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David LaChapelle's "Burning Down the House," 1996

Anarchic Portrait of Alexander McQueen and Isabella Blow Debuts at London's National Portrait Gallery

The late fashion icons and friends **Alexander McQueen** and **Isabella Blow** now have a permanent home together at London's **National Portrait Gallery**. The museum acquired **David LaChapelle's** infamous 1996 portrait of the fashion designer and style legend, "Burning Down the House," which made its British exhibition debut today.

Originally presented as a spread in Vanity Fair's March 1997 "Swinging London" issue for an article called "The Provocateurs," the playful photograph features McQueen in a sleeveless gown with a flaming torch in his hand as a mischievous Blow holds on to the

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foot of his dress. The duo both wear McQueen, while Blow also dons a **Philip Treacy** hat. McQueen was only 27-years-old, fresh from his debut couture collection for Givenchy, at the time of the shoot. Blow, who purchased McQueen's entire **Central Saint Martins** graduate collection in 1994, was 38 and considered McQueen's muse. In signature LaChapelle fashion, the photographer captured the pair in front of a flaming Hedingham Castle in Essex, England.

The acquisition was made possible in part by one of the duo's closest friends — heiress **Daphne Guinness** — along with the **Marrakech Gallery Foundation**, 2011, and **Fred Torres**.

"I am delighted that this astonishing double portrait celebrating two highly influential figures in British fashion by David LaChapelle has entered the National Portrait Gallery Collection," said National Portrait Gallery director **Sandy Nairne**. "I am most grateful to Daphne Guinness and the Marrakech Gallery Foundation, 2011 for making this acquisition possible, and to Fred Torres Collaborations for their support."

The photo is the museum's second photograph featuring Blow and fourth with McQueen.