

THE 50P LBD

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 PHOTOGRAPHER: JOHNNY CARR FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY
 MODELS: INAYA & NATALIE

The 'little black dress' featured is a 1980's black jacquard satin-backed crepe knee-length, low-backed fit 'n' flare cocktail dress by Kriss. I found the dress on top of a 50p-an-item pile of clothes at a flea market in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, in 1996. Although I no longer fit the dress, it forms a key piece in my personal archive of second-hand / vintage clothing purchased from charity shops in and around Dewsbury over a 30-year period.

Here, the archive has been brought to life through a creative collaboration, recontextualising a carefully edited selection of pieces, with Dewsbury as the nucleus - the place where I purchased the clothing, the two shoot locations, and the people involved all being from Dewsbury, or currently living in Dewsbury, and representative of the town's cultural demographic.


The Arcade, Dewsbury, a Victorian shopping arcade in the heart of Dewsbury town centre, and the location of the first shoot, is currently undergoing a multi-million-pound renovation to become the UK's first community-owned shopping centre.

I had been desperately seeking a South Asian model when I passed Inaya, a student from Dewsbury, whilst walking back to my car after another fruitless search. It was a moment of synchronicity, and Inaya was a perfect representation of Dewsbury's long-established South Asian population, and embodiment of its dual-culture Gen Z tribe. One of the most interesting aspect for me in a stylist / art direction capacity, was the consideration, and respect, to Inaya's cultural-religious modest dress codes, and the logistics of outfit changing in a very makeshift environment, amongst male collaborators and facilitators.

The shoot took place at time when the renovation of the arcade was in its very early stages, thus capturing the architectural echoes of its past through two centuries - important to document before these memories are lost forever in its 21st century transformation. It was so successful that Inaya has become the 'face of Dewsbury' through The Arcade Project's promotional campaign.

All the pieces used in this shoot were





INAYA WEARS THE 50P LBD WITH:
BLACK BALMAIN TAILORED TROUSERS (£2.00, CANCER RESEARCH, DEWSBURY)
BLACK GRENSON SHOES (£1.00, AGE CONCERN, DEWSBURY)
BLACK '70'S TRENCH COAT (£1.00, OWL LANE CAR BOOT SALE, DEWSBURY)
BLACK WOOL '50'S ZIP-THROUGH CAPELET WITH SEQUIN EMBELLISHMENT (£3.00, THE SALVATION ARMY, BATLEY)
BLACK '50'S HANDBAG WITH GOLDWORK AND AMETHYST EMBELLISHMENT (£3.00, SCOPE, BATLEY)
BLACK WOOL 'TÊTE DE GENIE' BERET (£1.00, SCOPE, BATLEY)



curated from my personal archive of clothing, purchased in Dewsbury charity shops or flea markets from 1995 to present, and costing no more than £10 per item. Other than the dress itself, my stand-out pieces here are the £1.00 traditional Japanese hand-tailored blazer and the antique cream silk embroidered fringed scarf (image 1), the £1.00 Grenson shoes, the £2.00 black Balmain dress-trousers, the £1.00 black 1970's trench coat, and the black velvet and amethyst handbag (image 2), the £7.50 mohair oversized long cardigan (image 3), and the 50p silk chiffon and goldwork traditional South Asian sari (image 4).

The second shoot continues in Dewsbury, this time modelled by my good friend Natalie, fellow advocate of 'buying second hand first', and Sister Queen of charity shopping. Natalie is also on the board for the Arcade Dewsbury renovation project, the location for the first 50p LBD shoot. Natalie is, primarily, an established vintage reseller, (Instagram: @eyewoodwake). For this shoot, my 'little black dress' was accessorised by a tightly curated selection of pieces from Natalie's vast archive of vintage clothing, and her own sentimental items of adornment. Some key pieces from Natalie's edit include a cream wool capelet with goldwork embroidery lined with silk. The cape was purchased at auction around 2016, when a large company in Huddersfield who supplied TV, Film & Theatre with authentic period clothing decided to close its doors and sell up. The cape is Victorian, estimated from between 1860-1900, possibly Ottoman. Natalie purchased a Victorian velvet and lace mourning capelet from a lady in Batley who used to perform in local Amateur Dramatic productions and had kept some of the items she wore on stage. This original Victorian cape had been stored in her attic for around 30 years and, remarkably, has remained in the most incredible condition.

Natalie also has contacts working in those local rag mills that still exist; these

INAYA WEARS THE 50P LBD WITH:
 TRADITIONAL SOUTH ASIAN KHAKI AND CREAM
 SHAWL, AGE DAMAGED (50P, MUSLIM AID,
 DEWSBURY)
 GOLD BIBA BLOUSE (£3.00, SUE RYDER,
 DEWSBURY)
 KHAKI HEAVYWEIGHT ARMY SURPLUS COMBAT
 TROUSERS (£3.00, KIRKWOOD HOSPICE,
 DEWSBURY)
 LONG MOHAIR '80'S CARDIGAN (£7.50, OXFAM,
 MIRFIELD)
 BLACK LEATHER SHOES WITH STUD DETAIL
 (£4.00, SUE RYDER, DEWSBURY)



INAYA WEARS THE 50P LBD
WITH:
VINTAGE LEVI 501S (£2.00,
CANCER RESEARCH,
DEWSBURY)
RED LEATHER CONVERSE
ALL STAR HI-TOP TRAINERS
(£2.50, SCOPE, BATLEY)
NUDE POWER NET CORSET
TOILE (KINDLY LOANED
BY ONE OF MY STUDENTS,
LOTTIE BLANKSTONE)
TRADITIONAL SOUTH
ASIAN DARK BROWN SILK
GEORGETTE SARI WITH FINE
GOLDWORK EMBROIDERY
(50P, MUSLIM AID,
DEWSBURY)
BLACK SHEER CHECKED
'70'S HEADSCARF (£1.00,
SCOPE, DEWSBURY)
BLACK WOOL CREPE
'60'S JAEGER TAILORED
JACKET (£2.00, SHELTER,
DEWSBURY)
ELASTICATED METAL
AND DIAMANTÉ ARMLET
(£1.00, BRITISH HEART
FOUNDATION, DEWSBURY)



pickers often rescue vintage and antique pieces for Natalie, that would otherwise be headed for destruction. Such pieces include a huge wool appliquéd Union Jack flag.

The location for the shoot was Natalie's beautiful home/studio that she shares with her partner, Robin, and which is situated in the heart of Dewsbury town centre. The space takes over an entire floor of the building, which was once home to Bickers & Co., an elegant boutique department store, and a destination for discerning shoppers for almost 100 years. My Mum used to work there (small world), and I remember visiting the store aged about 5. Reflecting on this now, it was somewhat reminiscent of the Grace Brothers department store featured in *Are You Being Served*, a 1970's sitcom. Nat lives on the floor where the alterations were made, and still finds dressmakers' pins trapped in the grooves of the wooden floor.

Joining the synchronicity dots even more, Nat's flat overlooks the original Shoddy and Mungo textile recycling mill (now apartments). Shoddy and Mungo is a term devised during the industrial revolution to describe soft and hard textile rags that were ground down and recycled into blankets, coats, and uniforms. Dewsbury and Batley, and the surrounding towns of Morley and Ossett were central to the recycling of textiles, an important cog throughout the era of heavy industry in the North of England, gauged by the fact that the town of Batley alone was producing over 7000 tonnes of shoddy in 1860. The boom of the Shoddy industry was significant in increasing the population in the small town of Batley from 4,566 in 1801, to 30,000 by 1890. The machinery

NATALIE WEARS THE 50P LBD WITH:
 BALL GOWN (AGE UNKNOWN, BUT DATED
 BETWEEN 1930S AND 1950S), BELTED AT THE
 WAIST WITH A VINTAGE HAMMERED METAL AND
 STUDDED LEATHER BELT, MADE IN MOROCCO,
 AND SOLD BY WAREHOUSE (CIRCA 1990S).
 1960'S SILVER LAMÉ SLINGBACKS.

used for this process was invented in Batley, a town situated next to Dewsbury, and also the home of Oxfam Wastesavers, the charity's only Northern textile recycling plant. By the 1990s, textile and garment production had become off-shored, due to the birth of what has been coined 'fast fashion', or most recently, hyper-fast fashion, resulting in a demise of the Shoddy and Mungo industry, or 'rag mill' as it became more commonly known in the late 20th century. This particular collaboration celebrates, and breathes life into, a new era of recycling, showing how we can extend the life of our clothing through the recontextualization of vintage pieces, and the sheer love of fashion that Natalie and I both share.



INAYA WEARS THE 50P LBD WITH:
 NAVY AND CREAM IRIDESCENT SEQUIN STRIPED
 SKIRT (£3.00, SUE RYDER, DEWSBURY)
 ANTIQUE CREAM SILK EMBROIDERED FRINGED
 SCARF (£1.50, SCOPE, DEWSBURY)
 TRADITIONAL JAPANESE INDIGO HAND-TAILORED
 JACKET WITH SMALL RED HAND-STITCHED MOTIF
 IN LINING (£1.00, AGE CONCERN, DEWSBURY)
 NAVY AND SILVER LUREX SOCKS (STYLIST'S
 OWN)
 BLACK LEATHER BLOCK-HEELED MULES (£3.00
 SUE RYDER, DEWSBURY)



NATALIE WEARS THE 50P LBD WITH:
SILVER ANKLE BRACELETS, GIFTED TO NATALIE
BY HER PARTNER, ROBIN, ON VALENTINE'S DAY
ON A TRIP TO INDIA IN FEBRUARY 2000