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Design Council backing anti-mobile theft range

By Hannah Booth

THE Design Council, Central St Martins College of Art & Design and streetwear design label Vexed Generation are collaborating on a range of bags and accessories designed to counter the theft of mobile phones.

The 'socially responsive' streetwear collection is designed to appeal to young people and scheduled to launch in April. A Government study last week revealed teenagers to be the prime target for mobile phone theft.

The range, still in its early stages, has already attracted an unnamed 'big-name label', says Central St Martins senior research fellow Dr Lorraine Gamman. She is hoping the collection will enjoy mass-market appeal.

Gamman, who founded Central St Martins' Design Against Crime initiative at the London Institute, briefed Vexed Generation on her research into street crime.

The group approached the problem of mobile phone security from



Mask and bag designed by Vexed Generation

the viewpoint of how they are worn and carried rather than looking at the safety of the handsets themselves, Gamman says.

'There is an element of social responsiveness in all the work we do,' says Vexed Generation co-director and designer Adam Thorpe. 'We create urban utility wear, but try to avoid "techno warrior" stereotypes,' he adds.

Vexed Generation has responded with initial design solutions, details of which are under wraps, says Thorpe. The collection includes secure bags and wearable mobile phone accessories.

Self-protection groups will be road-testing the range and London's Metropolitan Police are advising on the project.

Gamman approached Vexed Generation on the strength of its previous safety-aware streetwear clothing, including bullet-proof parka jackets and Ninja fleeces designed to fool surveillance cameras.

Design industry experts say mobile phone manufacturers need to introduce more effective security measures to their products to help combat the rise in crime, particularly among young people.

See News Analysis, page 9