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## Asked & Answered | Faye Toogood

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Marius W. Hansen

Fashion enthusiasts ought to find London's Covent Garden more relevant than ever these days with an [Opening Ceremony](#) pop-up shop now on its doorstep. The co-founders, Carol Lim and Humberto Leon, who have stores in Los Angeles, New York and Tokyo, are bringing their keen sense of urban cool to a 3,000-square-foot retail encampment at 31-32 King Street starting today and open for the next three months, just in time for the Olympics, and just until they open their permanent store a few doors down at 35 King Street in the fall. The duo's design partner on the project: [Faye Toogood](#), the 35-year-old

Casale, Rocky. "Asked & Answered – Faye Toogood," *New York Times*, July 19 2012.

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Street in the fall. The duo's design partner on the project: **Faye Toogood**, the 35-year-old London-based furniture and interiors designer whose work touches everything from fashion — she's enhanced runways for Vivienne Westwood, Alexander McQueen and Kenzo (also a part of Lim and Leon's creative enterprise) — to **fine art**. Here, she talks to T about her collaboration with the ever-intrepid Opening Ceremony.

**Q.** How did you come into the Opening Ceremony fold?

**A.** I met Carol Lim and Humberto Leon last year when they became the creative — directors of **Kenzo**. At the time I was helping with their spring/summer 2012 fashion show. They invited me to work on the windows and create some furniture for their London store, and basically gave me total freedom to build what I want. I hope I provide them with a good canvas and backdrop for their clothes.

**What kind of creations will you bring to the the Opening Ceremony pop-up?**

Several. Because there is sort of a duality to my work. I run two businesses: **Studio Toogood**, which is more about interior design and installation; and also **Faye Toogood**, my furniture design business. Both businesses are working on the O.C. project. I am building the window installations, which are a series of white rubberized totems marked with geometric shapes, each one connected to the other with wire. We're sort of channeling the energy of the Olympic Games in our own playful way.

**What other materials did you use?**

The nature of a pop-up is temporal, and I wanted to use materials that spoke to that character. For Opening Ceremony's upstairs and downstairs spaces, we built a dressing table, spade-shaped chairs and several element tables through a process of sort of stacking materials like rubber, wood, horsehair, the underlays of carpet, string and mirror.

**That's quite a combination.**

Well, I am obsessed with the physicality of materials. I love rough textures next to polished materials. A lot of what I build, I build again and again, each time experimenting with a new fabric or new metals or woods. The way we cut and layered materials for our latest tables and chairs was, in a way, an homage to the pattern cutting and construction of clothes in Opening Ceremony's collections.



Christopher James

The Opening Ceremony pop-up shop in London.

**Tell me about some of the challenges you came up against with this project.**

Well, they weren't challenges as such. The main thing we tackled at this shop was how to work with the space we were given. It's huge. So we had to scale up all of our designs. The original retail fit out upstairs and downstairs was so elaborate. It didn't really make sense having it all in a temporary boutique. We had to rip everything out and paint the entire space white.

**You must have been under a huge time constraint.**

We were. But that was sort of the beautiful thing about it. We only had six weeks to design and build everything so we made all the pieces in house. And it was nice not having to rely on big manufacturers. One of the other qualities usually inherent in a pop-up is a fixed budget. So we didn't really buy any of the materials either. They were all salvaged, found or left over from other projects.

**You have a background in publishing?**

I do. I was an editor at **The World of Interiors** for about eight years. And I think a lot of the storytelling and theater that goes into creating a magazine is still with me in my work. I also grew up in the countryside in a tiny place called Rutland. So a lot of what you see in my furniture and installation designs incorporates elements of nature that I remember from my childhood. But I am a city girl now. I've lived in London for nearly 20 years, and that has certainly brought the influence of a lot of clean, polished elements into my work too. I like the contrast of these two worlds.



**Do the summer Olympics have any influence on your pop-up designs for O.C.?**

Not especially. In fact, Carol and Humberto didn't really put anything about the Olympics in their brief for this project. I was very free to do what I wanted, which of course I liked. And in many ways I think the freedom that they offer people collaborating with them is one of their biggest strengths. I think it allows Opening Ceremony to continue pushing the boundaries with their collections.

**Do you know what collections we can expect to see on the racks at Opening Ceremony London for the next three months, and did that in any way have bearing on your designs?**

I actually don't know anything yet about the collections they've curated. Wait, maybe there will be some Christopher Kane in there. But in any case, the answer to that is no. We weren't preoccupied with what the collections might be. Opening Ceremony has a sense of style, a sense of construction and shape and geometry that I appreciate and respect. Which is why I think my pieces will fit well in there. I like what they are about. They always seem to be at the forefront of things, knowing as they do that the way we live goes beyond just clothes.