



EXCLUSIVE

Jonathan Anderson: Craft Is King

Here and right: A look at the JW Anderson's latest collection, which will go on show in Paris on Monday.



making," said Anderson.

Craft has always been top of mind for Anderson, a collector of art, antiques, ceramics and wood-turning pieces.

In 2022, he told the WWD Apparel and Retail CEO Summit that sometimes the idea of luxury "can be quite frightening" to some "and I feel like craft is a very good way of breaking down the realities of it, and showing the process. I think the more that we understand how things are made, the more we can ultimately see their value and merit."

During his tenure as creative director of Loewe, Anderson let his passion for craft run free. He worked with artists, sculptors, and even the Japanese animation experts Studio Ghibli on shows, campaigns and exhibitions.

In 2016, he established the Loewe Foundation Craft Prize, which pays tribute to the Spanish brand's roots as a

leather-making collective and supplier to the Spanish royal crown.

"Loewe was 'me,' but I don't want to replicate it" at the new JW Anderson, he said. "I wanted to work out why I was interested in [craft]. For me, it's about the still life, and this idea of connoisseurship, of going into depth with an object or a maker."

Anderson said his aim is to make the "perfect" cashmere sweater in Scotland, "and then understand the people behind it. I want to find things that I love, or what I wear myself, and then articulate them in the world we are in today."

Anderson also wants to look at "the imperfections in things and make it a personal story." He said the JW Anderson pieces are about "London, growing up in Ireland, and all of the primitive things that are about me. I want to build this into a world. It's about the long term."

He added: "If we make a sweater, then we will issue a different color only when we need to. Also, I don't want to let go of some things, like the Loafer bag," said Anderson, referring to his design inspired by the vamp of the shoe, which launched for spring 2025.

"Things don't have to be a success overnight. It's about enjoying a design and sticking with it. It's a slower process, and finding fetish within things. And it's very much how I see my home, and my world," he said.

Anderson also looked to the late, legendary Terence Conran, the designer, retailer, restaurateur and lifestyle pioneer who changed the way postwar Britons furnished their homes, and wondered what the Conran store would look like today.

He's been working with Wedgwood to make teacups and saucers designed by the British ceramicist Lucie Rie, but which never went into production.

Proceeds from sales will be divided between supporting the work of the Lucie Rie and Hans Coper Foundation and providing scholarships and grants ►

● Anderson said his rebranded JW Anderson label takes in his passions – "art and fashion and interiors and making" – and feels a lot like escapism.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON – Jonathan Anderson isn't pausing for breath. Having made his debut with menswear for Dior last week, he's ready to reveal a new look and approach for his signature label, JW Anderson, and it's all about heritage, craft and his personal passions.

Instead of seasonal fashion and accessories, the new JW Anderson will offer luxe wardrobe staples, jewelry, sunglasses, art, craft and items for the home.

He's teamed with long-standing U.K. suppliers – and friends – on furniture, vintage garden tools, and even runny honey that's made on the grounds of Houghton Hall, the family seat of his friends and Norfolk neighbors, David and Sarah Cholmondeley.

Anderson is planning to reveal the new concept, and creations, during the couture shows in Paris on Monday, at Galerie Joseph in the Marais.

The designer is going the full mile with the rebranding, a project he's been working on for the past year together with the JW Anderson team. In August, he'll be

shutting the JW Anderson stores in London and Milan for refurbishment, and will reopen them in September with the new concept.

The stores will become his own "cabinet of curiosities," and hubs of local craft, while the JW Anderson website is being revamped into something "different – and simplistic," the designer said in an exclusive interview.

There are more stores in the pipeline, including one on Piccadilly Road in London's Belgravia, a destination for high-end furniture and design. He also plans to open stores in New York and Paris. Each one will be like a fashion show, he said, offering a "slow-moving feast" of creativity and ideas.

The rebranding, Anderson said, was inevitable and already in the works before he was named creative director at Dior, the first designer under LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton ownership to take on men's, women's and couture.

"I wanted to rearticulate my own brand. When I started it, I had come out of university, I'd worked on the windows at Prada. I was more angsty. I had to fight my way to get where I am today," said the designer, who launched his eponymous



Vintage farm tools have caught Jonathan Anderson's eye.

label in 2008 with menswear, and began showing women's two years later.

He used JW Anderson as an experimental space, drawing on inspirations as diverse as "Wallace and Gromit," "Carrie," and the graphic iconography of Michael Clark, the pioneering dancer and choreographer – and one of his heroes.

"When I turned 40 last year, I decided that I wanted to change the brand. And I wanted to kind of work out, 'Who am I today?' I also wanted to consolidate everything I had done, and then add on all the things that I enjoy today, which is art and fashion and interiors and

Photographs by Virginie Khateeb



to support emerging artists in the field of ceramics and related fields.

Anderson has also been working with the London-based Postcard Teas on a new kind of dark roasted tea that tastes like coffee (another obsession of his) and with Ferguson's Irish Linen on a series of dish cloths with different messages and colorways.

The JW Anderson stores will stock Windsor chairs handmade in Lewes, East Sussex, England, by a company called Hope Springs; Murano glasses from Italy, and replica wooden Mackintosh stools made in Perthshire, Scotland.

The London stores will offer vintage watering cans made from French copper and antique gardening tools restored by Garden & Wood Ltd.

"I have bought from them for many, many years. They find and restore rare gardening equipment, and have the details of where everything was manufactured. The watering cans are incredibly rare," said Anderson.

"What's important for me is that [the gardening tools] are very, very well-made and, because of that, they've lasted so long. Sometimes we have to cherish the idea" that some things become better with time, and a new context, he said.

Anderson said Garden & Wood's founder, Edward Green, knows the history of garden equipment in Britain, every supplier, and where everything was made.

The tools, he said, "are still completely usable, and that is the point. They can be

decorative, but at the same time they are completely functional objects," he said.

Anderson is also pursuing his long-held dream of working with gold. He's making link chains with Lucie Gledhill Jewellery in London. Every link is individually made, soldered, and shaped by hand.

Even the jars of Houghton Hall honey have serious provenance. Each lid will be wrapped in fabric crafted using traditional 18th-century weaving techniques.

Anderson wants people to examine every object in his new shops carefully. "Everything may look simple, but each thing has got a complexity to it. It's either something I've always wanted to do, or something that I have an obsession with," he said.

Anderson is forging closer ties with his longtime fabric suppliers as well. He's sourcing boiled wool from the Yorkshire fabric mill Moon; waxed cotton from British Millarain, and silk grosgrain fabric from the weaver Stephen Walters. He's using that grosgrain for the lapels and side leg details of JW Anderson tuxedo suits.

Tartans come from Lochcarron of Scotland, a textile company specializing in tartan fabrics and traditional Highland dress. Denim is developed and made in Japan, while the damask is made by Britain's Humphries

Weaving, which specializes in historical reproductions for silk wall interiors.

The list goes on, both for objects and fabrics that will intermingle on the shop floor, and online. Anderson said there might even be a runway show every now and again.

"When we feel like there needs to be a show, we will do a show. It could be in a year or two, or in three months. But only when I feel like there is something to say within my own brand," said Anderson, adding that it was important for him to keep the JW Anderson team, which he describes as a "little family of very, very talented people," close, and working toward the same goal.

Fashion is still part of the mix. The

presentation Monday will showcase some of JW Anderson's greatest hits, including striped polo tops, a supersized Loafer bag, and skirts propped up with little panniers, a fun look the designer sent down the runway for spring 2025.

Colors are vibrant and include emerald for swimming style trunks; apricot for slip-on shoes, and bright white frames on a pair of exaggerated cat-eye sunglasses.

Anderson's hours may be long, but he's clearly energized by the work and likes the fact this new project is completely different from Dior. "I like being this sort of bipolar character, a kind of split personality. For me, it's like escapism, and I'm really proud of the project," he said. ■



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