

BIO



LILIA PRIER TISDALL
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Lilia Prier Tisdall is a Senior Costume Mounting Specialist at the V&A and was the lead costume mounter for NAOMI: In Fashion. Lilia has worked on some of the museum's most innovative exhibitions including Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty (2015), Undressed: A Brief History of Underwear (2016), Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams (2019) and Fashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear (2022). She is co-author of the book Pattern Cutting Templates for Skirts and Dresses and is co-founder of sewing pattern company Alice & Co Patterns.

ABSTRACT

Making a Model Mannequin – Couture Mounting and Cutaways for NAOMI: In Fashion

NAOMI: In Fashion opened at the V&A in June 2024 and is the first major exhibition to explore the extraordinary career of the British fashion model Naomi Campbell. The show includes work from leading global fashion designers and celebrates Naomi's creative collaborations, whilst exploring her activism and far-reaching cultural impact. For the V&A costume mounting team this posed a new challenge: how can you make a mannequin look as good as Naomi Campbell? As the exhibition would be filled with iconic fashion photography and film footage of Naomi, the mannequins needed to match in their variety, radiance, and poise. This paper will discuss the multiple display approaches that were taken to overcome this challenge, from colour research and digital amendments that elevated retail mannequins, to refining a Fosshape method for creating invisible 'cutaway' figures. We will also share some of the practical techniques that the team have developed to combat the common difficulties in mounting couture fashion, such as heavily beaded garments and sheer fabrics.