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## Ballet V Fashion

### The Australian Ballet launches three-year project with an Alpha60 collaboration



The Australian Ballet has collaborated with boutique fashion label Alpha60 on a limited-edition T-shirt for The Australian Ballet Shop.

The collaboration marks the beginning of the company's *Ballet V Fashion* project, a three-year initiative exploring the shared history of ballet and fashion.

Siblings Alex and Georgie Cleary launched their Melbourne-based label Alpha60 in 2005 alongside a Vivienne Westwood retrospective at the National Gallery of Australia.

They now have five Welcome to Alphaville stores (four in Melbourne, one in Sydney) and a growing list of overseas distributors.

Alpha60's achievements include shows at Rendezvous Paris and L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival, being selected as the resident uniform designers for Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurant, and exhibiting at the National Design Centre. They were Tiffany and Co Designer Award finalists in 2006 and 2007.

Alex Cleary's relationship with The Australian Ballet began in 2003 when he worked for the company's merchandise department during the early days of Alpha60's existence.

Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister, said the duo's design for the company is classic Alpha60.

"Their image of Parisian businessmen, one inexplicably wearing pointe shoes and a tutu, is beautifully witty and a perfect way to launch our *Ballet V Fashion* project," McAllister said.

Ballet and fashion have long influenced each other. For nearly a century, high-end fashion designers have created costumes for ballet companies around the world (Chanel being one of the first) but the last decade has seen an explosion in these sorts of collaborations.

Karl Lagerfeld, Giles Deacon, Toni Matceviski, Narciso Rodriguez, Christian Lacroix, Marc Jacobs, Akira Isogawa and Versace have all designed for dance.

The Australian Ballet has explored the relationship between ballet and fashion with a variety of projects in the last decade including the *TUTU* project of 2002 where the company commissioned 17 Australian designers to create their interpretation of a tutu, and the *Moving Images* exhibition of 2006 which displayed a selection of images of Australia's hottest ballet dancers by acclaimed fashion photographer Justin Smith. More recently, the company's 2010 calendar celebrated the glittering partnership between ballet and fashion with photographs from fashion archives and The Australian Ballet's repertoire.

The three-year *Ballet V Fashion* project will continue to explore the links between the two vocations with an evolving calendar of initiatives in the lead-up to The Australian Ballet's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2012.

A major highlight will be the publication of an illustrated monograph. Produced by The Australian Ballet, this coffee table book will be one of the first published on the topic featuring images from the 1600s to the present, with extended essays from leading dance and fashion writers.

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NEWS FROM

# The Australian Ballet



The Alpha60 collaboration complements the company's *Bodytorque* programme in May 2010 which will see five emerging choreographers paired with six emerging fashion designers in *Bodytorque.à la mode*. The season premieres at the Sydney Theatre on 27 May.

The limited-edition run of 100 *Ballet V Alpha60* T-shirts, with hand-numbered swing tags, will be sold exclusively through The Australian Ballet Shop: [australianballet.com.au/shop](http://australianballet.com.au/shop) for \$50.

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