

Speech: Margot James speaks at the launch of London Fashion Week

Good morning everyone.

I am absolutely thrilled to to be here, at my first London Fashion Week since becoming Minister for the Creative Industries in January this year.

Fashion is incredibly important to me personally. It is important to the government and I think you will probably know it is important to our Prime Minister who wears British fashion whenever she can.

I want to thank Caroline Rush and everyone here at the British Fashion Council, for ensuring London Fashion Week is once again heart and centre of the international fashion calendar.

Image of the Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries in front of the London Fashion Week sign.

UK fashion is an industry admired across the world and I am really proud to be associated with it.

The UK is a global fashion capital and home to world-renowned brands like Alexander McQueen, Erdem and Sophia Webster. As well as up-and-coming labels like Alexa Chung.

The wool trade once accounted for over 80 per cent of our exports and powered the industrial revolution.

Now your industry is worth over £32 billion, has created almost one million jobs and is powering the government's new industrial strategy.

That's nearly a million people whose livelihood depend on the creativity of this industry and many more buying, selling and marketing British fashion the world over.

They all depend on the creativity, talent and sheer hard work that this sector delivers month-by-month.

This Government is committed to giving creative firms across the country the support they need to compete on the global stage.

To help these businesses fulfil their global ambition my department recently announced over £4 million for the new Creative Industries Trade Board which funds fantastic projects like the British Fashion Council's London Show Rooms in Paris.

As well as trade, the British Fashion Council also does incredible work to nurture, support and grow both domestic and international talent, that's so important to your industry.

I'm so delighted to be here wearing Mother of Pearl which is one of the designers really supported by the British Fashion Council.

Our innovative designers and fashion houses showcase the nation's creative zeal, which is why Government is determined to do all we can to support this hugely successful sector and work with the British Fashion Council to ensure access to international talent through our new exceptional talent visa.

I know Brexit is responsible for a great deal of uncertainty and concern but one thing that keeps me going is the creativity in this country, exemplified by your industry, knows no borders.

I would like to thank, as Caroline Rush did, her team and the many people working behind the scenes to create this astonishing event

London Fashion Week has been going for 35 years and remains as important and trend-setting as ever. And I know that this will be the case for many years into the future.

Thank you for having me.