

Lorna Holder's Career

At the beginning of her outstanding and ongoing career, Lorna attended Nottingham Trent and studied under Pauline Denyer a designer in her own right and the wife of designer Sir Paul Smith. Lorna graduated in 1975 with a BA Honours in Fashion and Textiles and was the first black student to achieve the BA degree in Fashion and Textiles at Trent.

Lorna's talent and training led to her first work experience, which was at Bloomingdales in New York in the summer of 1973. After graduating she worked for Mono as Assistant Designer/sketcher to Stephen Mono, making Ladies High quality suits and coats for retailers such as Harrods and Selfridges. In 1976, when her husband's job took him to work in Oman, Lorna went with him and co-owned the Ali Baba gift shop in Salahla. In 1978 she produced a pioneering televised fashion show at the Holiday Inn Salahla, using locally sourced fabrics. Upon returning to the UK in late 1978, she designed for the Birmingham based Ladies fashion company House of Lerosé and ran their design studio in Soho London.

In 1979 she started work with Davies & Field as Head of their Young Fashion Department until 1986. It was here — in what is now the Rich MiX building — that she was working with and managing 4 pattern cutters, 4 sample machinists and a design room assistant/sketcher.

Whilst at Davies & Field, Lorna created designs for major chain stores such as Littlewoods, Etam, Berkertex and Lady at Lord John, as well as at Bourne & Hollingsworth on Oxford Street. She designed the Justine 'Young Fashion' range for Littlewoods' catalogue, and created one of the first celebrity fashion endorsements in a mainstream catalogue for the Olympian swimmer Sharon Davies.

Lorna has had an illustrious career in the fashion industry and has gone on to create successful production companies which have been responsible for producing exhibitions and projects of outstanding quality, often exploring and illuminating Jamaican history and culture.

Her business archives have been acquired by the London Metropolitan Archive and include many aspects of her fascinating career.