



Final Evaluation Report

Zandra Rhodes' Colourful Heritage
September 2025

Anna Cullum Associates

Foreword

“Colourful Heritage has been an extraordinary way to open up the Zandra Rhodes Foundation archive as a fabulous learning resource. To see UCA students handling, repairing and photographing my historical garments and accessories with such care and creativity has been truly inspiring. Working alongside them, I have felt my five decades of fashion collections come to life in new, exciting ways! The students have built skills and confidence, empowering them for their futures in the creative industries. One of the students, Emily, now works as a design assistant on my team!

“The school workshops extended the Colourful Heritage spirit of learning to young people in Medway, where I grew up. These workshops provided students with the opportunity to experiment, make, and showcase their creativity in a local art gallery. I was absolutely thrilled to attend the exhibition opening and celebrate their achievements alongside their friends, families and community.

“Importantly, the Zandra Rhodes digital archive created through Colourful Heritage is now freely available online. I hope this special resource will continue to educate, inspire and empower learners and teachers across the world. Congratulations to everyone who has been part of this wonderful project!”

Dame Zandra Rhodes DBE RDI

“Colourful Heritage was the first, large, outward-facing project of the Foundation. The twofold aspect of the project covered our philosophy of creating both digital and physical opportunities in learning to a diverse, inclusive audience.

The completion of the digital archive, with 100 new garments photographed, along with key accessories and drawings, means that we now have a fully comprehensive study-aid archiving Rhodes’ great breadth of output over 50 years. This large archive is available to anyone, anywhere with internet access. The process of achieving this involved working with students at UCA who learned about fashion, textiles and archiving (and so much more) as they contributed essential effort and skill to this important collection of work.

The Colourful Heritage project expanded into a series of inspirational workshops, bringing the physical aspect of looking, experimenting and drawing, to young learners and their teachers; rooting the essential ‘hand-eye’ nature of Zandra Rhodes’ processes into an empowering, reflective learning experience.

The coordination and effort contributed by all members of the team has created an impact and resource that will resonate and inspire for years to come.”

Piers Attkinson, Director of The Zandra Rhodes Foundation

Zandra Rhodes'
Colourful Heritage



UCA
University for the
Creative Arts

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Heritage
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Executive Summary

Project vision and scope

Dame Zandra Rhodes is a textile and fashion designer, who has been an inspirational figurehead of the UK fashion industry for more than five decades, and has an international profile and reputation. The Zandra Rhodes Foundation was established in 2020 to preserve the heritage of Zandra's work and Studio, providing a lasting legacy.

'Colourful Heritage' was an important component of this work – a project designed to digitize and catalogue key collection items, enabling them to be used as a source of inspiration for people from both within and outside the fashion industry now and in the future.

The purpose of Colourful Heritage was to record a number of Zandra's most important garments, ensembles, accessories and design drawings, adding the digital records to the University for the Creative Arts's open-source Art and Design resource which can be accessed globally.

In doing so, the project created opportunities for UCA students to gain valuable work experience through placements at Zandra Rhodes Studio to assist with the restoration and preparation, photography and recording of the collection. Once digitised, the collection was used to engage and inspire students from the Medway area of Kent, where Rhodes grew up, introducing them to new creative practices, and encouraging them to consider heritage using Rhodes' experience and local heritage as a catalyst.

The project has been delivered in partnership between the University for the Creative Arts (UCA), Zandra Rhodes Studio, and the Zandra Rhodes Foundation, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Summary of Achievements

- An important collection of previously undocumented garments, drawings and photographs has been digitised and preserved for future generations. Over 600 items have been catalogued and/or photographed and uploaded to an open-source database. Six oral histories with significant figures from the world of fashion have been created, enhancing the collection and knowledge further
- Over 1,000 people have gained the skills and knowledge directly to use the digital collection, through public webinars, teacher CPD sessions and a Schools' Outreach Programme. They have learnt how to access and use the database, and how they can use the heritage of the collection for their own studies, professional development and school lesson plans. The collection has been promoted to thousands more people nationally and internationally, through conferences, social media, press and TV.
- Over 80 schoolchildren from areas of deprivation have taken part in a schools' programme which included sketchbook drawing tuition and a carousel workshop day at UCA Canterbury. Their work was displayed in an exhibition at Nucleus Arts gallery in Medway and celebrated at a private view. School children learnt drawing and observational skills, zine-making, print preparation and screen printing, and were introduced to career pathways in the creative industries. They reflected on the heritage of their local area, and

how it can inspire their own creative practice. Many students reported feeling more confident in their creative abilities because of the project, that they had enjoyed learning new techniques and challenging themselves, and that they felt pride in their achievements. The programme has provided a model that UCA could replicate in the future.

- Four interns have worked in Zandra Rhodes Studio, helping to restore and prepare garments for photography and digitisation. They have learnt practical skills that will help them in their future careers and have gained confidence through working in a real-world setting. Three of the four interns have gone on to work in the fashion industry, including one intern who is now working for the Zandra Rhodes Studio.
- The partnership between the two organisations has been strengthened, with each team learning from each other and pooling skills, knowledge and ideas. UCA staff have a greater understanding of the workings of a professional studio and the level of detail which goes into preparing garments for photography – this knowledge can be passed on to future students. Zandra Rhodes Studio and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation have gained a greater understanding of the cataloguing process, as well as firsthand experience of supporting interns in the studio.
- The project has provided valuable learning both for UCA and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation in delivering funded projects with a social impact. Both teams are more confident having undertaken this project in approaching funders in future. The project has been an important vehicle for promoting the charitable work of the foundation.
- UCA has built new relationships with schools in Medway which they can return to in the future, as well as strong and lasting ties with organisations such as Nucleus Arts in Chatham

Key success factors and lessons learnt

- Zandra's personal investment in the project has made a significant difference to participants, either by working alongside her at the studio, or meeting her at the exhibition private view. Her presence has helped to build excitement and pride in participants. Participants have enjoyed meeting and learning from 'real' professionals from the fashion industry.
- The team have been alert to additional opportunities afforded by the project and have had the flexibility and drive to capitalise on them. Changes to the Schools' Outreach Programme brought schools together for a richer learning experience and gave students experience of being in a university setting. The addition of a public exhibition in a professional setting enhanced student's pride and made them feel valued.
- Collaboration between library staff and catalogue end users has resulted in a more in-depth understanding of the catalogue's use, leading to broader search terms and more accessible language being included to make the catalogue useable by a wider range of people.
- The team have learnt the importance of understanding the needs of different target audiences when planning activities and ensuring that teachers provide important information such as the timing of free breakfasts for students.



Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Project scope and vision

‘Zandra Rhodes’ Colourful Heritage’ is a project to preserve and celebrate the work of fashion designer Zandra Rhodes. It has been delivered in partnership between the University for the Creative Arts (UCA), Zandra Rhodes Studio, and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation, and is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Zandra Rhodes is a figurehead of British Fashion, having worked for more than 50 years at the forefront of the industry. She has designed for the likes of Diana Princes of Wales, Freddie Mercury and Marc Bolan. She is an alumnus of UCA Rochester (Kent Institute of Art and Design as was), and at 84 years old is still running her studio but looking to the legacy of her career. The Zandra Rhodes Foundation was set up in 2020 to oversee the dispersal of approximately 6000 garments from Zandra’s personal archive to museums worldwide.

Rhodes grew up in a working-class family in the Medway area of Kent, where her father was a lorry driver and her mother a teacher at the local Medway College of Design (which later became UCA). Rhodes attended local grammar school, Fort Pitt, and later the Kent Institute of Art and Design in Rochester. Her creative practice, which has included drawing every day for more than 60 years started in Medway, and in many of her early sketches Medway landmarks or localities are recognisable. Rhodes has always maintained ties with the area, which saw a strong economic downturn with the closure of the Dockyard – the area’s main employer - in the early 1980s.

The purpose of the Colourful Heritage project was to catalogue and digitise Zandra’s most important garments, ensembles, accessories and design drawings, adding the digital records to UCA’s Visual Arts Database Service (VADS), an open-source Art and Design resource which can be accessed globally.

In doing so, the project created opportunities for UCA students to gain valuable work experience through intern placements at Zandra Rhodes Studio to assist with the restoration, preparation, photography and recording of the collection. Further, the digitised collection was used to engage and inspire school students from Medway, where Rhodes grew up, by introducing them to new creative practices, and encouraging them to reconsider heritage using Rhodes’ experience and local heritage as a catalyst.

UCA took the opportunity created by the project to publicise VADS as a resource while interest in the project was drawing attention to it by running a webinar for researchers, academics and interested parties introducing them to the database via Zandra Rhodes’ collection.

1.2. Project Legacy: Changes in the UK university sector – a wider perspective

Over the course of this project, circumstances beyond the control of the team have affected the future of UCA. UK universities are facing a severe economic downturn. Falling numbers of international students over the past few years and a freeze in admission fees have resulted in almost all UK universities making operational cutbacks to deal with growing financial pressures, including reducing investment in repairs and maintenance, course closures,

consolidations or cutbacks, departmental closures, and a reduction in research and development investment, all with associated job losses.¹

Since funding for Colourful Heritage was granted there have been substantial changes to the staffing structure at UCA. As of March 2025, redundancies have been made across the university, particularly in libraries and student support, affecting several members of the Colourful Heritage project team directly and significantly curtailing the possible legacy outputs of this project due to organisational restructure and a loss of staff to deliver them.

In spite of these circumstances, there are positive and actionable organisational learnings which have come from Colourful Heritage, and while the legacy outcomes in some areas are not as far reaching as had been hoped prior to the cuts, this should not undermine the positive impact that this project has had in increasing UCAs visibility through increased awareness of VADS in the wider academic world, improved relationships with local arts organisations, the enormous benefit which the schools who have taken part in the project have felt, and the continuing professional development of individual team members who have had the opportunity through this project to develop new skills.

The Zandra Rhodes Studio likewise has now managed to archive a significant amount of Rhodes' collection and share it via VADS and the Colourful Heritage Instagram campaign, increasing the visibility of The Zandra Rhodes Foundation. The continuing professional development of the team at Zandra Rhodes Studio and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation, especially around how to work with external funding bodies has been a major success of this project.

1.3. The purpose of this report

This evaluation report draws together the achievements of the Colourful Heritage project, exploring what has gone well, and what can be learnt from the experience of delivering the project.

The project was delivered under the Heritage Fund's strategic framework 4, which asked grantees to meet a selection of the Heritage Fund's outcomes for heritage, people and the organisations delivering the project. The evaluation measures the extent to which these outcomes have been met in sections 2, 3 and 4.

The evaluation also assesses how the project has been delivered, capturing organisational learning along the way, and sharing recommendations, where appropriate, that might strengthen future projects for the organisations involved and for similar projects undertaken by other organisations.

The report also includes a more detailed analysis of some of the project's key activities, in Section 5 – Activities in Focus.

Key evaluation methods have included feedback from project participants, interviews with teachers, observation of events and activities, and reflective sessions with the project team.

The external evaluation has been led by Claire McQuillan of Anna Cullum Associates.

¹ [Universities grip financial crisis – but at what cost to the nation?](#), UK Universities, May 2025



**Outcomes
for heritage**

2. Outcomes for heritage

2.1. What the project set out to achieve

Zandra Rhodes' collection of garments, accessories, jewellery and ensembles have a high heritage significance for both the world of fashion, and the wider creative sector. However, very little of the collection had been catalogued, photographed and digitised.

Heritage Fund outcomes:

Heritage will be identified and better explained

The Colourful Heritage project was designed to create a lasting digital legacy of this significant collection, as well as identifying and recording knowledge associated with it through oral history interviews with figures of significance.

2.2. Digitising the collection

Newly catalogued material has been added to the Visual Arts Data Service (VADS), a free, cross-searchable digital archive supported and maintained by the University for the Creative Arts which houses more than 140,000 digital images from over 300 art and design collections in the UK, all of which are free to use for educational purposes.

Newly digitised material includes:

Style bibles and drawings: Rhodes' practice as a fashion and textile designer has been built on her drawing, sketching and recording of patterns throughout her lifetime. For example, one of her iconic textile designs 'Wiggles and Checks' was inspired by sketches Rhodes' made of jigsaw pieces from a jigsaw she and her family did on a family holiday when she was young. Consequently, her sketch books – known affectionately as the Style & Textile Bibles – are a key component of her archive. They are still in active use in her studio, often referred to by Rhodes as she works on new designs, and as such they form as significant a part of her collection as any of the completed garments or accessories.

As part of this project 193 individual pages from three different Style & Textile Bibles were scanned to 600dpi, formatted and processed - including being named appropriately for ease of searching - before being uploaded to VADS under a Creative Commons licence. This means they can be accessed globally and used for educational purposes by anyone who wishes to use them. They are also used daily by Rhodes' studio.

Garments, accessories and jewellery: 102 garments and 55 accessories were prepared by the student interns over the summer of 2024 and photographed in the Zandra Rhodes Studio. The images and records were processed and uploaded to VADS, and where appropriate cross referenced with the relevant design sketches from the Style & Textile bibles to create a comprehensive catalogue of Rhodes' work.

Reformatted videos and photographs: In addition to the new scans and photographs which were added to VADS, 31 videos from a previous JISC-funded project which had been stored on Vimeo have been reformatted and transferred to Panopto, a more up-to-date video management platform, with captions added to bring them up to current accessibility requirements. They have been included on the Resources page of the Colourful Heritage

website, and are available via the UCA supported Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection website.

326 photographs of 60 garments which were taken for the book *Zandra Rhodes: 50 Fabulous Years in Fashion* published in 2019 have been copyright-cleared and catalogued making them available online for educational use for the first time.

Oral histories: Six oral history interviews with Zandra and her contemporaries have been recorded on video, capturing important details about creative practice, collaboration, and the UK fashion industry in the second half of the twentieth century. The oral histories include significant figures in the history of the Zandra Rhodes Studio, such as milliner Stephen Jones and jeweller Andrew Logan, both of whom have collaborated with Rhodes on multiple collections. These interviews have been disseminated via social media channels and included on the Colourful Heritage website as a video resource. The videos include *Advice for Young Designers: Zandra Rhodes*, *Developing Creative Practice: Piers Atkinson*, and *Finding Your way into Fashion: Stephen Jones*. Created to be shown to a class of students, the videos were viewed 147 times between February and June 2025.



Figure 1 Zandra Rhodes being interviewed for #DrawEveryday Campaign and Oral History

2.3. Disseminating the digital collection

Once the archival material had been added to VADS, access to the collection was promoted through the Schools' Outreach Programme (see Section 3, Schools' Outreach for detail), teacher training and toolkits, webinars and symposium, and through press, social media, and conference appearances, with all participants encouraged to access the collections online, for professional research, personal interest, or to support educational activities.

The Colour Me Pink! Webinar provided an opportunity for academics, researchers and those with an interest in fashion history, heritage and Zandra's work to engage with the project and learn first-hand how to access the new catalogue records via VADS. The webinar had global reach with participants from Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Denmark, England, Ireland,

Scotland, the United States, and Wales. 84 people attended live, with the recording and slides sent to all 184 who signed up. For further detail of the webinar, see Appendix C Activity in Focus: Colour Me Pink!

Colourful Heritage Teachers' Symposium was run as a series of three 45-minute online sessions over three consecutive evenings to provide teachers the opportunity to consolidate the knowledge gained from taking part in the project and to embed this into their future practice, providing a toolkit for teachers to use with future classes. The sessions covered how to use the Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection on VADS, observation and mindful looking techniques to increase creative practice, and how to use social media to build creative communities. The symposium was well received, and attendees were particularly pleased with the toolkit as a teaching resource.

Website and social media statistics: there have been 1496 hits on the Colourful Heritage website across the project, and the Instagram has garnered 320 followers, more than four times the number of students who engaged directly with the #DrawEveryday campaign, suggesting a wider reach than just the original target audience.

VADS Database: The Zandra Rhodes Collection has been viewed 14019 times since being uploaded onto VADS in this project, with 4527 active users. New users from 86 countries have found VADS as a result of this project, with 61964 views of VADS during the timeframe of the project, indicating that users are exploring other areas on the database alongside Rhodes' collection. Engagement by new users peaked particularly around dates where the Project Manager (Learning & Outreach) presented the project at conferences, suggesting that dissemination of the project has reached a wide, international audience because of these activities.

Top five countries by use:

- Singapore: 26018, of whom 25808 are new users of VADS
- Hong Kong: 12717, of whom 12660 are new users
- Mexico: 12322, of whom 12224 are new users
- USA: 4648, of whom 4639 are new users
- United Kingdom: 1012 of whom 948 are new users

2.4. The difference the project has made to heritage

Colourful Heritage has ensured that the culturally significant and internationally recognised work and legacy of Dame Zandra Rhodes and her studio has been recorded and catalogued in such a way that it can be accessed, enjoyed and inspiring to current and future designers, creatives, and interested parties. It has ensured that people are aware of the collection and how to access it, and its inclusion in the Visual Arts Database Service which is actively maintained by UCA mitigates the risk of obsolescence or loss of knowledge which might occur if it had been done on a smaller scale.

Colourful Heritage has created a new comprehensive resource which can be used by and inspire future generations of designers, heritage professionals and researchers. It has provided access to previously uncatalogued ensembles, accessories, garments, design

drawings and sketchbooks which span Zandra's 50 plus year career at the pinnacle of British fashion.

Colourful Heritage has ensured that previous archive records of Zandra's work have been updated to a format and quality which are in keeping with today's standards of cataloguing and accessibility, meaning that more people are able to access and engage with content. By moving the previous records from Vimeo to UCA's own database VADS, there is more control over the accessing and dissemination of the information. Previously uncatalogued ensembles, accessories and Style & Textile Bibles have been added during this project which are now available digitally via VADS to anyone who wishes to engage with them. Improved visibility of the VADS service via Instagram posts and reels and the Colour Me Pink! Webinar and various external conferences have allowed more people to identify and access these resources on an international level.

The oral history interviews conducted as part of this project are timely, as almost all of the participants are beyond retirement age (though still working). Capturing the memories and experiences of people who have been at the forefront of the British fashion industry for decades gives a unique insight into this important aspect of British twentieth century culture. Their advice to younger creatives about practice, collaboration, creativity and believing in your own abilities and perseverance has been incorporated into resources for schools engaged in the #DrawEveryday campaign and will be available for future generations.

Within UCA, the project has led to an improved understanding between back-end users of VADS e.g. library staff, and front-end users such as tutors about how the system is used. Library staff have tended to see VADS predominantly as a knowledge repository; by being integrated into the project team, a better understanding of how users access information has developed. For example, where cataloguers might use the term 'cobalt' to describe a specific shade of blue, a researcher might only search for 'blue' meaning the item labelled cobalt will not be returned in the search. The project has allowed the library staff to develop a more user-focused process for inputting data, for example by expanding key terms for each item or creating 'similar to' return phrases in the search, making the collection easier to use and search, and making heritage more accessible.

2.5. Key success factors and lessons learnt

- The student internship programme was a successful way of providing additional capacity to the process of preparing items to be photographed and digitised, while providing valuable work experience for students (see Section 3 for further detail).
- Collaboration between library staff and catalogue end users has resulted in a more in-depth understanding of the catalogue's use, leading to broader search terms and more accessible language being included to make the catalogue useable by a wider range of people.
- Presenting the project at external conferences has increased awareness of VADS as a resource, leading to a much wider global reach.



**Outcomes
for people**

3. Outcomes for people

3.1. What the project set out to achieve

The project offered opportunities for students and young people to engage directly with creativity and the creative industries through in-person placements and workshops, using Zandra's work and experiences as a catalyst.

An internship programme was created for young people to learn professional skills, while supporting the cataloguing and digitising process. It was designed to bolster their CVs, improve their employment possibilities post-study and increase their confidence.

The Schools' Outreach Programme was developed for 16-18 year olds in Medway, where Rhodes grew up and studied. The primary goal was to improve practical skills in drawing and creativity, to understand what heritage is and what it can mean to them, and to feel a sense of pride and achievement in their own work and in where they come from. The team also wanted to increase levels of confidence and aspiration in children growing up in areas of relative deprivation.

It was recognised that to deliver this effectively teachers, researchers and academics who support young people in their studies and early career must also understand and have access to the resources created by the project.

Heritage Fund outcomes:

A wider range of people will be engaged with heritage

People will have developed skills

People will have learnt about heritage, leading to a change in ideas and actions

People will have greater wellbeing

3.2. Student internship programme

A more detailed analysis of the programme is included in Appendix A: Activity in Focus: Student Internships

3.2.1. What the internship programme delivered

Four UCA students were given the opportunity to work in the Zandra Rhodes Studio over the summer of 2024 cataloguing and digitising garments and accessories to be uploaded to VADS. The students were recruited through a competitive application process and interview, to give experience of applying for positions in a real-world employment scenario.

The placement consisted of 20 days in the studio, with an induction session on the first day. The interns spent their placement preparing garments and accessories for photographing, and cataloguing each item, gaining skills in garment preparation and repair, including how to replace beads, elastic and hems which had come loose, and repairing tears and damage from previous handling and wear. They learnt how to catalogue for an archive database and gained understanding of professional photography and digital requirements.

In total 103 garments and 53 accessories were restored, prepared, catalogued and photographed by the interns during their placements. The images and catalogue records were uploaded to VADS during the autumn of 2024, ready to be used for the Colour Me Pink! VADS

webinar in February 2025 and to support the Schools' Outreach Programme throughout the 2024 – 25 academic year.

3.2.2. The difference the internship programme made for participants

People will have developed skills: For the interns, the placement provided hands-on, practical experience of working in a commercial fashion and textile designer's studio alongside professional designers, photographers and heritage advisors. The opportunity to work closely with and handle haute couture garments allowed for better understanding of how these garments are constructed and cared for. In addition, interns developed improved communication, organisational and critical problem-solving skills throughout their placement, something which was commented on by the studio staff with whom they were working.

“[we] love seeing the studio bustling with activity, especially in the cutting room, which is typically reserved for bespoke garments Zandra is working on. Zandra is in great spirits and seems very happy. The interns appear content and there is a smooth and efficient workflow...[and] strong collaboration among everyone working on the project.”
(Zandra Rhodes Personal Assistant)



Figure 2 UCA interns at Zandra Rhodes Studio over summer 2024 checking, repairing, and preparing garments for photography and cataloguing

Reflecting on their placement experience, all four interns felt that the opportunity improved their CV and their confidence as they begin to move from education into the industry. One of the interns is still in education at UCA, the other three finished their studies in 2024 and all are now working in fashion. One is working in collaboration with a fellow alumni creating their own label, one has moved home following the expiration of her student visa. The final intern made

such a good impression on Zandra Rhodes while on her placement by taking up some additional repair work during her lunch breaks that she was offered a job in the studio and has now been there for nearly 12 months.

People will have learnt about heritage: all four interns reported that they had gained deeper appreciation of heritage, hand crafting skills and sustainable fashion as a result of their work in the studio and their interactions with Zandra.

“[The internship has] provided me with invaluable insights into the heritage and history of garments. [I learnt] the delicate process of repairing and mending historical pieces for photoshoots. I gained practical skills in pinning and positioning fabrics on mannequins to showcase each garment as closely as possible to its original state. This hands-on experience has deepened my appreciation for the craftsmanship and cultural significance of these garments”

All four interns reported that they had a better understanding of the level of detail, skill and craft which goes into creating garments of this nature as a result of their placement, leading to a deeper appreciation of the need to maintain and preserve garments and textiles.

3.2.3. The difference the internship programme made for the organisation

For Zandra Rhodes Studio and UCA, having the interns enabled them to advance the recording and cataloguing of historically significant garments, textiles and designs from Rhodes' archive, preparing them to be uploaded onto VADS and shared via Instagram to increase the reach of the Colourful Heritage project. The interns actively participated in social media campaigns and Heritage Fund initiatives like #ThanksToYou and #HeritageTreasures days, bringing a greater spotlight to the Colourful Heritage Project.

3.2.4. Key success factors and lessons learnt

- The programme was structured to reflect real life working experiences. All four interns reported that having to go through the application and interview process in order to gain the role has increased their confidence in applying for work and in how to successfully express themselves in this situation.
- It proved challenging to offer a joint reflection and CV writing session after the internships completed, as the students had moved on from the campus. This was replaced with the offer of a one-on-one session, building on the individual support and development opportunities provided during the studio placement.

3.3. Schools' Outreach Programme

A more detailed analysis of the programme is included in Appendix B: Activity in Focus: Schools' Outreach.

3.3.1. What the Schools' Outreach Programme delivered

The Schools' Outreach Programme was launched in November 2024 and ran through the Spring and Summer terms of the academic year. It engaged 16-18 year old school students from the Medway towns with fashion heritage and heritage more generally. 83 students were

engaged from five schools. The programme made use of Zandra's catalogue on VADS and a series of Oral History interviews recorded with Zandra and her contemporaries as part of the project as inspiration.

The programme was delivered in three stages:

- **#Draw Everyday** – was launched by UCA on Instagram in February 2025. All participating students were sent a Zandra Rhodes' Colourful Heritage sketchbook and encouraged to draw in it each day to improve creative practice and discipline daily.
- **Workshop days at UCA** – all participating schools attended a carousel day at UCA Canterbury where students took part in screen printing, zine making, paper fashion, and drawing workshops using ideas and designs from their own sketchbooks and images from Zandra's collection for inspiration.
- **Exhibition** – an exhibition showcasing the work made by the students during the workshops was held at Nucleus Arts gallery in Chatham with all students and their families invited to the private view, attended by Zandra Rhodes.

3.3.2. The difference the Schools' Outreach Programme made

People will have developed skills: The #DrawEveryday campaign encouraged regular creative practice and fostered a sense of community through social media engagement and shared creative experience, fostering a digital creative community aimed at bringing together likeminded people to support the development of creativity, emulating Rhodes' own creative network. It incorporated mindfulness techniques through drawing exercises, providing students with tools for wellbeing that extend beyond the project.

Students and teachers alike commented that they had seen improvement in students' drawing, observation and critical skills over the course of the #DrawEveryday campaign. Students could visibly see improvements in their own artistic skills and development over time. This tangible progress and skill development boosted confidence and self-esteem. The project emphasised that these same sketchbook skills were fundamental to Dame Zandra Rhodes' early career and indeed still are today, creating inspirational connections for young people. Students reported enjoyment and liberation of having a sketchbook with no rules, in contrast to how exam sketchbooks are structured by schools for exam boards.

Students said that the workshops had helped them think about potential future careers in the creative industries.

"I didn't know what to expect. I've been into universities before, but this one has lots more on display, its inspirational."

"...I want to do engineering, but this is so much fun, and I don't like numbers. This has opened my eyes."

Teachers interviewed were positive about the impact of Colourful Heritage on their own teaching practice, citing access to heritage resources and education materials provided by the project as something they could incorporate into their ongoing teaching practice. Several stated that they were keen to sign up for the project again next year to allow their future cohorts

to benefit from the experience, many citing the benefit of having access to professional standard equipment on site at UCA for their students.



Figure 3 Key Stage 5 students from Medway on campus at UCA Canterbury taking part in a screen-printing workshop

A wider range of people will be engaged with heritage: The programme reached 83 schoolchildren from five schools in areas of deprivation. The exhibition drew in family and friends who would not have engaged with the project, or the heritage of Zandra or Medway had the workshops been one-offs as originally intended.

The #DrawEveryday has taken on a life of its own, with one school taking it in-house and awarding house points to students who draw daily and show their work to teachers. The school is looking to set up their own campaign to keep students drawing over the summer holidays. Another school rolled it out to all of their students across Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, extending it beyond the project's target group of Key Stage 5 Art and Design students.

People will have learnt about heritage leading to changes in ideas and action: Students developed a stronger sense of place-based heritage when they recognised the Medway connection with internationally renowned designer Zandra Rhodes, creating new pride in their local area and helping them understand how their hometown connected to broader cultural narratives. The project also created unexpected heritage conversations - students learning about Zandra Rhodes for the first time discovered that their parents and grandparents had heard of her, leading to broader discussions about family history and shared cultural memory. Students began thinking about their own family heritage and what they should record or save for future generations, representing a fundamental shift from viewing heritage as something distant and institutional to understanding it as something personal and immediate.

“It has made me think about Medway differently. I’ve never seen no one dressed like me in Medway. It’s nice to know that there’s someone else like me, even if there’s been 60 years in between.”

Through interviews with Zandra Rhodes and her contemporaries, students gained new understanding of creative processes, drawing techniques, and support networks as forms of heritage worth preserving and sharing. The project helped students understand heritage as something created by communities and networks rather than individual genius, revealing the collaborative nature of creative work and the importance of support systems.

People will have greater wellbeing: the final exhibition allowed students to share their creative output with family and friends, providing obvious satisfaction and pride to the students involved and their parents. The project offered insight into the ongoing creative practice of an internationally significant figure in fashion heritage, leading to a more disciplined approach to their own creative practices and an understanding that creative higher education and creative professions are viable career options.

“The exhibition was amazing, celebrating young people, art and creativity, opening arts for all.”



Figure 4 Exhibition of work produced by students as part of the Schools' Outreach programme, held at Nucleus Arts Chatham and attended by students and their families and Dame Zandra Rhodes

3.3.3. Key success factors and lessons learnt

- The decision to change the schools programme from individual in-school workshops to an onsite carousel day for five schools meant that the team were able to deliver a richer and more detailed learning offer. Students were also given the opportunity to spend more time in and become more familiar with a university setting. The change also meant that schools were able to participate in a joint exhibition which increased the outcomes of the programmes.
- The flipped learning model, with the #DrawEveryday campaign on Instagram encouraging daily drawing prior to the carousel days was an effective method for encouraging visible improvements in drawing skills in the participating students, and a greater discipline and confidence in creative practice – this was something which was commented on by students, teachers and parents.
- Communicating with teachers directly was challenging, as communication often goes via an office or admin, meaning that information can be missed. Some teachers said they had not realised the full extent of the project until they were on site at UCA, despite cover letters being sent out with the sketchbooks.
- One school had a high percentage of students who receive free school meals, including breakfast, which UCA were not made aware of. The coaches bringing this school to UCA Canterbury for the workshop days left before breakfast, meaning those students had potentially not eaten since the previous day which affected their concentration and general wellbeing.
- The team were not aware that artwork for exams cannot be displayed prior to marking to avoid copying or cheating. This made engaging with #ColourfulHeritage more challenging.

3.4. Other impacts for people

- Researchers, academics and interested parties gained skills in how to use VADS through the Colour Me Pink! Webinar (see Activity in Focus Section 5.3). The 'slow looking' exercise introduced a successful wellbeing element to the webinar, which participants were engaged by.
- The project teams from UCA, Zandra Rhodes Studio, and Zandra Rhodes Foundation gained skills in delivering projects, working with external funders, and building educational-industry ties (See Section 4 for more details).



**Outcomes for
the organisation**

4. Outcomes for the organisation

4.1. What the project set out to achieve

The partnership between Zandra Rhodes Studio and the University for the Creative Arts was designed to strengthen ties between the organisations and be mutually beneficial. It was an opportunity for UCA and Zandra Rhodes Studio staff to learn how to deliver projects such as outreach to communities beyond the university, and projects supported by non-academic funders, making both organisations more resilient.

Heritage Fund outcomes:

The funded organisation will be more resilient

4.2. The difference the project has made

4.2.1. Professional development opportunities for UCA, Zandra Rhodes Studio, and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation staff

For both organisations, the project has been an opportunity to become more resilient by learning how to apply for, secure, and deliver a project funded by external funding bodies outside of academia. They have learnt how to plan and deliver the project, and how to work with and report to funders. For both teams this was their first experience of successfully applying for external public funding rather than research funding, and this is particularly significant for the newly created Zandra Rhodes Foundation.

Individuals on the UCA project team reported a great deal of valuable professional development gained from the project. This differed depending on the person, their role, and their previous experience, but included gaining skills in leadership, decision-making and adapting approaches to effectively support the growth of individuals when leading a team, learning new technical skills through specific training such as advanced cataloguing skills, and experience of recruitment from the recruiters' side of the table.

More broadly, enhanced collaboration skills across different university departments led to a better understanding of how different departments work, and how long certain processes such as cataloguing, which requires a great deal of detail, takes. There was strong collaboration between staff at different UCA campuses, with staff at UCA Canterbury providing invaluable local knowledge to support the workshop days at this location.

4.2.2. Strengthened relationship between UCA Zandra Rhodes Studio, and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation

The relationship between Zandra Rhodes Studio and UCA has been strengthened. Studio staff were very pleased to teach the interns and to give time to UCA colleagues during the project and have benefited from the work done on VADS by the library team at UCA. The studio now uses VADS as a reference system, decreasing the amount of time which has to be used by studio staff in looking up details or designs and giving Zandra's team more immediate access to her archive.

4.2.3. New and strengthened community partnerships

UCA has built strong relationships with Medway-based schools through this project. This was particularly important as the closure of the UCA Rochester campus in 2023 had left a gap in creative opportunities for young people in the Medway area, and there was a strong desire to redress this through Colourful Heritage.

Teachers who attended the onsite Schools' Outreach days at UCA Canterbury were very positive about the opportunities provided for both their students and themselves as practitioners. Several commented that they wanted to sign up again for next year to ensure their next cohort benefited from the relationship. While this is currently not possible due to funding constraints and UCA staffing cuts, it demonstrates that the flipped learning model approach is successful and justifiable for fostering these relationships.

By giving Key Stage 5 students the opportunity to have a day on site at UCA, the project shows students there is a place locally to pursue creative Higher Education. This could potentially translate into admissions and tuition fees for the university in the long term.

The #DrawEveryday campaign has developed a life beyond the project itself. As part of the flipped learning approach, UCA shared content on Instagram daily for 14 weeks from mid-March until early June, encouraging participants to draw, providing tips, techniques and inspiration. Participants were encouraged to tag their creations, building up a social network of creativity and creative practice. Since the exhibition, UCA reduced posts to once weekly, but participants remain engaged and continue tagging their work. Due to staffing restructure, the Project Manager (Education and Outreach) is in conversation with Nucleus Arts gallery (who hosted the student exhibition in Chatham) about taking over management of the campaign as part of their community outreach programme, keeping the online creative community alive and thriving.

The outreach programme has helped to build Zandra Rhodes Studio's reputation as a charitable foundation with a social purpose, which will help to build a case for support for future funded work.

4.2.4. Increased profile of UCA, Zandra Rhodes Studio, and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation

The project received good coverage in the media. Social media posts reached people interested in or involved with the project. A webinar helped raise UCA's profile within academic circles. International universities like the University of California and University of Chicago are using VADS in their teaching. This is similar to how UK institutions use the Smithsonian or Yale Library's online collections and boosts UCA's reputation worldwide. The surge in new users of VADS because of the project, with new users from 86 countries, has boosted the visibility and profile of UCA.

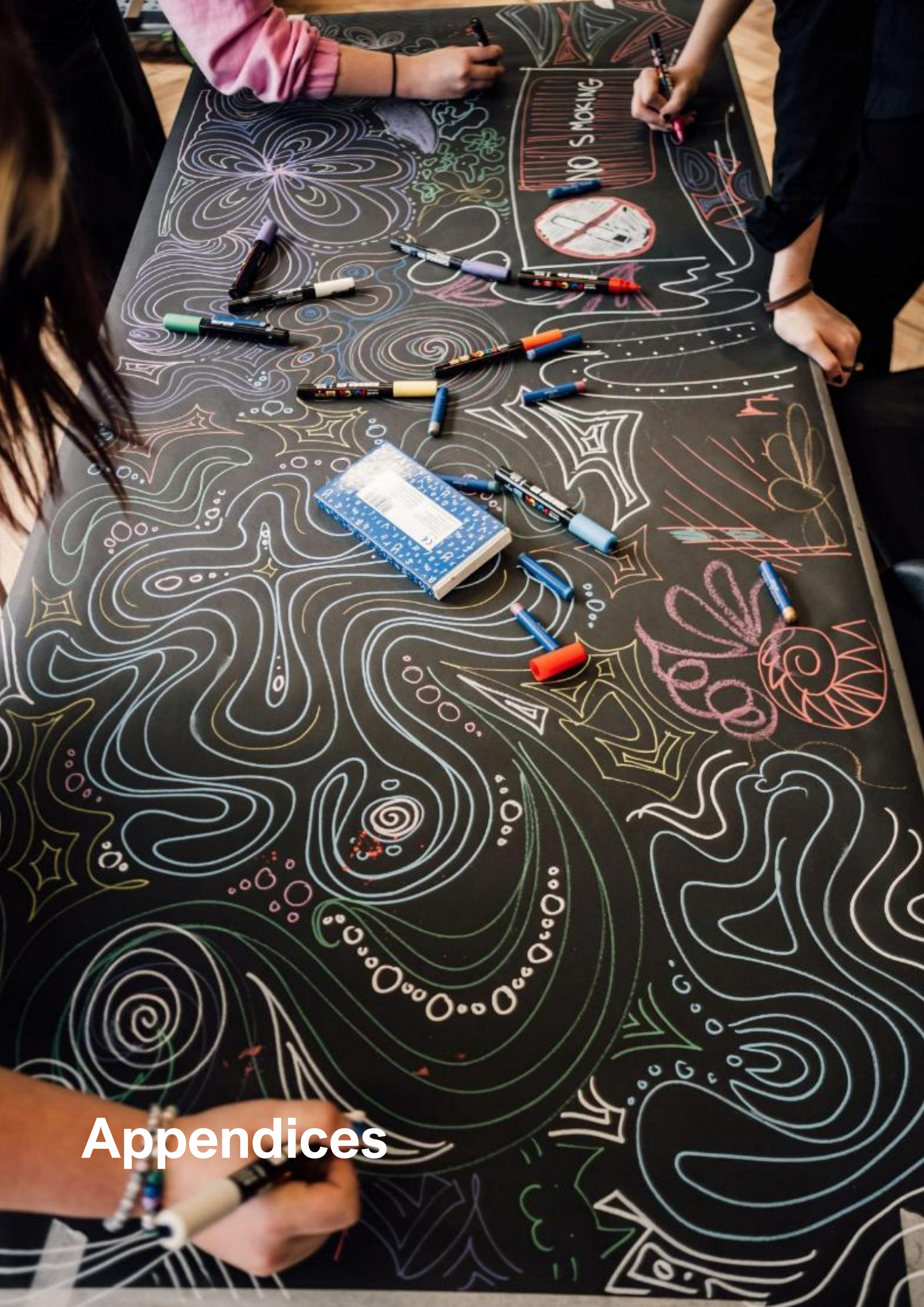
Local radio and TV also featured the project. Most recently, the BBC's The One Show included a segment about it.

This has been important in advocating the work of The Zandra Rhodes Foundation and UCA to a wider audience. UCA's unique selling point is that it is a Specialist Creative University. That they have forged stronger industry ties through this collaboration with Zandra Rhodes Studio and The Zandra Rhodes Foundation, the CPD opportunities for UCA staff, and the

increased public awareness of both organisations resulting from the Colourful Heritage Project can only serve to raise the profile of UCA as a higher education institution.

4.2.5. Key success factors and lessons learnt

- The team were driven by a shared passion and enthusiasm for the project, which strengthened the partnership and helped overcome obstacles.
- The team learnt the importance of collaboration and clearly understanding roles and responsibilities, particularly when team members are not based on the same campus or same location, as well as shared understanding of deadlines and milestones.
- The team also learnt to adapt to different communication preferences. For example, UCA staff are used to communicating via Teams or email as they are very often desk based, while Zandra Rhodes Studio staff who are working in the studio are more likely to respond to a phone call or WhatsApp.



Appendices

5. Appendix A: Activities in Focus

5.1. Activity in Focus: Student Internships

5.1.1. What the Activity set out to do

The intern placement gave four UCA students the opportunity to work in the Zandra Rhodes Studio over the summer of 2024 as part of the Colourful Heritage project. The benefits were two-fold; for the interns it provided hands-on, practical experience of working in a commercial fashion and textile designer's studio, preparing haute couture garments for photographing and cataloguing, working with professional creatives and developing communication, organisational, and critical problem-solving skills to bolster their CV. The application and selection process for the placement mirrored that of a job application and interview, providing valuable experience for students as they transition into the world of work.

For the Zandra Rhodes Studio and UCA, having the interns in place enabled them to advance the recording and cataloguing of historically significant garments, textiles and designs from Rhodes' archive, preparing them to be uploaded onto UCA's Visual Arts Database Service (VADS) and shared via Instagram to increase the reach of the Colourful Heritage project.

5.1.2. What happened

To ensure the programme reflected real-world employment scenarios, a competitive application process was undertaken. A role description was agreed between UCA and Zandra Rhodes Studio and published internally via UCA student communication channels. Interested students had to apply in writing submitting a CV and cover letter, they were then short-listed and invited to interview, with successful candidates offered the placement opportunity.

All four successful interns reflected that the recruitment process was beneficial; the fact that the position had to be competed for gave an increased sense of pride in gaining it, and the process of having to express their interest and passion for the position in writing was noted as an important life skill:

"I am really proud of myself for getting the position, especially as the application was just a cover letter, expressing my passion and skills through text was a skill in itself."

Each placement consisted of 20 days working in the studio with two interns in the studio at the same time. The placement started with an induction. Interns were taught by Zandra Rhodes herself, Zandra's former Production Manager Frances Diplock, and Stephanie Howell, a Costume Mounter at the Victoria & Albert Museum on how to prepare garments and accessories for photographing for the catalogue.

Interns gained skills in:

- **Garment restoration, preparation and handling:** learning how to restore and prepare garments and accessories for photography, including the best methods for ironing different fabrics, and for dressing mannequins. Some garments had been in storage since the 1960s and had suffered changes to the materials over that time, with elastics failing and fabrics becoming brittle, the interns were taught how to change elastics, replace lost

beads, mend fastenings and repair rips and breaks in fabrics. This led to an improved technical understanding of garment construction and the properties of different fabrics.

- **Cataloguing for archive database:** learning how to catalogue items using standard museum/archive terminology and metadata standards to ensure information captured was accurate and consistent across the collection.
- **Professional photography and digital requirements:** by working with the studio photographer students gained understanding of the digitisation process from start to finish, and of the exacting standards required in a professional studio environment.

Preparation included ironing, pressing, cleaning and minor repairs to garments and accessories, before mounting accessories, dressing mannequins and working with the photographer to ensure high quality images of each ensemble. Interns were taught how to catalogue items, capturing Keywords, references to Zandra Rhodes' Style & Textile Bibles and contextual information to support the catalogue entry, such as images of items being worn on the runway or shown for the first time.

"The induction process at Zandra Rhodes Studio was clear and well organised. We received an introduction to the entire building, a brief explanation of each room, and were introduced to the people working in the studio. They explained our tasks and showed us how to use the equipment. On the first day, we prepared garments for cataloguing, and on the second day, we helped dress the mannequin."

In total 103 garments and 53 accessories were prepared, catalogued and photographed by the interns during their placements. The images and catalogue records were uploaded to VADS during the autumn of 2024, ready to be used for the Colour Me Pink! VADS webinar in February 2025 and to support the Schools' Outreach Programme throughout the 2024 – 25 academic year.

5.1.3. The difference this made

For the interns: Interns completed a reflective journal during and after their internships.

While all four interns were from a fashion background, they were able to bring their own skill sets to the project. For example, one was particularly adept at social media, a skill which she shared with her fellow interns, Zandra Rhodes Studio staff and UCA staff members who had differing levels of experience of using platforms such as Instagram. Another had a particularly good eye for detail which came to the fore when checking assemblages for photography. One of the interns was given an opportunity to showcase her sewing skills by helping to create banners for an upcoming exhibition during some downtime in the studio which impressed Zandra to the point that the intern has since secured a part time role with the Studio.

All of the interns reported that they gained new, practical skills in both garment handling and preparation, and cataloguing from the placement, as well as improving soft skills like communication and team working. All strongly agreed that they felt this placement had enhanced their CVs and future employment prospects and that they felt more confident as a result of the placement. They report a deeper appreciation of heritage, hand crafting skills and sustainable fashion as a result of their work in the studio and their interactions with Zandra and her ethos.

“This internship has been an incredibly enriching experience, providing me with invaluable insights into the heritage and history of garments. I learned about different types of trims and fabrics, the patience required to iron intricate clothing with many layers and ruffles, and the delicate process of repairing and mending historical pieces for photoshoots. Additionally, I gained practical skills in pinning and positioning fabrics on mannequins to showcase each garment as closely as possible to its original state. This hands-on experience has deepened my appreciation for the craftsmanship and cultural significance of these garments, and I am grateful for the opportunity to apply these lessons to my future endeavours”

“[the intern placement] gave me the confidence to step forward in starting my own brand. It was so inspiring”

“I became more confident and responsible with my tasks, learned new tricks to iron garments more neatly (especially in gathered areas) and realised the importance of not being shy to ask and communicate”



Figure 5 UCA student interns at Zandra Rhodes Studio referring to one of Zandra's Style & Textile Bible, and repairing an accessory prior to digitisation

For Zandra Rhodes Studio: the efficiency of the workflow and work rate of the students in preparing and photographing garments and accessories was commented on by studio staff, as was the interns' ability to collaborate with studio staff and photographers. That the interns decided to stagger their lunch breaks so that there was no break in output throughout the day meant that productivity was maintained at fast pace as it reduced periods when the photographer might be waiting for garments to be ready to photograph. The efficiency and quality of the interns' work was also commented on by the photographer and other staff.

“[we] love seeing the studio bustling with activity, especially in the cutting room, which is typically reserved for bespoke garments Zandra is working on. Zandra is in great spirits and seems very happy. The interns appear content and there is a smooth and efficient workflow...[and] strong collaboration among everyone working on the project.”
(Zandra Rhodes’ Personal Assistant)



Figure 6 At Zandra Rhodes Studio: an ensemble on the mannequin ready for photographing, and an image of an ensemble being catalogued and prepared to be added to UCA's Visual Arts Database Service (VADS)

For UCA: the opportunity for UCA staff to work on site at Zandra Rhodes Studio has increased their understanding of the transition between educational space and early career employment for their students, giving them greater insight to pass on to future students. The close collaborative work between UCA Project Team members and Zandra Rhodes Studio early on in the project has allowed later aspects of the project to flourish; the garments which have been catalogued by the interns have been used to support the Schools’ Outreach programme, while being able to show examples of students working on the project to school students demonstrates a clear pathway into creative employment via creative Higher Education.

5.1.4. Success factors and lessons learnt

- The timescale from advertising, to interviewing to the placement beginning was very tight. UCA’s health and safety policies slowed the process of advertising the posts, and the team now know to allow more time to negotiate the University’s systems and procedures.
- Originally, the intention was that the four interns attend a one-day in-person employability workshop at UCA after completing their placements to solidify learning and ensure that skills and experience gained from the placement translated into enhanced CVs, improved interviewing, and ultimately paid positions. In reality, it proved very difficult to organise as all of the interns were on different courses and at different stages of their educational

journey, with some completing their studies shortly after the placement and moving away. It would have been beneficial to plan the timing of this with students as they were onboarded, if it was something they felt was valuable.

- Good communication between the Zandra Rhodes Studio team and the UCA staff member overseeing the placements, and preparatory work undertaken by both before welcoming the interns into the studio – from ensuring there was an expert on site each day, to creating a sustainable and productive workflow for the interns to follow – meant that the project was run efficiently and effectively and that time in the studio was maximised for working rather than problem solving.
- The welcoming atmosphere created by studio staff allowed the student interns to get fully involved with the project, asking questions, learning, absorbing and sharing knowledge.
- When two interns are working together, staggering lunch breaks so that other team members further down the line, e.g. the photographer, were not affected by their breaks increased overall workflow and efficiency.

5.2. Activity in Focus: Schools' Outreach

5.2.1. What the Activity set out to do

The Schools' Outreach Programme was designed to provide underrepresented 16-18-year-olds in Medway with the opportunity to increase their engagement with fashion heritage and creative practices. Medway, where Zandra grew up and went to school, has higher than average levels of socio-economic deprivation, with higher-than-average youth unemployment levels².

The programme was designed to show young people a success story from their local area, and through engagement with Zandra's own heritage and a better understanding of their own, show them that heritage and creativity are accessible to everyone. It introduced them to the idea that creativity and the creative industries are a viable and valid career option by giving them the opportunity to learn and develop new creative and critical skills and improve well-being and a sense of both place and purpose.

5.2.2. What happened

The Schools' Outreach was originally envisaged as a workshop delivered in schools to 16-18 year olds by an outreach practitioner from UCA. The aim was to deliver a workshop in 10 different Medway schools, engaging approximately 150 students.

In the initial bid, it was expected that the workshops would be delivered early on in the programme – likely in the autumn term of the academic year, with resources for teachers to continue engaging their students with the project after the workshops.

Over the course of the project the Schools' Outreach offer developed into a 'flipped learning' model, designed to engage students over a longer period of time, encourage creativity and drawing practice, and develop an on-line creative community where students could share their work with one another and the project team.

During the first stage, all participating students were sent a Zandra Rhodes' Colourful Heritage sketch book. The **#DrawEveryday campaign** was launched by Rhodes via Instagram in February 2025 with a video message directly to participating students challenging them to draw every day. This was followed up throughout the campaign with extracts from the interviews with Rhodes and her contemporaries which were gathered as part of the project, and images from Rhodes' archive via VADS. Students were encouraged to use their sketchbooks each day to record something by drawing, helping them to establish a practice of observation and notation, and practice their drawing skills, not for examination or marking but simply to encourage creative practice and active looking. Students were encouraged to share their drawings using the #DrawEveryday tag on Instagram, building up a creative network – something Rhodes cites as being very important in her own practice.

The workshop aspect of the programme was upgraded to an on-campus day at UCA Canterbury – the nearest UCA campus with Fine Art and Print Making facilities to Medway. These took place over two days in April 2025, with different schools each day. The campus

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/labourmarketlocal/E06000035/>

day consisted of a carousel of five creative workshops, plus a campus tour, lunch in the student union, information about creative Higher Education pathways, information about the Colourful Heritage Project as a whole, the #DrawEveryday campaign, and the end of project exhibition of student work to be delivered in June at Nucleus Arts, a community art gallery in Medway.

The five workshops were:

- Slow looking – an observational drawing workshop where students were encouraged to look for patterns and shapes in a selection of fabrics and garments provided by Zandra Rhodes Studio and create a series of ink and paint drawings based on their observations.
- Paper fashion – drawing bold colourful patterns onto large pieces of paper and then using the paper to fashion garments directly onto one another through folding, pleating, tearing and taping shapes together.
- Zine making – using found 2D media (in this case a selection of magazines and papers provided by the tutor) to combine in new ways, based on the graphical rather than written information portrayed by the source material to create an 18 page A5 booklet or zine which could then be drawn into, written on, and/or printed into to create a unique object from found and reused materials.
- Print preparation – creating stencils for screen print using drawings and observations from their own Colourful Heritage sketchbooks as a starting point.
- Screen printing – using the stencils made in print preparation in the print room to create a series of prints.

84 students attended the on-campus workshops over two days. Coaches were provided free of charge to the schools with additional funding secured by the Project Manager (Learning and Outreach) to transport students to and from campus. One school pulled out last minute due to administration difficulties at the school's end and two schools did not take up all of the places offered to them by UCA. While this falls short of the original target number of 150 students engaged across 10 schools, the depth of the final offer, with students using professional grade studios and equipment on campus and engaging with 5 different workshops across the day provided a more in-depth immersion into creative higher education and practice than the more light-touch in-school approach originally envisaged could have done.



Figure 7 Key Stage 5 students on the Schools' Outreach Programme taking part in a paper fashion workshop (left) and a zine making workshop (right) on campus at UCA Canterbury

5.2.3. The difference this made

The flipped learning approach used for the schools' outreach, using the #DrawEveryday Instagram campaign coupled with the Colourful Heritage sketch books allowed students to engage with the project and begin gathering ideas and images prior to arriving on campus. All students interviewed expressed sheer joy in having a sketchbook which was not going to be marked for an exam. Many commented on how much they enjoyed the freedom that having the Zandra Rhodes Draw Everyday sketchbook had given them, by being able to draw anything that captured their imagination and purely for the sake of drawing.

“Draw Everyday has really helped. Because doing Graphics everything has to be really neat and tidy, and I get worried about it. This has been really good just to let me enjoy drawing again.”

“The sketchbook has been really good – I’ve been trying to use it every day, and I’ve really noticed that it’s improved my observational skills.”

Teachers too noted that they had seen improvements in their students drawing skill and confidence as a result of the #DrawEveryday campaign.

“They saw it as a proper task at first, an assignment to be marked, but now they’re just enjoying it and doing it because they enjoy it.”

The #DrawEveryday Instagram campaign created an online creative community. UCA and Zandra Rhodes Studio shared images and videos of Zandra’s work to inspire students and teachers. Students posted their own work with the hashtag, creating a dialogue between students and professionals. Using social media made it easier for young people to join in, since it was a platform they already used. The digital platform also allowed everyone to connect, no matter where they were. This helped break down barriers between school students and universities, as everyone shared their creative work in the same place. This sense of creative community is something that has been important to Zandra in her professional life.

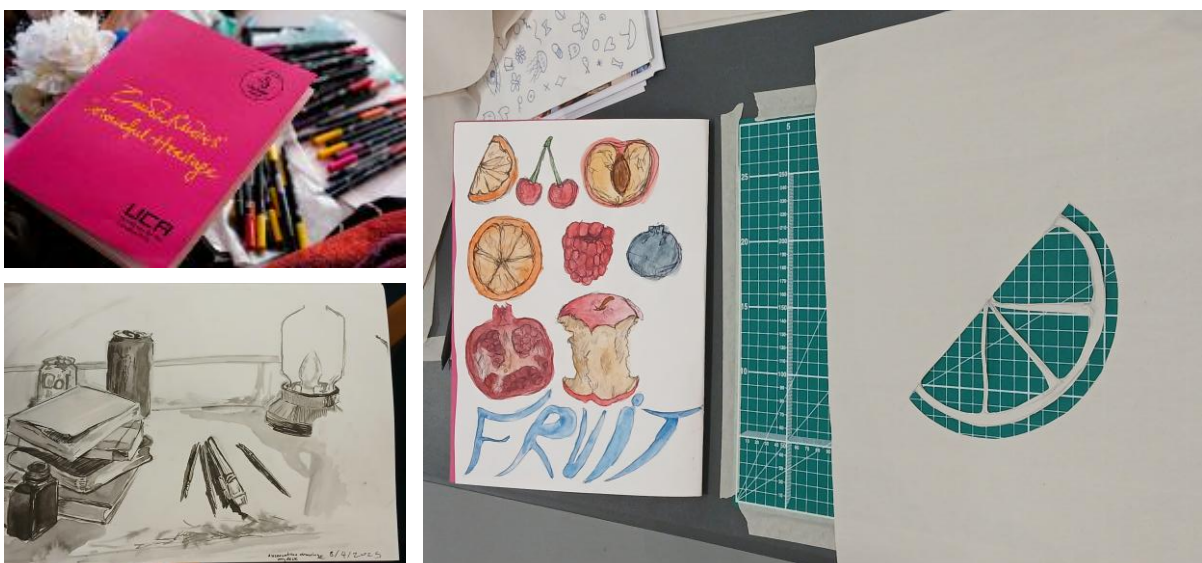


Figure 8 Every student participating in the Schools' Outreach Programme was sent a Colourful Heritage sketchbook and challenged to draw in it every day. Some students used their drawings to inspire designs for printmaking on the campus days at UCA Canterbury.

Students have developed greater awareness of their own heritage and creative practice because of the project. Several said that they were not aware of Zandra Rhodes before the project, but that older relatives were, leading to conversations with their family about Zandra and about their own heritage.

“I didn’t know Zandra, but I asked my nan and she loves her! She kind of reminds me of Zandra, she’s got bright purple hair. She was really excited, she said I had to do this project, it’s the opportunity of a lifetime.”

Many of the sketches produced by the students are either of places around Medway, or their homes and families. They were encouraged to sketch things around them and build up a log of their own surroundings and environments, much as Zandra does in her own practice. Seeing videos of Zandra’s work through the #draweveryday campaign, particularly her sketchbooks, has made the students consider their own heritage and hometown in a different light, seeing that there are local icons to be proud of, and that there are opportunities for ‘people like them’ to be something:

“It has made me think about Medway differently. I’ve never seen no one dressed like me in Medway. It’s nice to know that there’s someone else like me, even if there’s been 60 years in between.”

The response of the students to the workshops they tried was overwhelmingly positive, particularly the Zine making and printing, which many students experienced for the first time. They gained skills and an understanding of process which they will be able to carry forward into their own creative practices, be that current education or beyond.

“[zine making] was less stressful because I didn’t have to be creative from nothing. I could use things already there to make new work. I want to make more zines, I really enjoyed that.”

“[Screen printing] ... even though it was only a 45-minute session I understand the process now, and that it’s something which can be layered up over a longer time to make a more complex image.”

This was a sentiment echoed by the teachers:

“The screen printing was amazing because that is not something you can do as a whole group in school. You can only teach one or two at a time and when is there ever opportunity for that?”

Across both days of the workshops there were very high levels of engagement from all the students with the activities they were asked to participate in. For several, this was their first experience of visiting a university campus, and for almost all their first experience of visiting a creative university. There was evident interest in the campus space itself, the work of current university students which was on display, and the opportunities that might be available in such an institution.

“I didn’t know what to expect. I’ve been into universities before, but this one has lots more on display, its inspirational.”

“[on doing a creative degree] Maybe - I don’t know yet, I’m having a crisis! I want to do engineering, but this is so much fun, and I don’t like numbers. This has opened my eyes.”

“I want to get into architecture. I’ll be the first person in my family to go to uni. I want to make sure it’s something good.”

5.2.4. Exhibition

A stretch goal of hosting an exhibition of student work during the project was added after the funding was granted by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The exhibition ran for two weeks in June 2025 in Nucleus Arts, a community art gallery in the Medway town of Chatham. The gallery is free to enter and situated in a central location in Medway. The choice of location was important in strengthening the connection with Zandra’s early life, and in ensuring that students and their families could get to the gallery easily, without having to travel far.

At least one piece of work from each student who attended the workshop days was displayed. All participating students and their families were invited to a private view, with a drinks reception and an official photographer. Zandra attended, speaking with students and their families, asking students about their ambitions, their work, and their engagement with the project and posing for photographs with students and their work.

5.2.5. The difference this made

The majority of visitors to the private view were participating school children whose work was on display and their families and friends, although approximately one fifth of visitors were members of the general public who had no explicit connection to the project.

Visitors to the private view were asked to complete a short feedback postcard. The comments were coded against the following criteria: positive (general), creativity, pride in work or self, opportunity for young people.

Every single comment received was positive, there were one or two suggesting that they would have liked to have seen more student work on display but given the size of the gallery this was not an option. The creativity on display was the next most commented on topic, with just under half of respondents saying how impressed they were:

“The exhibition was amazing, celebrating young people, art and creativity, opening arts for all.”

Just under half of the comments stated how proud the commenter was about the exhibition, either because they had work on display, or were a family member of someone displaying work.

“Amazing. A great way to demonstrate young upcoming talent - it is a joy as a mum to see your daughter’s art in an exhibition #proudmum”

“Was lovely to see my art in an exhibition.”

Around a quarter of commentators focused on the importance of the opportunity for young people given by the project.

“I think it is great to support the potential next generation of art/fashion to give them an insight into the world which they hope to move into.”

The overwhelming feeling from students and parents was one of pride and excitement. Students expressed a quiet confidence and excitement at seeing their own work displayed in a gallery context, while parents demonstrated a strong sense of pride in their children's accomplishments and appreciation for the project in providing such a valuable opportunity.

The fact that Zandra Rhodes was in attendance, and was speaking with each student, asking them about their work and their ambitions for the future, while posing for photos with each student in front of their work (and teaching them how to pose for the camera) made it a really special and significant moment.

One of the key drivers of this project has been to show school age students in Medway that the creative industries are a viable option, to instil a sense of pride in their own heritage, and to dispel feelings that opportunities don't happen for people “from these kinds of places”. The excitement at meeting Zandra and having her take an interest in their work was evident from the students.

5.2.6. Success factors and lessons learnt

- The flipped learning model worked best with the schools and teachers who fully engaged with it. One school had largely left students to their own devices with the sketch books, while another had used the #DrawEveryday videos as starter activities in their art and design classes and actively encouraged their students to bring their sketch books into school. The students from this second school had a much larger body of work and were more confident on the workshop days.
- The Project Manager (Education and Outreach) at UCA found that it can be hard to communicate directly with teachers, as communication often goes via an office or admin, and things can get lost in translation. Teachers from the school who did not actively engage said they had not realised the full extent of the project until they were on site at UCA, despite cover letters being sent out with the sketchbooks.
- One school had a high percentage of students who receive free school meals, including breakfast. Because of the timing of the day, the coaches bringing them to campus for the workshop day left before breakfast time, meaning those students had potentially not eaten since the previous day. This was exacerbated by the schedule of the day running to a university schedule rather than a school schedule, with lunch being at 1pm and there not being a break/snack time incorporated into the morning. Planning around the needs of these students, or providing breakfast or snacks on arrival, would have provided them with a better experience.
- The team were not aware that artwork for exams cannot be shared online or even on the walls of the school prior to assessment, to prevent the possibility of copying or cheating. This made it more challenging to engage with the #DrawEveryday campaign.

5.3. Activity in Focus: Colour Me Pink! VADS webinar

5.3.1. What the Activity set out to do

‘Colour Me Pink! Being Inspired by the Zandra Rhodes’ Colourful Heritage Project’ was a webinar run by the UCA library department in February 2025 to introduce researchers, academics and others interested in fashion history and heritage to the Visual Arts Database Service (VADS), using the newly uploaded Zandra Rhodes archive as a catalyst.

VADS is a service created and run by the library department of UCA. Since its inception in 1997 some 140 000 images from over 300 art and design collections across the UK have been added to it. All are open source and freely available for non-commercial use in education. The profile of the Colourful Heritage Project was a good opportunity to introduce a wider range of people to the resource as a whole through the lens of Zandra Rhodes’ archive.

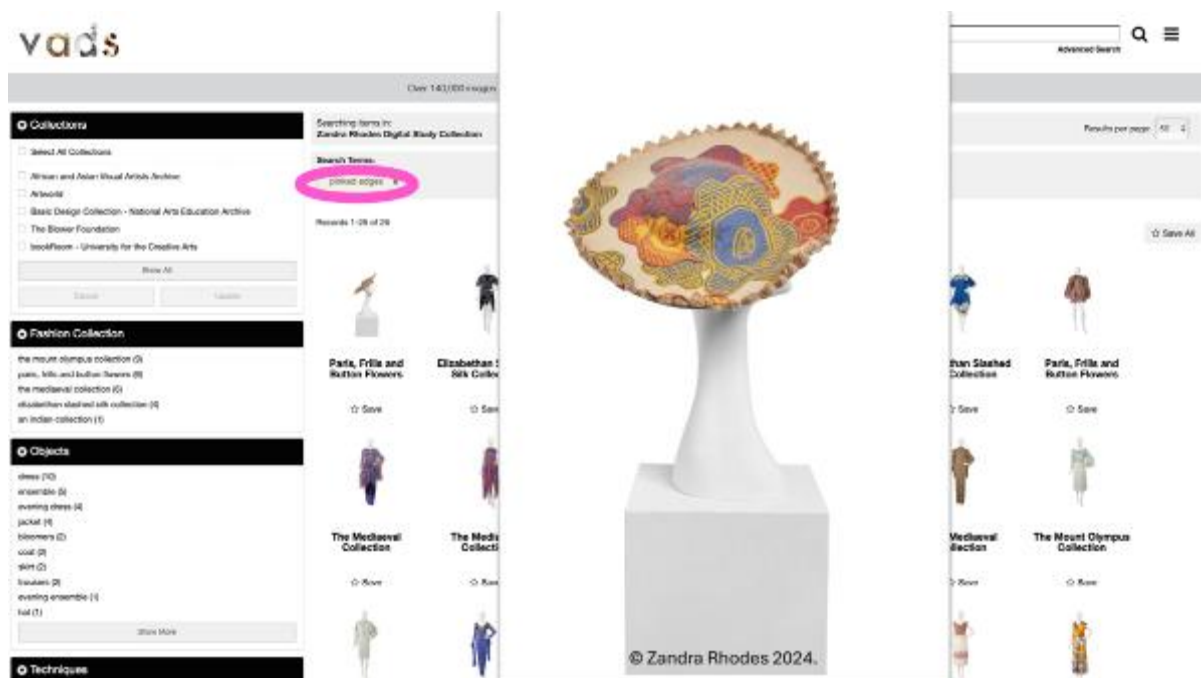


Figure 9 Example of VADS search on Zandra Rhodes Archive

5.3.2. What happened

The webinar was promoted ahead of the event through various academic arts and libraries groups, including the Art Libraries Society, Libraries Information, Academic & Research Libraries Group, Group for Education in Museums, Archives & Records Association UK & Ireland, the Museums Computer Group (submitted to 1775 subscribers at the time), Visual Resources Association, Museum Librarians and Archivists Group, UCAs internal and external communications and marketing channels including @colourfulheritage, the project’s Instagram and via the personal social media of those running the webinar. 314 people clicked through to the registration page for the webinar, with 184 registering to attend and 84 attending in real time on the day.

The webinar consisted of a presentation about the Colourful Heritage Project itself, an introduction to some of the garments and ensembles catalogued and digitised by the interns as part of the project, examples of how to use the collection as a researcher and historian, including copyright and access, and a presentation on 'slow looking' using the collection, a technique for observing images and patterns in a methodical and ordered way to improve observational skills – this is something Zandra is very keen on and uses in her own creative practice. It has been a thread throughout the project, with students involved in the outreach days also participating in 'slow looking' practice.

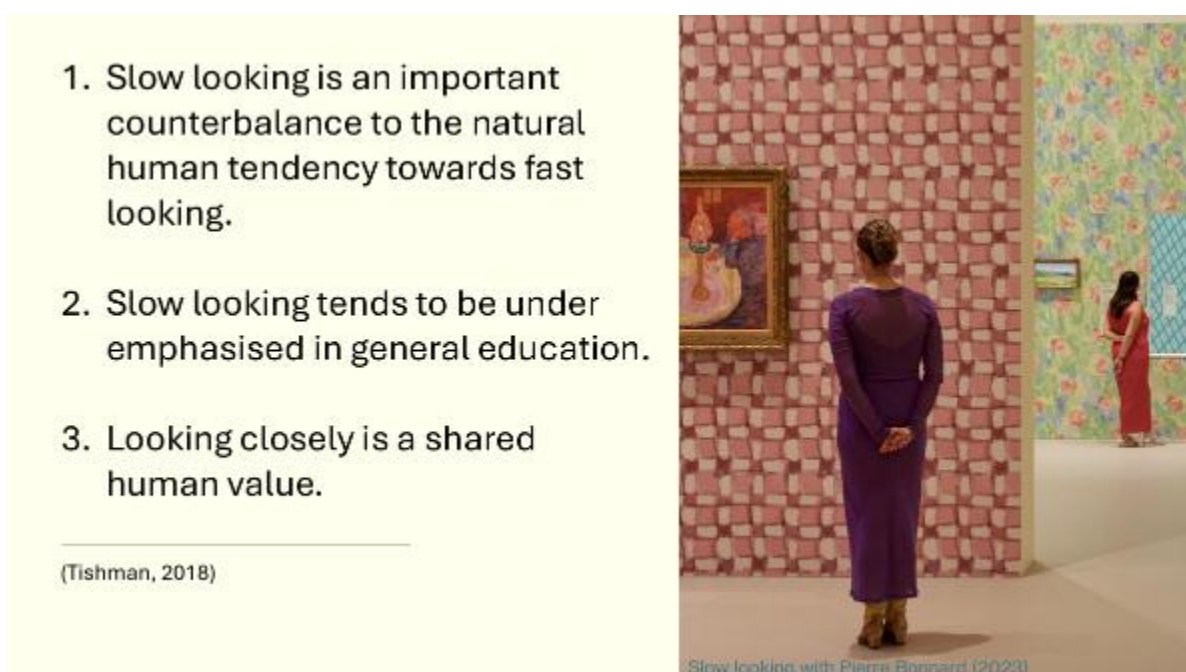


Figure 10 Slide from Colour Me Pink! Webinar introducing the concept of slow looking

A recording of the webinar was sent to all registered participants after it took place so that those who could not attend live could still engage, and those who had attended live could refer back to it if required. Participants were global (predominantly English-Speaking) with attendees from Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Denmark, England, Ireland, Scotland, the United States, and Wales. They included academics, archivists, library professionals, researchers and museums professionals. Approximately 10% of participants were UCA staff, this provided a good opportunity for the library department to demonstrate internally the reach and depth of this project and the service it offers through VADS, the other 90% of attendees were from other institutions or were individuals.

There were some technical hitches with the webinar, despite the team logging in ahead of time to ensure that they were all able to swap between presenters and take control of the slide show as necessary. This was dealt with by one of the presenters taking control of all presentations and moving slides on for the other presenters – a good on the spot work around.

5.3.3. The difference this made

Throughout the webinar participants were engaged, with questions and comments being posted in the chat window which was overseen by those hosting – this allowed answers and links to relevant information to be posted in real time to attendees. The exercise in ‘slow looking’ proved highly engaging with almost all attendees taking part and sharing their thoughts in the chat. The response at the end of the webinar was very positive with many comments of thanks and about further engagement, including how to share with colleagues.

“It was fascinating to see how the collection would be used digitally/electronically and the scope of uses. Enjoyed the cataloguing elements too.”

“Relevant insights for a project I am working on - really useful, thank you.”

“It was great to hear a variety of perspectives on the project.”

“The speakers were so articulate and enthusiastic talking about the project.”

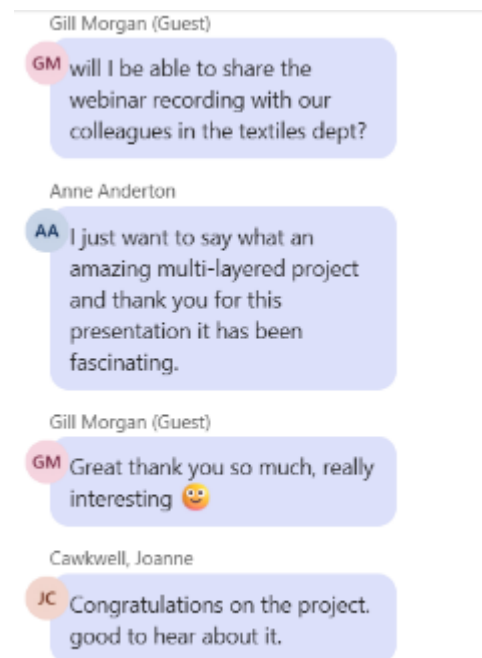
In a survey distributed after the event, all respondents said they were extremely satisfied with the webinar, and almost all said they were extremely likely or likely to access the Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection on VADS.

The only feedback about things which could be improved related to the technical issues, though all giving feedback said it was very minor, expressed more concern that it affected the presenters than it did their own enjoyment of the webinar, and were very grateful that the slides were made available subsequently.

“Not all slides were visible, but this is a technical issue and can't be helped, also very much appreciate that the team have provided the slides subsequently. In terms of the content, really interesting to hear about the project and the many aspects of it, and really lovely just to spend some time viewing and considering the output of a creative icon like Zandra.”

5.3.4. Success factors and lessons learnt

- The introduction of the ‘slow looking’ exercise helped make the webinar feel more creative and interesting.
- There were some technical issues with the webinar despite a technical run through and checking the presentation with the team the day before. One of the presenter’s slides froze part way through and two of the presenters could not see the chat. The fact that there were multiple presenters meant that a reallocation of tasks was able to be undertaken immediately with all slides being shown from one laptop which was working,



Screen capture of some of the comments at the end of the webinar

rather than swapping between presenters and potentially causing disruption, while another was able to keep an eye on comments from participants and reply in a timely manner.

- It would have been helpful to have one person dedicated to monitoring and respond to the chat, feeding questions to the presenters at opportune moments.
- Notifying participants that a recording of the webinar and the accompanying slides would be made available made people less concerned if they were unable to fully access everything in real time.
- Asking participants to turn their camera's off would have reduced postproduction and editing before the webinar recording was made available.

6. Appendix: Evidence Sources

Feedback to inform the evaluation of this project has been gathered using the following quantitative and qualitative methods

Quantitative

- Social media data for #ColourfulHeritage and #DrawEveryday
- Website data for Colourful Heritage, VADS and the Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection
- Survey of attendees of Schools' Outreach Exhibition
- Survey of attendees at Colour Me Pink! Webinar
- Survey of attendees at end of project symposium

Qualitative

- Reflective learning journals kept daily by student interns while on placement at Zandra Rhodes Studio
- Interviews with students and teachers attending UCA Campus day for workshops
- Vox Pops with students attending UCA Campus day for workshops
- Evaluator observations of UCA Campus workshop sessions
- Interviews with workshop facilitators
- Reflective session with Project Manager Learning & Outreach
- Evaluator observations of exhibition launch
- Vox Pops of attendees of exhibition
- Reflective sessions with Colourful Heritage team