I live between London and Florence, am married to a Spaniard with Italian residency, working for Wallpaper\* magazine, which is read in 82 countrIes, with a third of its readership in Europe and another third in the UK. Magazines like Wallpaper\* and Times Luxx that I also work for, make money from advertising. Take a look at these two magazines and see how much of that investment comes from Italy and France.

I want to talk about why freedom of movement so important to us and why immigration is not a dirty word.

Our youthful and great ‘British’ designers are all European and proud of it, Mary Katrantzou is Greek, Roksanda Illincic is Serbian, Simone Rocha is Irish and Peter Pilotto and his partner Christopher Vos are Austrian/Italian and Belgian/Peruvian respectively. Jonathan Anderson who won double Designer of the year last week at the British Fashion Awards is from Northern Ireland, but is also creative director of Loewe, the Madrid-based Spanish luxury leather-goods house owned by LVMH who also have a minority stake in his label J.W Anderson. It’s Anderson who has revived that house, together with his team, most of who are British or educated in Britain. There are plenty of high profile Brits working for important French houses, such as Celine's Phoebe Philo and Givenchy’s Clare Waight Keller, yet its hundreds more, educated in the UK that make up their design teams in Paris, Milan, Rome and Florence.

The father of french Haute Couture is said to be an Englishman, Charles Frederic Worth, who founded the House of Worth in Paris in 1858. In 1872, Alessandro Berluti made the journey from Senegallia, in Italy to Paris and set up shop as a *bottier* or bootmaker, a migrant worker, complete with his tools, in search of a better life if there ever was one. Thierry Hermès was born in Krefeld, Germany, his family moved to France in 1828, 9 years before he founded Hermès. The first store Louis Vuitton opened outside France was in London back in 1885 and its Men's Artistic Director is brit Kim Jones ( who commutes) and Marc Newson, the industrial designer, also based here, who has just designed their new luggage.

Back in the late 80’s the Antwerp six, which included Dries Van Noten, Martin Margiela and Ann Demeulemeester rented a truck, drove it to London and presented their collections to an international audience during London Fashion Week. Maison Margiela is today owned by an Italian, Renzo Rossi, and its creative director is John Galliano, the London trained, Gibraltar born British designer.

You will know from speaking to say the banking industry that their ability to attract top talent is essential for a successful business. Creativity is at the heart of our industry and moving freely around Europe is essential. And its our art education that makes our talent so strong.

The industry is not just made up of designers and brands, London’s creative community includes photographers like Juergen Teller, German born, he made London his home since the early 90’s ( Katharine Hamnett gave him his break in the 90’s). He shoots campaigns for many international brands earning huge fees. Those campaigns he shoot for brands that include Céline, are also invested back in our independent magazines which punch above their weight internationally, like Another, Tank, System and Love.

Juergen spent some of his money on a new studio designed by 6A Architects, a young practice based in London, the studio won the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2017. Sir David Chipperfield, one of our most successful architect, employs 95 in his London office, 135 in his Berlin office and 40 in his Milan office.  Before he got to build anything, it was the fashion industry, like Katharine Hamnett and Joseph, who asked him to design their stores. Today he designs the stores for Valentino, there are hundreds across Europe and the world. Thats a lot of revenue and more prestige for the UK. Chipperfield used the fees from fashion commissions to enter competitions for the museums and he is now a world leader in that sector.

As well as photographers like Teller, we produce the best hair and make up artists, the best stylists, and hosts of other independent talent who supply bespoke creative services to the industry in the UK and in Europe. Pat McGrath is from London, she is one of the worlds top make up artists, when she is in Paris she has up to 50 assistants per show, she created the make up for many brands including Giorgio Armani, and recently launched her own make up line, the self funded Pat McGrath Labs. Pat in turn hired graphic designers Michael Nash to create her packaging. They work for brands like Margaret Howell, Thomas Pink, Louis Vuitton, Dior and Italian shoe maker Gianvito Rossi. Aside from bringing in revenue from European clients they also develop paper for all those project. Their supplier of choice is James Cropper paper, a mill established in 1845 in Kendal. So when Louis Vuitton’s 460 global stores, sell10 billion dollars of sales annually, thats 1000 tonnes of bespoke paper exporting the UK to wrap them up in.

Being able to trade freely within the EU is massively important to this sector. All our designers, whether they are established like Paul Smith ( who has presented his menswear in Paris since 1976, produces in the UK and Italy, wholesales out of his showroom in London, Paris and Milan and has 39 stores and 871 clients in the EU) or Manolo Blahnik ( born in the Canary Islands to a Spanish mother and Czech father, works in London, lives in Bath and produces his shoes outside Milan) produce in Europe. Yes some of them can and do produce in the UK, but they will be working with yarn, cloth, or leather produced in Italy. Others produce in Italy or Portugal. And they may show their collections in London fashion week, but they probably wholesale from a showroom in Paris or Milan. But whether they produce in the UK or in Italy, when they wholesale they add value to the transaction and earn money for the economy, which gets reinvested. Its fantastic to walk down Mount Street in Mayfair and see that Simone Rocha, Christopher Kane, Roksanda and Erdem have stores they opened there.

Simplicity in trading with Europe means that new fashion entrepreneurs can start selling, being able to invoice and ship to Europe or buy from Europe where the only thing you need is the VAT number of the European client. Having seen what steps are required to deliver to Mexico which requires multiple visits to the Chamber of Commerce and costly fees or Switzerland, young designers wont cope.

My Spanish, Florence based husband, set up a shoe brand four years ago. This February he invested in a small store in Marylebone in February, hired three graduates, and collects VAT. His company is British, he produces his sandals in Florence, selling across Europe and to the UK. Post referendum exchange rate changes have meant that in order to maintain his price points with his most important clients, UK based e-commerce platforms like Matches Fashion ( recently sold for 1 billion dollars), Mr Porter and Browns Fashion he has had to take a cut in his margins to keep his entry price at 275 pounds, rather than 315 pounds which is less competitive, and you cant ask your client to reduce their margin. This effects his ability to invest money back in the brand.