historic connections and supply chains can be difficult due to a lack of archival evidence and, in many cases, purposeful attempts by retailers and brands to obscure the production processes by which fashions were made. In response, this paper considers the extent to which it might be possible to speculatively reconstruct lost fashion networks from London in the 1940s by bringing together fragments of archival material with extant objects.

1940s London may not commonly be remembered as a vibrant fashion city, but amid the shortages, rubble and government regulation, London's fashion systems were undergoing significant reforms that would have lasting impacts on its reputation as a world fashion city. This paper uses objects from the Museum of London's fashion collections to show how processes of making garments in London were changing at this time. Mapping out these changing processes reveals new connections between altered manufacturing processes and the development of retail methodologies for the promotion of fashion goods. By making connections between the growth of mass-manufacture ready-to-wear, outsourcing practices and retail techniques, this paper reveals that the dynamic processes of change triggered by austerity conditions impacted not only the way fashions were made, but fundamentally changed the way manufacturers, retailers and consumers understood the symbolic capital of London fashion at this time.