

# THE VINSON VIEW

Quality maniac and master shopper Nick Vinson on the who, what, when, where and why



## FLYING THE FLAG FOR FREE MOVEMENT

Paul Smith has shown in Paris since 1976, produces in the UK and Italy, wholesales out of London, Paris and Milan and has 871 wholesale clients and 39 stores within the EU.

Manolo Blahnik was born in the Canary Islands, lives in the UK and produces shoes near Milan.

Jonathan Anderson, the London-based, Northern Irish designer, is creative director of French-owned Madrid-based leather goods house Loewe. French powerhouse LVMH also has a minority stake in his label JW Anderson.

These great 'British' designers are all European: Mary Katrantzou is Greek, Roksanda Ilincic is Serbian, Simone Rocha is Irish and Peter Pilotto and his partner Christopher de Vos are Austrian/Italian and Belgian/Peruvian respectively.

Massimo Nicosia, head of design at Pringle of Scotland, has his roots in Sicily.

Dean & Dan Caten of DSquared2 have made London their home yet Italy is where they show, sell and produce their collection.

French luxury goods holding company Kering owns 'British' labels Alexander McQueen, Christopher Kane and Stella McCartney.

## Borderline crazy

Picky Nicky fears Brexit will send creative talent packing

As a Brit who lives between London and Florence, married to a Spaniard with Italian residency, working for the world's most international magazine, I woke up on 24 June in Paris, midway through Men's Fashion Week, to learn the unthinkable was a reality. At the shows and appointments that followed, I pondered the extent of freedom of movement between the UK and continental Europe, now and in the past, for the houses and designers whose collections I was seeing, and how some early European migrants had set up major maisons.

Before the nightmare of Brexit had had a chance to sink in, I received an invite for the opening of London Show Rooms Men, the British Fashion Council initiative that allows emerging British designers to promote themselves during Paris Fashion Week. Of course, there are plenty of high-profile Brits working for important French houses, such as Céline's Phoebe Philo and Chloé's Clare Waight Keller, yet it's hundreds more, educated in the UK, that make up their design teams (Alber Elbaz said Louise Wilson OBE, the late professor from London's Central Saint Martins, provided him with his 'orchestra' at Lanvin).

The father of French haute couture is said to be an Englishman, Charles Frederick Worth, who founded the House of Worth in Paris in 1858. The first store Louis Vuitton

opened outside France was in London, back in 1885. All pre-EU of course, and mentioned just for fashion history, but today it's Briton Kim Jones, Louis Vuitton's men's artistic director, also Wilson-trained, who showed his best collection to date with a little help from UK artists Jake and Dinos Chapman.

That night at Berluti's pool party [\[fig 1\]](#), I recalled that in 1882, Alessandro Berluti set out from Senigallia in Italy to Paris, where he set up shop as a bootmaker – a migrant worker in search of a better life. The next night, talking with our friends from Hermès, I learnt Thierry Hermès was born in Krefeld, Germany, and his family moved to France in 1828, nine years before he founded the brand [\[fig 2\]](#). Neither story involves the EU, nor the UK, but they reinforce the positive aspects of migration on the very foundations of fashion.

Back in 1986 The Antwerp Six, a group of designers including Dries Van Noten and Ann Demeulemeester, rented a truck, drove it to London and presented their collections during Fashion Week. Maison Margiela is today owned by an Italian, Renzo Rosso, and its creative director is Britain's John Galiano. Kris Van Assche, a Belgian, heads up design at Dior Homme; Lucas Ossendrijver, a Dutchman, leads at Lanvin Homme. I could go on. Cross-pollination helps fashion, and indeed all creative industries, to thrive – a reason to treasure freedom of movement. ✨



[\[fig 1\]](#) The international talent pool at the Berluti party in Paris.



[\[fig 2\]](#) A S/S17 jacket by Hermès. The French brand's founder migrated from Germany.