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A-Z of Business

Mannequins

Name: Rare Basics

Sector: Retail display solutions

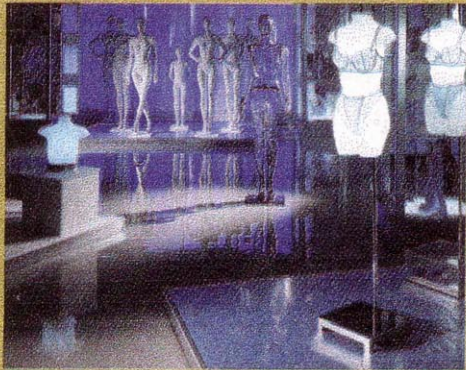
Location: North London

Profile: Gay Briggs set up Rare Basics in 1990, with the aim of making high-quality mannequins.



The company of 10 employees is now one of the UK's main mannequin suppliers.

Product: With wood too hard and fibreglass too expensive, Briggs, who trained at top model-makers Adel Rootstein, launched an innovative backless torso, made from vacuum-packed, unbreakable plastic. Rare Basics' range now includes three-



dimensional models and mannequins lit from within.

Competition: "We have a good slice of the pie," says Wendy Coleman, who has worked with Briggs for seven years. Rare Basics also has an exclusive deal with a Lithuanian design company, importing full-size mannequins. Marks & Spencer was Briggs's first customer, after buyers spotted the potential of the flat-backed model at an exhibition. Other clients include Selfridges, Debenhams and designer Maria Grachvogel.

Industry myth: Mannequins are modelled on real people. "It's true that in the 1970s, mannequins were based on people like Joan Collins and Twiggy," says Coleman.

Future plans: Briggs aims to continue developing new products, including accessories