

Laura Weir Resets British Fashion: Inclusivity, Accessibility, and A Fairer Future

Published on 03 Oct 2025 | By IFI Correspondent



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When **Laura Weir** stepped into her role as CEO of the **British Fashion Council (BFC)** this summer, she made it clear that inclusivity would no longer be an afterthought—it would be the foundation of British fashion's future.

Weir addressed one of the industry's most pressing issues: the growing difficulty for working-class designers and those from ethnic minority backgrounds to build sustainable careers in fashion. With **studio rents skyrocketing**, **EU funding drying up post-Brexit**, and **catwalk shows costing upwards of £30,000**, the barriers to entry have become daunting.

Her response? A **reset for British fashion**. Weir's initiatives include:

- **Waiving London Fashion Week participation fees** for independent designers (previously as high as £30,000).
- **Taking fashion back into schools**, showing young students that a career in design is possible regardless of their background.
- **Decentralizing opportunities**, widening access beyond London to empower talent across the UK.

"It is profoundly difficult to be working-class in Britain," Weir told CNN. "The barriers are numerous, and they are not unique to fashion but symptomatic of wider inequalities. By making the pathway easier and fairer, we can ensure talent doesn't go to waste."

Industry veterans have praised her bold approach. Rosie Wrighting, Labour politician and former fashion buyer, applauded Weir's vision to "level the playing field for independent designers and small brands that have been priced out of participating in recent years."

The stakes are high. Once, Britain produced icons like **Alexander McQueen**, **John Galiano**, and **Vivienne Westwood**—all of whom rose from modest beginnings. But today, rising **tuition fees (£9,535 annually)**, **London's living costs exceeding £20,000 a year**, and material expenses have made that pathway nearly impossible without financial backing.

Designers like **Patrick McDowell** and **Tolu Coker** are still breaking through, but not without struggles. McDowell recalled juggling three jobs during their time at Central Saint Martins: "*At a certain point you have to ask yourself—should this be as hard?*"

With systemic barriers and soaring costs threatening creativity, Weir’s vision feels urgent. Her policies aim not just to create opportunities but to **restore faith in fashion as a career for all**—not just the privileged few.

As London Fashion Week 2025 approaches, all eyes are on how her inclusivity-focused reforms will reshape the industry and inspire the next generation of designers.

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