

THING IN ITSELF

PING CHEN

An eight-look wearable art collection exploring how memories of care can reshape the language of masculinity through clothing.

ND SELECTS 2026 • SHOREDITCH DESIGN WEEK • LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL
15–17 SEPTEMBER 2026 • KACHETTE, LONDON, EC1V 9LP



Thing in Itself, 2025. Photography by Yankun Long. © Ping Chen.

London-based artist and fashion designer Ping Chen will present *Thing in Itself* at ND Selects 2026, as part of Shoreditch Design Week during London Design Festival, at Kachette from 15–17 September 2026.

Spanning eight interconnected looks, *Thing in Itself* explores how memories of care can be translated into clothing to reconsider conventional ideas of masculinity. Drawing on Ping's relationship with his great-grandfather, the collection brings tailoring into dialogue with structures associated with carrying, caregiving and domestic labour. Reversible garments, modular construction, weaving, knitting and hand-finished details allow memory and care to become embedded in how the garments are constructed, transformed and worn.

THE PROJECT

Thing in Itself began with Ping's memories of his great-grandfather and the everyday acts of care embedded within their relationship. Experiences of being carried, held and cared for became a starting point for reflecting on forms of masculinity expressed through tenderness, intimacy and protection—qualities often overlooked within conventional representations of masculine identity.

Through autobiographical research and embodied experimentation, Ping translated these memories into physical actions including carrying, embracing, kneeling and dressing. Rather than treating the body simply as a form to be dressed, these actions became tools for developing pattern, silhouette and construction, allowing bodily experience itself to shape the garments.

The collection brings familiar codes of tailoring into dialogue with forms associated with caregiving and domestic labour, including baby carriers and aprons. References to Chinese dress and family memory are reinterpreted through contemporary construction, while the orchid recurs across print, knit and ornament, creating a visual thread between personal memory, cultural heritage and the material language of the collection.

Rather than proposing a new or fixed definition of masculinity, *Thing in Itself* considers clothing as a space in which inherited ideas of identity can be questioned, reconstructed and left open to change.

MATERIALISING MEMORY AND CARE

Material processes are central to *Thing in Itself*. Working across tailoring, weaving, knitting, digital textile processes and hand construction, Ping uses transformation to translate memory and embodied experience into the physical structure of the garments. Rather than functioning simply as technical features, reversible and modular constructions allow garments to shift between different states through dressing and interaction with the body.

In *Careback*, memories of being carried by Ping's great-grandfather are translated into a tailored overcoat incorporating a detachable carrier structure. References to baby carriers and caregiving garments intersect with masculine tailoring, while more than 300 individually hand-sewn metal fasteners allow the garment to detach, unfold and be reconfigured. Its reverse configuration, *Careback: Unfolding*, exposes layers previously concealed within the overcoat and rearranges its detachable components across the body, transforming the contained tailored exterior into an expanded composition of colour, pattern and texture. Acts of fastening, supporting and carrying are made visible within both configurations, embedding the physical language of care directly into the garment.

In *Interwoven*, family photographs are digitally printed onto textile, laser-cut into strips and manually interwoven before the resulting material is constructed into tailored garments. Through this process, individual images are fragmented and reconnected, transforming the family archive from photographic representation into physical textile structure. Memory is therefore not applied to the garment as surface imagery, but materially reconstructed through the process of making.

Across the collection, reversible garments, detachable components, knitted jacquard, lace and transparent textiles continue this dialogue between material, memory and the body. Garments unfold, reverse and shift between configurations, exposing and concealing different layers through wear.

Together, these processes position clothing not simply as a representation of memory and identity, but as a material structure through which they can be carried, transformed and continually renegotiated.



Thing in Itself, 2025. Photography by Yankun Long. © Ping Chen.

ABOUT PING CHEN

Ping Chen is a London-based artist and fashion designer working across wearable art, textiles and material-based practice. His work explores relationships between the body, identity, memory and cultural heritage through experimental garment construction and textile processes.

Ping graduated with First-Class Honours in BA Design from Goldsmiths, University of London, and is currently pursuing an MA in Design: Expanded Practice (Fashions & Embodiment) at Goldsmiths. He received the Christine Risley Award 2025 and Bronze in the International Design Awards 2025, and was named a finalist in Mittelmoda The Fashion Award 2026. His practice has also been featured in *The Vanilla Issue*.

Recent presentations include London Design Festival 2025, London Textile Month 2025 and Margate Pride Art Festival 2026, with forthcoming presentations at Dutch Design Week 2026 and FASHIONCLASH Festival 2026.

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Exhibition

ND Selects 2026

Part of

Shoreditch Design Week during London Design Festival

Dates

15–17 September 2026

Opening Times

15 September / Tuesday / 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

16 September / Wednesday / 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM

17 September / Thursday / 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Venue

Kachette, 347 Old Street, London EC1V 9LP

PRESS IMAGES & MEDIA CONTACT

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Press Images

High-resolution press images and full image credits are available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1a59bgQbPRsHuRYFGOTMLXVHsyHethxv5?usp=sharing>

For press enquiries, interviews or additional information, please contact Ping Chen at the details above.