



EMMAWILKINSON
KILTMAKER

AM RI TEACHD
PROJECT PROPOSAL
&
RESEARCH

AM RI TEACHD

- "Future" (Scots Gaelic)

This collection considers a great deal of contradictions we have all experienced in some way: Unity and divorce; What has been lost and found; Times of darkness and light - all felt throughout the passage of time as we certainly move into an always uncertain future. I have created Am ri Teachd initially playing on memories of things I have experienced that reflect these contrasts, meaning this collection is deeply close to me while also being a visual story many can relate to.

Inspiration has been taken from metaphorical issues and feelings as well as taking visual influence from figures throughout history who's personal stories evoked feelings centuries ago that remain relevant today. Mary, Queen of Scots, James VI & I, Bonnie Prince Charlie and George IV all played an iconically romantic or tragic part in the history of Scotland and Britain which brought us to where we are today.

The collection is also a demonstration of working in the *past* - through skills such as traditional kiltmaking and hand embroidery, the *present* - considering the issues of today as inspiration, and the *future* - a forward thinking approach to highland dress, fashion and the use of technique and materials. Am ri Teachd is also a demonstration of contemporary Scottish and British textiles, pushing the boundaries of traditional hand sewn kiltmaking and combining this with the ancient craft of embroidery to create a fusion of old and new that exudes contemporary design thinking. It also embodies issues relevant to people today as nationalism rises, our economic and social future is uncertain and what it means to be British and Scottish has changed beyond recognition in the space of a generation...but our unquestionably iconic sense of dress in Scotland has remained.

Am ri Teachd will culminate in four sculptures, three skulls and three paintings.



EMMAWILKINSON

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

Another icon of both romance and tragedy in Scottish history - Mary, Queen of Scots embodies fierceness, the power and challenges of being female and brutal downfall. These are the characteristics that inspire this piece in the collection.

Challenged at every turn by her male advisors, her reign was dramatic to say the least - love, murder, rebellion, jealousy and revenge all ring true. Edinburgh awoke to canon fire marking the return of the Queen of Scots to Scottish shores. Enemies existed all around her; She sought to unite the English and Scottish crowns and thus found not a fellow female ally in her cousin Elizabeth I but an enemy that would eventually seal her fate; John Knox, head of the Church of Scotland decried her as a harlot for her Catholic beliefs in a land torn apart by Reformation; Lord Henry Darnley challenged her place as Queen in favour of his own claim to the throne of Scotland; and her half-brother James rebelled against her. Eventually, she was imprisoned as commanded by Elizabeth, and spent 25 years as her prisoner before being executed out of fear of the power she represented as a monarch and a woman.

This look must be regal, delicate and dangerous at the same time to embody all of these key words that come to mind when researching the life of Mary Stuart. She was an accomplished embroiderer herself and so this will be focal in this piece.



JAMES VI & I

Unity is a key component in this piece. James VI, son of Mary, Queen of Scots, was the monarch who united the crowns of Scotland and England & Ireland after the death of Elizabeth I. He joined not on the crowns, but the nations to form Great Britain and the parliaments of Scotland and England, which did not separate again until 1999. His acts of promoting togetherness did not stop there, he authorised the Bible to be written in common English so it could be read by the wider population, he avoided religiously fuelled wars and is remembered, overall, as a generally thoughtful and peaceful monarch continuing the “Golden Age”.

The look will draw inspiration from family, and the complexities of family (a nod to his mother and her second-cousin's strained relationship resulting in both death and coming together), unity, prosperity and peace. The piece will look at precious metals and armour as ceremony rather than protection. Coins from different periods of time will work as embellishments, showing a family of monarchs side by side, reunited. Gold will be a key colour, symbolic of the peace and prosperity enjoyed at this time of great unity within the British Isles and something...going forward...we must strive to reinstate.



BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE

This piece has been inspired by one of the most romantic figures in Scottish history - Bonnie Prince Charlie. Not the weak, fearful, pretender made out by English propaganda, Prince Charles was seen by Scots as a symbol of hope, courage and a better *future*. His great cause united the ever bickering clans, bringing Scotland together as one force for change.

His ultimate failure in April 1746 at the Battle of Culloden and the collapse of the final Jacobite uprising will forever cast shadow over his successes both in battle and in uniting the Scots. The Bonnie Prince's failures marked the end of highland culture - the manufacture and wearing of tartan banned, the gaelic language outlawed.

This look considers the contrasts of success and failure; courage and fear; unity and divorce - all emotions and actions embodied by Bonnie Prince Charlie and the part he played in the history of Scotland. They are explored through colour and texture, working in both darkness and brightness; recreating ornate uniform and 18th century flamboyance all with a modern edge and thought-provoking edge.

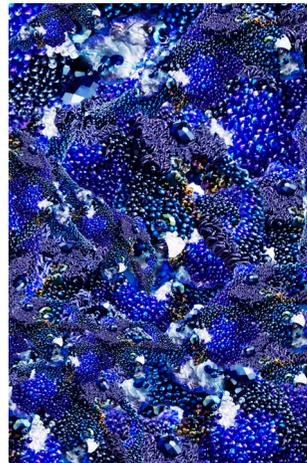


GEORGE IV

After the failure of the final Jacobite rebellion in 1746, Scottish culture had been thoroughly suppressed....until George IV visited Scotland in 1822. His visit, and the works of Walter Scott romanticising the Scottish

Highlands in literature at the same time, restored Highland culture in a modern way. King George wore full Highland dress during his visit - an outfit that in today's money would cost around £10,000 - and so the weaving of tartan recommenced on a huge scale, the tartans and their associated clans were ratified in writing and the Scots traditions were reinstated.

With this in mind, this piece will be modern, over the top and heavily adorned. The look will consist of a very contemporary representation of Highland Dress by creating the garments in plain tweed with tartan highlights, taking inspiration from contemporary designers such as McQueen and Westwood, heavy embellishment on the shoulders - an area symbolically associated with power and status - and, above all, be fit for a King. Black won't play into this colour palette as it has in the previous pieces which have dealt with the ideas of failure and loss. Instead, this piece will be regal shades of blue, purple, silver and gold - exuding a sense of status and positive change which were all brought back to Scotland by the visit of George IV.





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