



## ON MENSWEAR AND SPACETIME

by Silvia Bombardini

Albert Einstein's theory of special relativity, published in his 1905 paper, *On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies*, introduced the idea of a fourth dimension known as spacetime, a concept that inspired Irish designer Alan Taylor's newest work in menswear. It reminds us that behind the frills and sequins, fashion remains a study in geometry, precise measurements, and imagination. "I was fascinated by the idea of looking at the world in a completely different way or even imagining a completely different world," says Taylor. "It came through my work by the meshing of garments together. It was about seeing every side of the garment at once." Taylor's creations resemble visible theorems, layered asymmetries that maintain a sense of lightness by ways of subtractions: vents, slits, nets and sheer organza, cropped lines and cut-away sleeves. The designer, who says he would have been a mathematician in a different life, says he "fell into fashion" during his foundation year at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. "I was completely blown away," he says from his studio and home Hackney, London. "I never realized what could be done creatively and that it could become so conceptual. Growing up, I was oblivious to contemporary fashion, it wasn't

as relevant there as it is over here." Still, Taylor's Irish roots make a recurring appearance in his collections, from a Francis Bacon-inspired palette and hand-painted linen to his use of tweeds from Magee Tweeds, a sixth-generation family mill in Donegal. Irish filmmaker Paul McKenna also shot Taylor's fashion film for his winter 2013 collection. Taylor names the asymmetric kilt, or the red and black net and tweed 4D jacket as his personal favorites this season. I fell in love with his disjointed coats with elbow cutouts. Will he consider designing womenswear, especially given his experience at Simone Rocha before he launched his own line? "I have always seen design as just design, not separated into mens or womenswear," he says. "I don't mean this in an androgynous way. I see design as proportion, color and balance within the garments, outfits and the collection as a whole." Following his recent debut on the official fashion week schedule with the MAN initiative, Taylor says he hopes to continue to push his boundaries in design. "I am not going to force anything," he says. "I just want it to grow organically."

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