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Hand & Lock: Fashion's secret weapon

Since 1767 Hand & Lock have been at the forefront of British fashion and ceremonial embroidery. Over their long history they have been commissioned produce high quality fashion embroidery for European couture houses including Chanel, Dior and Louis Vuitton. They also supply military badges for the Royal forces, ceremonial embroidery for the British Royal family and exquisite hand monogramming to the public.

In recent years embroidery has undergone a dramatic fashion renaissance with the hottest new designers looking at inventive ways of reimagining embellishments. [Mary Katrantzou](#) commissioned Hand & Lock to produce jewellery inspired, heavily embroidered panels for her AW14 collection. Originally famous for Prints, Katrantzou took her keen eye for detail and used it to make high definition embellished mink sweaters that, in her words, were “about taking an everyday garment and making it really stand out for its decorative nature and luxury value”.



Up and coming Fashion East designer [Ed Marler](#) is a true embroidery convert charging Hand & Lock with embroidering his debut SS15 and follow up AW15 collections. His eclectic debut collection featured embroidered stab vests and embroidered bandanas and evoked the myth of the immortal vampire drifting through the decades collecting styles, garments and trinkets. His AW15 follow up was a kitsch nod to East end London culture with no shortage of references to the classic TV series, Only Fools and Horses. Hand & Lock were tasked with producing a new babycham inspired design that ran throughout the collection reinforcing his key reference along with his trademark crown motif.

Both Katrantzou and Marler have pushed the boundaries of fashion embroidery and found new ways to express old ideas. But the traditional embroidery work of monogramming shirts for [Thomas Pink](#) or producing Gold Epaulettes for [Gieves and Hawkes](#) remains a key component to the business of Hand & Lock. Production Director Jessica Pile explains how they manage to have one foot firmly in tradition and other in contemporary couture:

“The concepts and designs change but the techniques stay the same. We use the same methods today to produce embroidery that they would have used 250 years ago. Like with many things, the craft was perfected after many centuries of trial and error. Now we are in the age of preserving these skills.”

Hand & Lock's archive includes drafts and communiques from legends of couture Hardy Amies, Christian Dior and Norman Hartnell as well as samples from recent commissions for [Kate Moss for Topshop](#), Kim Jones for Louis Vuitton and Tom Ford for Gucci.

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