Revisiting the Gaze: 
Feminism, Fashion & the Female Body

Chelsea College of Arts 
University of the Arts London 
28 -29 June 2017
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ABOUT

In 2015 Laura Mulvey’s seminal essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) enjoyed its fortieth year. The BFI hosted a panel to mark the occasion, where Mulvey emphasized that her essay was very much a ‘historical document of its time’: emerging from the politics of the women’s movement in the 1970s. Mulvey used the term the ‘male gaze’ just once in her essay yet the concept has become central to debates on spectatorship. Critique has focused on the psychoanalytic underpinnings of this concept as well as the privileging of gender over other aspects of identity (e.g. hooks 1992). Furthermore, Mulvey herself has acknowledged that elements of the essay have ‘necessarily been rendered archaic by changes in technology’ and has revisited it in her subsequent writing.

The idea of the gaze – whether male or female – has proved incredibly fruitful in making sense of the fashioned body. Yet, with the recent resurgence of feminist activism – being termed ‘fourth wave’ or ‘digital’ feminism – debates on fashion and the gaze have evolved enormously. Blogs such as Man Repeller playfully mock the idea of the ‘male gaze’ whilst other women have explored the empowering potential of self-authored images of the female body (e.g. Petra Collins, #freethenipple, Emily Ratajkowski). Activists on the street have used their own fashioned bodies as a site for articulating protest, through movements such as Femen and Slutwalk, with these protests, in turn, being subject to critique on social media for their privileging of white, heteronormative bodies.

Becoming visible opens up opportunities for empowerment but as Michel Foucault (1975) has noted, ‘visibility is a trap’, as underlined in instances of revenge porn and catcalling on the street. Furthermore, Angela McRobbie (2009) has argued the ‘male gaze’ has been replaced by a super-strict regulation of appearance – whether by oneself, one’s peers or the fashionable milieu. The ‘politicized, hypervisibility’ of the veiled body, as well as the different gazes that fall on Muslim bodies in both online and offline spaces, has been noted by Reina Lewis (2015). Such visibility has in some cases proved empowering, but in others led to body shaming, reprisals and even to death – as in the recent killing of the Qandeel Baloch, the Pakistani Twitter celebrity.

These social and digital changes provide the impetus for a re-examination of fashion and the politics of looking. Working from the premise that the gaze is intersectional (Gamman and Marshment 1988), we want to consider what remains fruitful in Mulvey’s essay as well as thinking about new ways of theorising fashion, the female body, and the gaze.

ORGANISERS

**Dr. Morna Laing** Senior Lecturer and Theory Coordinator for Textile Design at Chelsea College of Arts, UAL.

**Dr. Jacki Willson** is Academic Fellow in Performance and Culture at University of Leeds.
PROGRAMME
WEDNESDAY 28 JUNE

9.00-10.00 REGISTRATION
Outside Banqueting Hall

10.00 WELCOME + OPENING REMARKS
Banqueting Hall

10.15-11.15 KEYNOTE PAPER
Banqueting Hall

Dr. Maria Walsh, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL
A Cartography of the Gaze: Diffuse and/or Curious?

11.30-1.15 PARALLEL SESSIONS: PART 1

1A: UNDRESSING, PLEASURE, AND THE GAZE
11.30-1.15, Parallel Session, Banqueting Hall
Chair: Dr. Maria Walsh

Dr. Barbara Brownie, University of Hertfordshire
Choreographed Undressing: How the nature of observation informs the character of undressing

Dr. Ilya Parkins, University of British Columbia
Un/Knowing Self and Other through Boudoir Photography: Ethics and the Neoliberal Feminine

Sophie Swoffer, De Montfort University, Leicester
'It would have been quicker to just hire a stripper': The body of the female artist and its challenge to the misogynistic gaze

1B: VIOLENCE AND THE GAZE
11.30-1.15, Parallel Session, Red Room
Chair: Dr. Dawn Woolley

Arpita Sinha, Fashion Model & MA Graduate in English Literature, Kolkata
Disfigured Faces on the Ramp: Marketing Gender Violence and Feel-Good Feminism

Dr. Rosa Nogués, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL
Killing looks: Marlene McCarty’s ‘Murder Girls’

1C: PREGNANCY, MOTHERHOOD AND THE GAZE
11.30-1.15, Parallel Session, Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Jacki Willson

Maureen Brewster, Parsons School of Design, New York
Making Lemonade?: Beyoncé’s Pregnancy Announcements as Response to the Postfeminist Media Gaze

Lana Locke, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL
Film Screening: Mother’s Milk (2016)

Tessa Nunn, Duke University, North Carolina
Pregnant Situations in Varda’s and Poirier’s Film Creations
1.15-2.15  LUNCH
Outside Banqueting Hall

2.15-3.45  PARALLEL SESSIONS: PART TWO

2A: THE VEILED BODY
2.15-3.45, Parallel Session, Banqueting Hall
Chair: Prof. Reina Lewis

Dr. Nazli Alimen, University of Helsinki
Understandings and Practices of Veiling: Observant Muslim Women in Turkey

Dr. Azadeh Fatehrad, Artist, Curator and Researcher, London
Women’s Body: The alienated system of ‘looking’ in post-revolutionary Iran (1979 - present)

2B: THE SENSES, AFFECT AND THE HAPTIC GAZE
2.15-3.45, Parallel Session, Red Room
Chair: Dr. Morna Laing

Tamara Tyrer, Central St Martins, UAL
Film screenings: Chorine (2016) and Technological Tornado Woman (2017)

Dr. Lucia Ruggerone, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
Resisting the gaze, exploring how clothes make us feel

Dr. Sara Chong Kwan, London College of Fashion, UAL
Negotiating the gaze: The wearer’s multi-sensory perspective

3.45-4.15  TEA + COFFEE
Outside Banqueting Hall

4.15-5.30  KEYNOTE PAPER + END OF DAY DISCUSSION
Banqueting Hall

Professor Reina Lewis, London College of Fashion, UAL
The Female Religious Gaze?: The pleasure and pitfalls of recognisability

5.30-7.30  WINE RECEPTION
Green Room
THURSDAY 29 JUNE

9.00-9.30  REGISTRATION
Outside Banqueting Hall

9.30-10.30  KEYNOTE PAPER
Banqueting Hall

Dr. Mo Throp, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL
Fine Art Practice, The Female Body and Spectatorship

10.45-12.30  PARALLEL SESSIONS: PART 3

3A: RESISTANCE, FRAGMENTATION AND THE GAZE
10.45-12.30, Parallel Session, Banqueting Hall
Chair: Dr. Mo Throp

Denise Ackerl, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL
The ‘fascioned’ body: a case study of the collaged online erotic gaze

Harriette Richards, Western Sydney University
A Broken Gaze: The Ambivalence of Looking

Stephanie Spindler, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL
Materialist Encounter: Enactment of Corporeal Practice

3B: THE BODY AND JUDGEMENT
10.45-12.30, Parallel Session, Red Room
Chair: Dr. Morna Laing

Dr. Rosa Crepax, Goldsmiths, University of London
Online Audiences and the Fashion Gaze Through Internalisation and Semantic Alterations

Lauren Downing Peters, Stockholm University
Looking Fat in a Slender World: The Dialectic of Seeing and Becoming in Jen Davis’ “Eleven Years”

Renate Stauss, London College of Fashion, UAL
In the land of mirrors: vêtothérapie / fashion therapy in France. On forced forms of self-reflection and image-based notions of a fashion-able self.

3C: BEYOND THE BINARY
10.45-12.30, Parallel Session, Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Jacki Willson

Dr. Ope Lori, UAL and Leeds College of Art
Caster; In Honour of Her and All Those Who Are to Follow

Eda Çakmak, Fashion Theorist, Blogger and Educator, Istanbul
Colleen Siviter, Writer, TV Producer and Editor, New York
The Glitter Hive: Fashion, Femininities and Cross Cultural Queer Narratives
Dr. Catherine Baker, University of Hull
Queer female spectatorship, masculinities, and the gaze: revisiting the desire/identification/fashion cycle

Sophie Bramley, University of Leeds
Photographic protest: Transgender ‘hypervisibility’ in the work of Bettina Rheims.

12.30-1.30 LUNCH
Outside Banqueting Hall

1.30-3.00 PARALLEL SESSIONS: PART 4

4A: (IN)VISIBILITY: OLDER WOMEN AND THE GAZE
1.30-3.00, Parallel Session, Banqueting Hall
Chair: Dr. Jacki Willson

Noor Bhangu, University of Winnipeg
Shadow Archives: Thinking Through Diasporic Fashionability

Shalini Gupta, Pearl Academy Delhi
Age and ‘The Gaze’ in Urban India

Dr. Naomi Woodspring, University of the West of England
Seeing and Being Seen: On older women and the gaze

4B: FRAMING THE GAZE IN SPACE AND TIME
1.30-3.00, Parallel Session, Red Room
Chair: Grace Adam

Bethan Bide, University of London and the Museum of London
Materiality and the researcher’s gaze: rethinking what it means to look at historical clothes in a museum collection

Dr. Felice McDowell, London College of Fashion, UAL
Gazing into her space: the mediatization of fashionable lives in ‘The Top Shelf’

Dr. Alexis Romano, Recent Graduate of the Courtauld Institute of Art, London
Reframing the Gaze: Prêt-à-porter and the Urban Fabric in 1960s French Magazines

4C: OBJECTS MADE FOR THE GAZE: MANNEQUINS, VIRTUAL REALITY AND GENETICALLY MODIFIED WOMEN
1.30-3.00, Parallel Session, Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Morna Laing

Rosemary Cronin, Artist, Writer and Lecturer, London
How can contemporary artists and pop culture figures interrupt a loaded and historic gaze? How can phallic signifiers be hacked to open up gender politics?

Jade Dillon, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
Mirror, Mirror: Establishing the Gendered Gaze in Louise O’Neill’s Only Ever Yours

June Rowe, University of the Arts London
Bodies made for Gazing: The Spectacle of the Fashion Display Mannequin
3.00-3.30 TEA + COFFEE
Outside Banqueting Hall

3.30-5.15 PARALLEL SESSIONS: PART 5

5A: PRODUCING IMAGES OF THE SELF FOR THE GAZE
3.30-5.15, Parallel Session, Banqueting Hall
Chair: Dr. Agnès Rocamora

Dr. Andrea Kollnitz, Stockholm University
Compelling Gazes. Empowering Self-Representation in the Life and Work of Leonor Fini

Leren Li, Royal College of Art, London
Beyond the Photoshopped Sherman: Manipulating and Exhibiting Female Gaze Through Fashion Photography in the Digital Age

Dr. Dawn Woolley, Anglia Ruskin University
The Internalised Dissecting Gaze of the ‘Cutting Scalpel Eye’: Fashioned Bodies on Social Networking Sites

5B: LIFE DRAWING WITH GRACE ADAM
3.30-5.15, Parallel Session, Red Room
Introduction: Dr. Jacki Willson

Grace Adam, University of the Arts London
The Agreement. Life Drawing: Power. Authority; Control and the gaze; Curious looking.

5C: CELEBRITY, POWER AND THE GAZE
3.30-5.15, Parallel Session, Lecture Theatre
Chair: Dr. Naomi Woodspring

Dr. Rosie Findlay, London College of Fashion, UAL
“Inspired by real life”: Examining ‘aspirational realness’ on the websites of Glossier and Maryam Nassir Zadeh

Emma McClendon, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York
Who Wore It Better?: Fashion, Celebrity, and the Culture of Judgment

Ellen Nolan, University for the Creative Arts, Rochester
The experience of being looked at

Dr. Ellen Wright, De Montfort University, Leicester
‘This will be your version of what happened’: Performance, Perspective and Control in Jackie (2015)

5.30-6.00 CLOSING REMARKS + THE FUTURE
Banqueting Hall
KEYNOTE PAPERS
Keynote Paper

DR. MARIA WALSH

A Cartography of the Gaze: Diffuse and/or Curious?

In a recent discussion with feminist film theorist Martine Beugnet on haptic and optic visuality, Laura Mulvey suggestively reformulates her position in her infamous essay ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ as historically evolving. While optic visuality, a position Mulvey called ‘the male gaze’, can be instrumentalised to objectify and control the on-screen ‘feminized subject’, it does not necessarily have to be deployed in this way. In discussion with Beugnet, Mulvey adheres to her investment in optical visuality as it contains within it ‘both the inquiring pleasure of curiosity and the investigative critical gaze’ she associates with feminism. Her response is in reaction to the loss of historical specificity in the current turn to theories of haptic visuality in film which tends to prioritise how film generates sensations and affects over and above situated knowledge.

In my paper, I want to return to feminist film theorists Mary Ann Doane and Teresa de Lauretis, who responded to Mulvey’s essay in the 1980s, and productively re-read them in the light of the recent turn to the haptic.

Mary Ann Doane reconfigured Mulvey’s infamous assertion: ‘In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female’ to think about a female subject of desire as both subject and object of the look premised on what she called ‘the accoutrements of femininity’. Looking at the image of Marlene Dietrich for example, ‘accoutrements’ such as hats, gloves, veils, etc. might function as prosthetic devices that give the woman both the distance necessary to survey herself and the pleasure of extending her gaze into objects close to her body. Here we might glimpse the value of clothing as an autoerotic prosthetic that might generate another kind of looking that resists objectification.

In recent fashion photography by women such as Petra Collins for example there is an interest in situating the female body in narrative contexts that are also intimate and sensual. Aligning with this kind of practical ethos, my paper will further trace the 1980s reception of Mulvey by feminist film theorist Teresa de Lauretis who reconfigured the gaze in terms of visual icon and narrative employment, in other words, in relation to how the female protagonist carries the look through space. This double act potentially resists being fetishistically objectified.

What will emerge from this historical cartography is a haptic optics, the gaze as a diffuse and curious mode of engagement with the world that is captured by visual media such as film and photography.

Dr. Maria Walsh is a writer and art critic. She is a Reader in Artists’ Moving Image at Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London. She is the author of Art and Psychoanalysis (2012) and co-editor of the anthology Twenty Years of MAKE: Back to the Future of Women’s Art (2015). She is an Associate Editor of MIRAJ: Moving Image Review & Art Journal and was Guest Editor of the Special Issue: Feminisms: Women artists and the moving image (2016). She is currently researching a monograph on the ‘screen’ as a critical site of therapeutic encounter.
The Female Religious Gaze?: The Pleasure and Pitfalls of Recognisability

Looking like what you are can bring advantages and dangers for women whose dress connects fashion and faith. This is true online in cross-faith modest fashion social media and offline on the street, at school, at work. Most spectacularly, Muslim women who wear a headscarf in western Muslim-minority societies are likely to be rendered hypervisible to out-group onlookers, positioned as symbols of civilizational alterity within a post 9/11 securitising discourse still prevalent today. Whilst being recognisable to co-religionists can bring welcome recognition and solidarity, as for Jewish women covering their hair on marriage, offline and on, being visible through dress and body management also triggers uninvited surveillance from the self-appointed guardians of women’s morality.

This paper examines how modest fashion bloggers and social media influencers, and their followers, negotiate the variety of gazes that they encounter and employ within a fashion culture that aspires to inclusivity and respect for diverse interpretations and practices. It explores how the increased availability of cheaper mobile digital screen technologies affords new opportunities for the self-representation of faith-related fashion and the challenges this creates for a previously women-led zone of commentary. Given the popular trope of ‘coming out’ as people of faith utilised by women taking up hijab or covering their hair on marriage, this paper explores the extent to which they are sent back ‘in’ when they relinquish forms of dress that announce religious identity, taking an intersectional approach to examine how the invisibilisation of religious identity impacts on the visibility, and hence experience, of ethnicity.

Keynote Paper

DR. MO THROP

Fine Art Practice, the Female Body and Spectatorship

We’ve been discussing the issue of an active male gaze and the passive ‘to be looked-at-ness’ of the woman since Mulvey’s seminal essay some 40 years ago; how to reclaim the feminine as an active role, to assert a female sensibility; how to re-think and empower the female subject trapped in this debilitating binary of gender inequality?

In this paper I attempt to re-consider the structure of subjectivity beyond the constraints of recognition in order to address new forms of contestation rather than perpetuating second wave feminist demands for a more equitable distribution of the dominant forms of order, reason and truth. How might feminist interventions and new forms of contestation – particularly in this case, for artists - continue to address these unequal operations of power and open up new kinds of relations? Since the first cam girl ‘lifecaster’ Jennifer Ringley installed a webcam in her room in 1996 (dismissed by Victor Burgin as woman as exhibitionist – a site for voyeurs [1])1, to more recent ‘performances’ for the camera by such artists as Laurel Nakadate, I aim to explore how the woman might circumvent this relation of the subjects desire to be recognised by the other – in this instance, the debilitating male gaze – and ask how art can engage in more disruptive strategies? In this I follow the feminist theorising of Elizabeth Grosz2 (2) who questions the worth of this recognition; why wait to be recognised rather than making something new which will enable us to recognise ourselves and eschew recognition altogether.

Dr. Mo Throp is an Associate Researcher at CCW Graduate School, Chelsea College of Arts. She is co-convenor with Maria Walsh of the Subjectivity & Feminisms Research Group at Chelsea whose recent collaborations include the publication Twenty Years of Make Magazine: Back to the Future of Womens Art (IB Tauris) and co-curated exhibition Can Do at Chelsea Space in 2015. The research group hosts an ongoing series of ‘Performance Dinners’, the most recent being No 8 Bankorg held at the BIOS gallery, Athens in 2015. Mo also edited a publication: The Performance Dinners in 2014.

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ABSTRACTS
OF
PAPERS
Choreographed Undressing: How the nature of observation informs the character of undressing

The act of undressing is carried out habitually, and yet also frequently occurs as choreographed performance. This act takes on a variety of different characteristics depending on whether it is observed or unobserved, and on the character of that observation. The individual gestures that contribute to an act of undressing are tailored to invite or deter the gaze of others. Actors in these performances make decisions before and during undressing that determine the style in which they will transform the relationship between clothes and body, including the selection of appropriate garments, to delay or conceal their gestures.

Examples for discussion will contrast two very different examples of choreographed undressing: striptease, which has traditionally invited the erotic gaze but is, in neo-burlesque, beginning to invite critical reflection on the presentation of the imperfect body for erotic consumption; and the removal of clothes in fitting rooms and locker rooms, where the act of undressing is choreographed to conceal the body from the unwanted gaze of others. The paper will also consider the mirror as audience, and the way in which the reflected gaze can prompt the habitual act of undressing to be transformed into a performance. All of these examples will be located in the historical context of undressing as an activity that has been commonly subject to the homospectatorial gaze, and of fashion design that has been determined in part by the expectation of participant involvement in the undressing process.

Dr Barbara Brownie is Senior Lecturer in Visual Communication at the University of Hertfordshire. Her research interests include the relationship between clothes and the body, fashion, and typography. She is author of several books on design and culture, including Acts of Undressing (Bloomsbury, 2017). She has also written on fashion and body culture for The Guardian, Huffington Post, and Berg.
Un/Knowing Self and Other through Boudoir Photography: Ethics and the Neoliberal Feminine

This paper argues that a complex ethics of the neoliberal feminine self is produced by the online textual rendering of the gaze in the experience of ‘boudoir’ photography, an erotic artistic/commercial form typically imagined as a gift for a lover, especially a new spouse. The analysis attends to the mutually reinforcing pillars of photographers’ promotional and other editorial copy, and model/client testimonials found on photographers’ websites, wedding blogs, and online magazines. Of particular interest is the narration of the photographer’s gaze as a tool for the production of new ways of being an embodied feminine subject; the focus is on being seen into being, a formulation that intervenes in the dichotomous formulation of subject and object implied by feminist critiques of a masculine gaze and of ocularcentrism more generally. (Conor 2004) What, I ask, is the content of this feminine being? On one level, boudoir shoots tend to be storied by calling on what a range of scholars have identified as tropes of neoliberal femininity, including the twinning of conventional sexualisation and ‘empowerment’ and the reification of a highly individualist notion of self-care. (McRobbie 2008; Budgeon 2011; Negra 2009; Gill 2008)

Yet, boudoir shoots are ghosted by others: at least by the photographer, and very often by the person for whom the photographs are initially intended as a gift. Thus I read accounts of them as ambiguous: as much as they claim to narrate the reclamation and honouring of self and often attest to a process of moving into pure self as empowering, they simultaneously reveal the relational production of selfhood. In so doing, they point to the collective labour not only of producing feminine subjectivity, but of moving from a position of unknowing to knowing the self. In this most seemingly individualist of genres, then, inheres a complicated ethics of disavowal and avowal of relations with others and a nascent vision of communion. Accounting for this gaze might offer us a key to understanding what, to some, are the contradictory manifestations of contemporary feminism in commercially saturated online spaces that nonetheless function with a communal ethos.

Dr. Ilya Parkins is Associate Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus. She is the author of *Poiret, Dior, and Schiaparelli: Fashion, Femininity and Modernity* (2012) and co-editor of *Cultures of Femininity in Modern Fashion* (2011). Her essays on fashion, feminist theory, and femininity have appeared in a range of journals including *Feminist Review, Australian Feminist Studies, Biography, Time and Society, and The Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies*. The proposed paper relates to a new project about contemporary feminist wedding culture and its mediation of new feminine, feminist and queer subjectivities.
SOPIE SWOFFER

'It would have been quicker to just hire a stripper': The body of the female artist and its challenge to the misogynistic gaze

In this performative presentation I will reflect on my previous practice which explores the monstrous potential of the female body in relation to the deconstruction and reclamation of the male gaze. I will be drawing particular attention to my most recent performance work Have Your Cake and I'll Eat it For You (2016), which responded to art created in the 1970s by the recently rediscovered sex positive feminist artist, Penny Slinger. In the same decade that Laura Mulvey's groundbreaking text, which defined the male gaze and women's 'to-be-looked-at-ness' (1975:62), came to precedence, Slinger was creating challenging work often using her own nude body as the subject. Slinger aimed to re-define the female body in art from one that is objectified to one that holds agency.

For this presentation I will draw upon the issues and challenges that were present in the 70s for female artists making work on feminine sexuality, such as Slinger deliberately choosing to present her work in men's magazines provoking readers to review how they viewed the usual work in this context. Have your Cake builds upon Slinger's work which presents the female body as a site of power and I will be explaining and performatively demonstrating this through this presentation with a re-engagement with the digitised body, displaying mediatised versions of myself through film, projection and voice recordings in order to emphasise and heighten my assertive femininity. I will be contextualising this previous performance by engaging with writings on the self-awareness of the 1950's pin up icon (Buszeck 2006; Wright 2016) and underground BDSM fashion, as well as writings around the body in performance art (Schneider 1997; Rodosthenous 2015).

Through this exploration I will performatively challenge misogynistic responses to the female body and continuing issues surrounding the fetishization and degradation of the female body. After recently overhearing a male professor from my audience insist that instead of my performance it would have 'been quicker to just hire a stripper.' I will evaluate whether these issues are still present for current female artists and if the male gaze is still an important and applicable theory.

Sophie Swoffer is a Leicester-based performance artist. After graduating from De Montfort University in 2014 with a First Class Degree in Drama Studies, she undertook her MA in Performance Practices (with Distinction) at DMU. After graduating, Sophie was selected for the competitive position of Associate Artist at DMU, where she continued to make work. Her practice interrogates and explores the on-screen image of the woman, blurring the boundaries between the sexual and grotesque, offering alternatives to the gender expectations that we are presented with in contemporary culture. Sophie will begin her funded PhD in September at DMU, which, through an exploration of the roles of the starlet and the ageing actress, will focus on a reconsideration of the male gaze in relation to her own performance practice.
Disfigured Faces on the Ramp: Marketing Gender Violence and Feel-Good Feminism

A prevalent form of gender violence in countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Cambodia is the “acid attack”. It involves throwing acid with the intention of either disfiguring or killing the victim. Usually, acid attacks are retaliations of a jilted lover; in some cases, the girl is a victim of family feuds. The survivors, who are disfigured permanently, are forced to live their lives in obscurity away from the public eye. However, recently, some apparel brands and fashion shows have taken it upon themselves to bring them out of the obscurity and into the public gaze. Survivors have been employed as models in fashion shows in both India and Bangladesh, and one survivor has even been chosen as the ambassador of a fashion label.

While these initiatives claim to politicize the ramp and engage in feminist activism: challenging conventional beauty standards of the industry, empowering the survivors, giving them a voice and mainstream acceptance in society, the question remains whether such initiatives do ultimately empower the survivors, or are they only tools in a marketing campaign that encashes on the displaced collective guilt and easy sympathy of a patriarchal society otherwise hostile to feminist causes. This paper examines these very claims and answers these questions against this specific context by discussing a few examples. Other than the fashion shows, brands like United Colors of Benetton and their socially relevant campaigns¹ (of which I was a part recently) claim to work towards women empowerment in developing countries like India and solving economically fraught issues like the third-world garment labour market. As Angela McRobbie points out, the inseparable relation of consumer and fashion industry ultimately thrives on the base of capitalism, and things are never what they seem. In effect, I argue, what these initiatives sell is a feel-good faux-feminism, to borrow a term from McRobbie.

Bibliography:

Arpita Sinha is a fashion model based out of Kolkata, India. She has a Master’s degree in English Literature and a PG diploma in Mass Communications.

In Marlene McCarty’s drawing ‘Marlene Olive – June 21, 1976’ (1995 --- 97), we are confronted by a teenage girl’s unashamed and daunting stare. She is looking directly at the viewer, defiantly and arrogantly, almost contemptuously. She is sitting on the floor, her legs crossed, relaxed and unbothered, her hands carefully resting on her ankles. The large scale of the drawing (90” x 60”) emphasises both the enigmatic nature of her expression and the contained menace reflected in it. She appears poised and impassive, calm, yet expectant, returning our look in a calculated manner, the precision of McCarty’s pencil marks intensifying Olive’s calculating glare. Her trousers are unbuttoned, letting the darkness of her pubic hair show. Together with her flowing black hair, the only other dark mark on the drawing are Olive’s nipples. Although we see the outline of a shirt, it is as if it was transparent, unable to cover the girl’s body. And, as if she knew this, she carefully lays her hands at the precise spot where her sex is. The gesture implied oscillating between shame and titillation.

This piece is part of McCarty’s series called *Murder Girls*, in which she depicts real life girls who have committed matricide. Like the rest of the series, McCarty has constructed this drawing of Marlene Olive out of the girl’s arrest photo and fashion magazine clippings. The depiction of the girls’ bodies in the series reflects the close link between fashion photography’s representation of the female body and the girls’ relationship to their own bodies. But, as the drawing of Marlene Olive lays bare, this is not a relationship solely determined by objectification and the male gaze. The girl’s defiant gaze back at the viewer intensifies our discomfort before her, a result of the perceived intimacy of the artist’s rendering of the portrait and the brutality of the murder committed by Olive.

My paper will discuss McCarty’s series in relation to the specific dynamic of looking that the representation of the female body in the portraits mobilises, a dynamic that, whilst structured around the sexually explicit nature of the represented body, resists the objectifying gaze and problematises the viewer’s engagement with the represented female body.

Rosa Nogués is an Associate Lecturer in Art Theory at the Chelsea College of Arts, London. She obtained her PhD in 2013 at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy (Kingston University). She has lectured at Central Saint Martins (London), Middlesex University (London) and the Universität für angewandte Kunst (Vienna). Her writing has been published in n-paradoxa, Revista Mundo Crítico and the current issue of the Moving Image Research and Art Journal. Book chapters are forthcoming in Média Theorie (Les presses du réel), Soundings: Documentary Film and the Listening Experience (Huddersfield University Press), and Outsider Bodies (IB Tauris).
MAUREEN BREWSTER

“Making Lemonade?: Beyoncé’s Pregnancy Announcements as Response to the Postfeminist Media Gaze”

The hypervisibility of the pregnant celebrity body has made it increasingly subject to postfeminist media narratives of bodily anxiety, surveillance, and shame (Nash 2012, Cramer 2012). However, the widespread mediation of pregnant bodies – smoothly contoured and safely sexualized – have also made this once unruly and grotesque body one to be “coveted and enjoyed” (Tyler 2011) as it is celebrated via pregnancy photo shoots among both celebrity and non-celebrity women.

Beyoncé Knowles Carter’s recent pregnancy photographs, released in February 2017, are no different. In the images, Beyoncé bares her pregnant belly and stares down the viewer, a deity of pop culture inviting reverence – and daring any lingering conspiracy theorists, who claimed that she faked her first pregnancy with daughter Blue Ivy, to doubt the validity of this pregnancy.

This presentation will interrogate Beyoncé’s pregnancies within the framework of postfeminist media culture and its encouragement of a self-reflexive gaze (McRobbie 2004). I will position Beyoncé’s first pregnancy, and subsequent allegations that it was faked, as representative of our contemporary culture of celebrity pregnancy, which operates as a discourse of bodily performances. I argue that these performances (re)produce narratives of fatness and weight loss to discipline the pregnant body – and that when coupled with Beyoncé’s powerful star image (Dyer 1979) as a “perfectionist icon” (Duboff 2016), make it believable that she would fake a pregnancy to avoid disrupting her physique.

When viewed in this context, Beyoncé’s recent pregnancy announcement can be read as a “practice of the self” (Foucault 2000): while I argue the images represent Beyoncé’s agency in utilizing her pregnancy as part of her star image and transmedia narrative (Edwards 2012), they also fashion her pregnant body as a disciplined object – an image that she, perhaps paradoxically, invokes to reclaim her body’s authenticity. Ultimately, I will argue that Beyoncé is appropriating the visual language of celebrity pregnancy discourse to respond to and reframe her pregnancy narrative, illustrating the symbolic power of the postfeminist media gaze upon the celebrity body. This presentation will thus fill continued gaps in academic scholarship addressing the self-fashioning of the pregnant celebrity body.

Maureen Brewster is a lecturer in fashion studies and works as the faculty advisor to BLAS: The Journal of Dress Practice at Parsons School of Design. She is also a lecturer in fashion and media studies at Marymount Manhattan College. Maureen received her MA in Fashion Studies from Parsons in 2014, where her research focused on fashion, media, celebrity, gender, and the body; she has since continued that work in presentations for the Popular Culture Association, and is also developing a forthcoming website (www.femmaterial.com).
LANA LOCKE

Mother’s Milk (2016)

My video work Mother’s Milk (2016) takes place in various spaces where I had to express milk following my return to PhD study after childbirth and 4 month’s maternity leave. Makeshift private spaces, they primarily consist of the toilets at Chelsea College of Arts, but also my studio, a gallery project space, and even moving, stinking train toilets.

The gaze in this context is primarily my own, reflected in the mirror of these functional spaces, just as the breast has become functional rather than aesthetic, and my clothing chosen to facilitate breastfeeding and the expressing of milk rather than to be attractive to others. However, the public gaze is also invoked as I have chosen to hide in these spaces rather than confront the gaze of others in more comfortable but exposing arenas.

The soundtrack hints at the potential judgment that might come from both male and female onlookers. It is a Woman’s Hour interview with Margaret Thatcher talking about childcare. She encourages women to go back to work after having children, but only if they can afford a nanny as the government should not subsidise childcare. One of the virtues of going back to work, she says, would be to have something else to bring to evening supper to talk about with their husbands.

Unlike in the US, the UK has no law requiring employers, let alone higher education providers, to allocate a space in which nursing mothers can express milk. Whilst a direct request to the University of the Arts London to provide such would have engaged with this issue on a hygienic, legitimate level, and a public protest or performance would have given it a social platform, I became more interested in my own experience of the dirty spaces and need to navigate in and out of them so as to perform this maternal function at an illicit level. As this functional act became part of my artistic practice through filming it, it became an extension of my research on the feral: that which exists in a gap between the wild and the civilised, not belonging to approved social spaces.

Lana Locke is an artist and practice-based PhD candidate at Chelsea College of Arts, London, supported by the University of the Arts London Research Studentship. She works with found objects, cast metal, wax and clay; expanding towards installation, video and performance, carrying the visual language of her objects into authorised and unauthorised environments, involving and temporarily altering the space through their entanglement with it. She has exhibited regularly in the UK, including in Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2013 and 2016 and Dolph Projects 2016.
Current scholarship on pregnancy and childbirth in films tends to focus predominately on what Getino and Solanas consider “first cinema,” namely Hollywood films. First cinema films centered on pregnancy narratives often neglect to explore the bodily experience of pregnancy and reduce pregnancy to a series of events and images leading up to childbirth. By turning to second cinema films, we see an attempt to go against the grain and break with patriarchal notions of pregnancy. Agnès Varda’s films \textit{L’Opéra Mouffe} (1958) and \textit{Réponses des femmes} (1975) explore the experience of living in a pregnant body and gazing at pregnant bodies. Anne Claire Poirier’s first feature-length film \textit{De mère en fille} (1968) documents the bodily transformation of Liette Desjardins before, during, and after her pregnancy. Both films record real pregnancies, and both directors incorporate their own pregnancies into the films. Varda and Poirier film pregnant women’s bodies, are women’s bodies creating films, and place their bodily experience of pregnancy within these films. Their embodied involvement in the films and the films’ creation reminds us that filmmaking, much like pregnancy, is a creative process that requires both bodies and minds. At the same time, they are creative processes that attract others’ gazes.

The three films studied in this paper—\textit{L’Opéra Mouffe}, \textit{Réponses des femmes}, and \textit{De mère en fille}—present possible bodily experiences of pregnancy and childbirth; however, I do not qualify them as films concerning only women, describing only women’s stories. Instead, these films concern and consider all human bodies and their bodily existence in the world. Drawing on phenomenological and feminist theories, I examine the experience of viewing pregnant bodies in these films. I argue that by exploring the creative and alienating bodily experience of pregnancy, these films provoke viewers to question their own body’s existential relationship to pregnant and birthing bodies.

\textbf{Tessa Nunn} is PhD student at Duke University in the department of Romance Studies. Her research centers on 19th century French literature, film studies, and dance history.

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Parallel Session 2A: The Veiled Body

DR. NAZLI ALIMEN

Understandings and Practices of Veiling: Observant Muslim Women in Turkey

Religion is perceived, experienced, and expressed through the body. Clothing is one of the most effective ways in which bodies are gendered (Entwistle, 2015). It greatly contributes to the construction, presentation and representation of (gendered) religious identities (see Arthur [ed.], 1999). As I discussed elsewhere, due to the veil, the observant Muslim female body is more distinguishable in the public sphere and more open to surveillance and regulation by men and other women than the observant Muslim male body is (Alimen, forthcoming).¹ Investigating observant Muslim women’s narratives on veiling practices in Turkey, this paper examines the body, religion, gender, power, control, and gaze at micro and macro levels (e.g. individual and family). ‘Islamically proper’ dress not only means different things to different people in different geographies but also changes over time (Lewis, 2015). In this paper, I demonstrate different understandings and experiences of the veil. For this, I use the data collected through individual interviews held with 21 observant Muslim women (aged between 17 and 48, and living in city centres and towns) in 2013. The findings illustrate that the age at which women began wearing the veil and whether veiling was by choice or enforced can be influential on women’s interpretations and experiences of veiling, unveiling, and reveiling practices. For instance, one of my informants talked about being forced by her father to start wearing the veil in puberty and explained how this affects her veiling practices. Another informant, whose veiling decision had been a personal one around the age of 16, unveiled in her early 20s because it was not comfortable for her to work in the veil as a hairdresser (despite working in a mixed-gender hair salon), and reveiled as she opened her female-only hair salon. Thus this paper demonstrates that veiling as an embodied and spatial practice is subject to different interpretations and experiences in gender regimes.

References

Dr. Nazli Alimen received her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies and Marketing at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. She holds a BA degree in Fashion Design from Gazi University and an MBA from Izmir University of Economics. Her research interests include Islamic fashions and consumer cultures, and fast fashion consumption.

¹ Not all Muslim wear the veil, even if they may describe themselves as ‘observant’.
Women’s Body: The alienated system of ‘looking’ in post-revolutionary Iran (1979 - present)

After the announcement of the compulsory dress code in Iran in 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini drew on the Quran to support his idea that veiling was a form of protection. He proclaimed that “woman is a pearl that is best hidden in an oyster shell”1 and that the veil would protect women from being sexually objectified when out in public. It is because of this momentous decree that, in post-revolutionary Iran, women’s body is mysteriously covered and inaccessible at all times. Interestingly, this strict segregation, in fact, significantly charges the act of looking. In the Iranian context, the ‘moral police’ and its avatars produces the fantasy of an omnipresent and omniscient gaze that shames she who shows what she should not be showing. Women’s Body: The alienated system of ‘looking’ in post-revolutionary Iran (1979 - present) reflects on this highly charged arena in which women’s body is constantly being watched, whether by the police, the government or other people. The veil’s purported function is to prevent one from directly and persistently looking at women’s body, but it cannot fully obscure the body.

At the same time, this paper also refers to Jean-Paul Sartre’s fantasy of a man peeping through a keyhole into a room. In fact, the idea of being furtively watched in this way represents the day-to-day reality in my country of Iran. In this context, the position of the spectator is not fully authorised; it lies somewhere in between seeing and not seeing. There is no state of full or absolute ‘veiled-ness’ or ‘unveiled-ness’ for women; whether veiled or unveiled, there is a constant duality in contemporary society in Iran.

By way of analogy, this paper refers to the unbuilt house that Adolf Loos designed in 1928 for Josephine Baker that actuates an unusual system of looking that evokes aspects of this particular gaze upon the covered woman in Iranian society. The water and glass in Loos’ house, just like the veil, function to obstruct direct and sustained looking. In Iranian society, women cannot hide from, nor can they return a gaze, which is paradoxically omnipresent and unseen, invisible as in Josephine Baker’s house.

Dr. Azadeh Fatehrad (b.1981, Tehran) is an artist and curator based in London. Her research engages with the feminist history of Iran from 1909 to the present. Fatehrad’s research, artistic and curatorial practice are intertwined around a process of gathering information and generating new imagery in response to archival material she discovers. Fatehrad has made extensive use of archival material including those held at the Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt am Main; the International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam; and the Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies (IICHS), Tehran. This allowed her to develop new insights into Iran’s Women’s Movement and devise a related series of public programmes including exhibitions, conferences and workshops including, ‘Hengameh Golestan: Witness 1979’ at The SHOWROOM London (2015), as well as ‘The Feminist Historiography’ at IASPIS, Stockholm (2016). She has presented academic papers at a variety of conferences and symposiums, such as ‘The Neo-traditionalist: Representation of women in post-revolutionary Iran’, Moderna Museet, Stockholm; ‘Communal Social and Inter-Political Stage of Curatorial Practice’, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; and ‘Challenging Gender, Embracing Intersectionality’ at Kingston University, London. Fatehrad is currently curator of Beyond the Frame in partnership with Iniva, UAL, and the Liverpool Biennial. She has exhibited her work internationally in London, Vancouver. www.azadehfatehrad.com

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1 Online source: https://islamgreatreligion.wordpress.com/2010/12/04/hidden-pearls/, [last accessed 20 April 2014].
Tamara Tyrer

Chorine (2016)
Looped Video and Sound Projection/ Installation

Chorine investigates the question and possibility of representing a female space and time through a visual evocation of interiority and female subjectivity: firstly, by exploring the ways in which filmic technique can be used to represent time and perception and secondly, by creating a form of ‘haptic cinema.’ Chorine employs the filmic technique of slow motion (shot on a high speed industrial camera filming at 1000 and 500 frames per second) to evoke an interior, haptic space, exploring the notions of stillness and motion, then and now. The dancer’s body is explored as the instrument and conductor of time. The body is presented as one crossing, spiraling, invoking temporalities and liminalities, mimetically re-visioning images of turn of the twentieth century dance and of women and water. Chorine evokes ideas of thresholds and transitional states, referencing a ritualistic, mythic and fairy tale language. The film explores the notion of a different mode of temporalisation in an attempt to explore a female imaginary where the liminal state of the dancer is evoked through the body’s encounter with time, through slow motion. Chorine draws on the concept of haptic visuality to explore a palpable, visceral filmmaking, and the idea of embodiment in order to evoke a female interiority and subjectivity.

Tamara Tyrer is an artist specialising in film, video and dance. I am currently doing a PhD at Central St Martins, entitled, Of Space and Time: Film and the Female Performer. As part of my practice I created Whoopee, a burlesque performance cabaret, creating site-specific shows at The Porchester Baths, The V&A Museum, Blackpool Tower Ballroom, The ICA and many others. My film work has been exhibited at amongst others, The National Gallery, The Courtauld and The Rochelle School.

www.tamaratyrer.com
TAMARA TYRER

Technological Tornado Woman (2017) (4 minutes)
Video and Sound Projection

*Technological Tornado Woman* re-visions the choreography and imagery of Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan to investigate the question of a female space, time and interiority on film. The performer enacts a ritual with the air and her body, using it to transform into a spiraling, whirling strong body of movement, the body as an instrument and spiral of time. The film uses the editing process to manipulate and heighten the movement and space-time of the dancer. The film explores the creation of a haptic and filmic space, exploring the textures of the material and the air.

*Technological Tornado Woman* investigates the question of a subjective ‘female’ space through a visual evocation of interiority, by exploring the passageway from outside to inside, visible and invisible, through the movement of the body inside the fabric, culminating with the dancer involved in her own reverie, concealing the gaze. The film explores the notion of a ritualistic, circular subjective space, a circular territory, reflecting on Luce Irigaray’s essay, “The Gesture in Psychoanalysis”, where she writes, “the girl describes a circle, both inviting and refusing access to territory thus inscribed. She plays with this gestural territory and its limits. She produces a space, a track, a river, a dance, a rhythm, a song.”

The work examines notions of subjective time and space and different modes of temporalisation, exploring notions of flight and transformation, evoking Helene Cixious words in *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975), “Flying [stealing] is woman’s gesture – flying [stealing] in language and making it fly [steal].” The potential of transformation is evoked through movement, the potential to explore a ‘female’ space-time.

Tamara Tyrer is an artist specialising in film, video and dance. I am currently doing a PhD at Central St Martins, entitled, *Of Space and Time: Film and the Female Performer*. As part of my practice I created *Whooppee*, a burlesque performance cabaret, creating site-specific shows at The Porchester Baths, The V&A Museum, Blackpool Tower Ballroom, The ICA and many others. My film work has been exhibited at amongst others, The National Gallery, The Courtauld and The Rochelle School.

www.tamaratyrer.com

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1. Irigaray, L “The Gesture in Psychoanalysis” from Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis (London and New York: 1989), 133
Resisting the gaze, exploring how clothes make us feel

In sociological and cultural studies the relationship we have with our clothes has been mostly analyzed in terms of fashion and identity, with a focus on the ways in which we use clothing to represent ourselves to and in the world. In this approach the emphasis is on the visual representation of women’s identity through clothes, which has long dominated semiotic and socio-cultural theories, underpinned by a dualist notion of mind and body as two separate entities. In this paper the dualism is rejected and the attention is focused instead on the feelings we experience about and in our clothes when we are wearing them. This perspective is inspired by the recent affective turn in the socio-cultural sciences and in the renewed attention for the work of Gilles Deleuze on the body and on ways of becoming. In this context, the paper seeks to approach the study of the body-clothes assemblage in ways that account for the “feeling of being dressed”, thereby shifting the emphasis from the pure visual experience of the spectator that looks at a dressed body to the wider affective experience that the body-person senses when encountering the materiality of the garments. In line with this approach, it focuses the attention on how women feel about their dressed body without (or often despite) the aid of a mirror-reflected image and postulates that this image could be seen as the first step of a process of alienation, typical of our culture, that transforms the sensorial body of women into the contemporary “body image”. Further it shows how this visual transfixing of the body negatively impacts the occasions of becoming in which the body might get involved. Finally it argues that the notion of the body as a composition of forces as found in affect studies, opens up ways of exploring the body-clothes assemblage in ways that significantly broaden the visual perspective based on the body-image.

Lucia Ruggerone teaches Sociology in the School of Social Studies at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK and is Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Fashion at the Università Cattolica, Milan, Italy. She has published in the area of material culture, fashion and the body and qualitative methodologies. She is currently working on the aesthetics of everyday life and the application of affect theories to sociological research.
Negotiating the gaze: The wearer’s multi-sensory perspective

This paper considers ‘the gaze’ in relation to the dressed body from the phenomenological perspective of the wearer, informed by empirical data from my recent doctoral study into everyday sensory engagement with dress in a contemporary UK context. I will highlight some of the ways in which the male and female participants in my study expressed a self-conscious awareness of ‘seeing and being seen’ in particular social situations and public environments. It will be argued that multi-sensory engagement with dress, involving visual but also tactile, auditory and olfactory elements played a role in their negotiation of the gaze of others and the social structures that regulate expectations around the appearance of the dressed body.

The participants employed sensory dress strategies of inviting and deflecting the attention of others, such as hiding and/or revealing parts of the body or managing the body’s scent and sound. These strategies provided an element of control over how ‘visible’ or ‘invisible’ they were, and helped to mediate the ‘impressions’ that they made on others in social life (Simmel 1997[1908]). Additionally, more private and intimate aspects of sensory dress experience, for example the touch of clothing on the skin at times gave the participants a private sense of resistance to perceived social expectations around appearance. This discussion builds on existing critiques of accounts that pin meanings of the dressed body to a singular visual appearance or assume that the symbolic or visual meanings of dress are shared between wearer and observer (see Campbell 2007).

Furthermore, this paper proposes that ‘appearance’ of the dressed body is more than the term appearance suggests. Rather, visual dimensions and visual perceptions of the dressed body and how meaning is made from these are predicated on the other senses, that work in tandem or conflict with the visual, and on other contexts upon which the visual is contingent such as materiality, movement and imagination. This draws on Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) phenomenological articulation of the interconnection of all the senses and the sensory crossover between people and things (1993[1964]). A notion of ‘dress as a sensory atmosphere for the body’ and the ‘ambient gaze’ is presented as a possible alternative means of understanding the multi-sensory impressions that a dressed body might make.

Dr. Sara Chong Kwan is an associate lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies at London College of Fashion, UAL. She has just completed her doctoral study on sensory engagement with everyday dress in a contemporary UK context. Sara has co-organised a number of conferences, ‘Fashion and the Senses’ and ‘Fashion and Re-collection’ and has co-edited a special issue of the journal Critical Studies in Fashion and Beauty on fashion and memory.
DENISE ACKERL

The ‘fascioned’ body: A case study of the collaged online erotic gaze

This paper explores subversion and resistance in online moving image and performance practices that create critique towards populist right wing uprisings in Europe through the application of Debord’s Detournement and Žižek’s over-identification.

My video work “Sequence 02” (PW: Charlie, February 2016) functions here as a case study, where my upper body is placed on top of a close up of pregnant Marion Marechal Le Pen, the niece of Marine Le Pen and the rising star of Front National in France. The work is a collage of two ready-made videos where female bodies are pieced together and superimposed with a male voice; the eroticized version of young Le Pen’s own original YouTube video where she speaks in French parliament (July 2014) uploaded by another YouTube user and my out-of-synch performance of Charlie Chaplin’s speech from The Great Dictator titled “The Great Speech” (October 2015, Vienna). In the case study I am peeling off the different layers of this video work, starting with the white shirt which functions as the connecting visual element, followed by the process of my own over-identification with Le Pen, which is similar to Chaplin’s mimicking of Hitler in The Great Dictator which he based on similarities in visual appearance and biographic parallels. The case study will also investigate how the collaging of the two videos both reversed and created a new Detournement from the ready-mades. With a special focus on the male gaze, I connect the work with Hannah Hoech’s Dadaist collages from the 1930’s where she cut up female bodies in exploration of the “New Woman” in Weimar Germany. I am also discussing the aspect of the work’s placement in the online space where the interlinking to other YouTube videos are crucial for its contextualization as they provide the necessary references which allow for its subversive quality. This analysis connects with a debate around satire and subjectivity in relation to the work NAMEReadymade (2008) from Janez Jansa where three Slovenian artists adopted the name of the former conservative Prime Minister.

Denise Ackerl (b.1987 Vienna) is currently doing a practice based PhD at Chelsea College of Art (Subjectivity and Feminism(s) research group) where I look into strategies of resistance in the digital space from a feminist performance perspective. My work is located in the context of post-Fordism and cyberfeminism(s) which signifies feminist appropriation of information and computer technology on a both practical and theoretical level. In my online interventions I investigate ways of re-territorializing a previously shrinking autonomous political sphere and repoliticize it. Previous to my PhD I did MA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and studied Painting and Economics in Vienna. In 2016/17 I was an invited speaker at the Intersections conference at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, at the Gender, Anarchy and Demolition event at the Institute of Contemporary art London and the Feminism and digital art symposium at Chelsea College of Art. I am also the organizer of the monthly feminist performance discussion forum called “Space for Failure”
HARRIETTE RICHARDS

A Broken Gaze: The ambivalence of looking

Writing of the artistic gaze, Siri Hustvedt notes that the strength of Louise Bourgeois’ work, “lies not in confession but in the visual vocabulary of ambiguity, an ambiguity so potent, it becomes suspense” (2016: 29). The ambiguity of Bourgeois’ work mirrors the ambiguity of human experience. Her poetic reflections together make up “not a synthesis but clusters of antitheses” (Hustvedt 2016: 29). In producing a series of Cells, Bourgeois transforms broken pieces of memory into material artefacts and, in presenting these memorial moments as fragmented, Bourgeois depicts an image of life as similarly fragmented, as antithetical and splintered. The entirety of life becomes a collection of cellular remnants.

Encountering Bourgeois’ work, Hustvedt is startled by its originality and fierce vocabulary. Reading Hustvedt’s response to the work, I am struck by the fixedness of her gaze upon the art, and the emotional nature of her response. In a contemporary landscape dominated by ubiquitous social media and saturated with visual stimulation, the affective quality of Hustvedt’s gaze appears remarkable. The ways in which we engage with fashion imagery in this appearance-driven landscape is more akin to the fragmented nature of Bourgeois’ work than to the attention Hustvedt pays it. The disconnect between gaze and attention in the contemporary fashion media motivates this research, stimulating an examination of ambivalence in looking.

The concept of ambivalence has long been a crucial aspect of research in the fields of both fashion studies and feminist theory. In 2000, Anne Boulwood and Robert Jerrard remarked that ambivalence is “a concept that pervades our late twentieth-century cultural and personal experience” (2000: 308). Whether conceived of as a cultural concept or as a methodological tool through which to, as Ilya Parkins, following Meaghan Morris notes, consider relations between contradictory states (2008: 69), the idea of ambivalence has substantial conceptual potential. This paper utilizes this potential, employing the concept of ambivalence as a frame through which to explore contemporary engagement with fashion imagery, asking how the experience of looking is affected by the constant barrage of visual imagery, and how a broken gaze affects the ambivalence of human experience.

References

Harriette Richards is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. Her current research considers the cultural history of Aotearoa New Zealand through the sartorial representation of an aesthetics of melancholia. Recent work has been published in Fashion, Style and Popular Culture, Allegra Lab and the Australasian Journal of Popular Culture.
A Materialist Encounter: An enactment of a corporeal practice

This proposed intervention is to rethink the female body as a site of protest, addressing the gaze as a form of disembodiment, the dominant Western perspective of vision in contrast to a feminist phenomenological practice in which destabilizes phenomenological thinking through the interrelational components of sight, movement and emotion.

The Boxing Series are artworks examining the instrumentalization of my body in the making process. I ‘wrestle’ with boxes of different shapes and sizes, with different latex skins, colours, and in various environments, to investigate the postural and sensory movement of the female sexed body and to extend the comprehension of the way in which the flesh ‘sees’ and ‘moves’ in co-occurrence with the making process. This research enacts a methodology that deliberately destabilizes accepted practices within Western patriarchal hierarchy, in which the concept of a body might come into question.

I make myself vulnerable to ambiguity, I try to stress the importance of the materiality as a way in which it is important to see and comprehend the relation between things, rather than trying to understand something through representation alone; the body instrumental, a feminist position that includes the materiality of this body, a female sexed body as the subject and the enactment of corporeal practice.

Stephanie Spindler is an American artist. She is currently undertaking a practice-based Ph.D. at Chelsea College of Art. Owing to her father being in the U.S. Navy she was born in Japan and then settled in Virginia, USA. As an only child, Stephanie liked to draw with oil crayons on cut up paper bags. Her mother keeps the drawings in a box under her bed to this day. Currently, Spindler creates metaphorical bodies out of cardboard boxes and then wrestles them until they are both changed from the outside in and the inside out. The practice-led research explores the structure of experience, using a theoretical feminist phenomenological methodology in relation to a sculptural installation practice, where feminist phenomenology and new materialism intersect to explore the experiential and material engagement of matter and meaning. This investigation turns to materiality that is at the core of artistic practice. The subject provokes the specificity of a sexed body through the expression, motility, and materiality of the co-emergent and co-immersive processes of doing/undoing, touching/touched and moving/being moved with the artwork and the performative process of making as a line of questioning.
DR. ROSA CREPAX

Online Audiences and the Fashion Gaze Through Internalisation and Semantic Alterations

As the fashion scene becomes progressively digitalised new dynamics emerge between audiences, content, and fashion professionals, and the relationship between the internalised gaze of the fashion industry and processes of identity formation through fashion consumption grows increasingly interesting.

Reflecting on forms of online interaction and 'the fashion gaze', this paper explores contemporary audience engagement in the context of mainstream androgynous fashion. I ask: how does the digitalisation of fashion promotion and consumption affect the way in which women relate to the implicit scrutiny of the fashion industry? Can young women escape the fashion gaze while still engaging and interacting with mainstream fashion?

First, I consider the effects of the digitalisation of fashion communication in terms of affect and emotions, and assess how, in cases where members of the public interact directly with fashion intermediaries on social media, direct audience engagement leads audiences to internalise the scrutiny of such professionals. The paper then turns to forms of indirect audience engagement where, acquiring a distance from the fashion gaze, consumers are able to reflect on femininity and women's bodies through practices of creativity and semantic alterations of the dominant aesthetics. Tumblr blogs are examined as a particular case of this phenomenon. Looking at reblogged images of androgynous fashion on Tumblr, I investigate the way in which, while on the one hand digitalisation accentuates the pervasiveness of fashion's internalised standards, on the other hand, it also creates new spaces where women can re-appropriate practices of looking at themselves and their bodies through fashion. Finally I show how, when fashion images are consumed away from the eyes of the perceived fashion authority, aesthetics are remixed and meanings are shifted, opening up discussions about issues that are still too often silenced in dominant mainstream fashion discourses, such as racial inclusion, feminism, taste that deviates from middle-class standards, and the representation of women's bodies.

Dr. Rosa Crepax is an associate lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London in the department of sociology, where she also completed her PhD in 2016 with a thesis entitled “The Aesthetics of Mainstream Androgyny: A Feminist Analysis of a Fashion Trend”. Her areas of interest include aesthetics, fashion, class cultures, feminism, queer studies and the creative industries.
LAUREN DOWNING PETERS

Looking Fat in a Slender World: The Dialectic of Seeing and Becoming in Jen Davis’ “Eleven Years”

In 2002, Brooklyn-based photographer Jen Davis trained her camera’s lens on a new subject: herself. Shy and struggling with her weight, the decision to become her own subject was an intrepid one that placed Davis at the margins of her comfort zone. What began with an unassuming photograph of the artist, photographed on a beach with the aid of a tripod-mounted camera, however, gradually evolved into an intimate eleven-year exploration of her own bodily insecurities measured against normative ideals of feminine beauty, as well as a dramatic self-transformation in the form of a 110-pound weight loss.

Throughout the series, which recalls the genre paintings of Jan Vermeer, a shrinking Davis, bathed in beams of golden light, captures herself in a number of intimate moments, such as toweling her hair after a shower or tangled in bed with a lover. The most arresting photos in the series, however, are those in which we see Davis dressing or undressing, or bearing witness to her own reflection in a mirror. In these exceedingly mundane moments, Davis poignantly captures the fragile dialectic between seeing and becoming. Here, dress serves as a reminder of Davis’ recalcitrant flesh, oftentimes too large to fit into mass manufactured, standard-size garments, while the mirror functions as a vital and critical protagonist—a proxy for the cultural gaze as Davis negotiates the sizeable burden of fat stigma with the construct of ideal feminine beauty.

Using Davis’ project Eleven Years (2002-2013) as a jumping off point, this paper will explore how the artist’s body is “fashioned” throughout the series, but will also consider how fat femininity is constructed within media representations, broadly defined, through the dialectics of seeing and becoming and of looking and being looked at. Drawing upon Efrat Tseelon’s observation that “the act of representation modifies the nature of the represented object,”1 as well as Joanne Entwistle’s theoretical framework of “dress as a situated bodily practice,”2 I will explore how images do not merely reflect, but rather actively “fashion” the fat, female body as a product of overlapping discourses of beauty, fat stigma and the self as a perpetual work-in-progress.

Lauren Downing Peters is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Fashion Studies at Stockholm University where she is writing her dissertation on the early stoutwear industry and the discursive construction of the “stout” body within early twentieth century fashion media.

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RENATE STAUSS

In the land of mirrors: vêtothérapie / fashion therapy in France. On forced forms of self-reflection and image-based notions of a fashion-able self.

*Vêtothérapie* – fashion therapy was conceived at an adolescent psychiatric unit in Marseille at the turn of the century in collaboration with the local fashion institute. It is now most prominently practiced at *Maison de Solenn* in Paris, a large purpose-built showcase of a psychiatric ‘health space’ for adolescents. *Vêtothérapie* denotes group therapeutic sessions that take place in a biannually-changing fashion library (*vêtothèque*), officially described as: a tool for relationships, self-acceptance and discovery, aiming to ‘help the adolescent construct some sort of self-image in accordance with her/his personality and taste’. Self-reflection is one of the key objectives and the mirror is regarded as essential to therapy, identity ‘work’ in front of the mirror termed ‘a central moment of the session’.

My paper introduces this little known and rather shielded dress-related form of therapy. Drawing on a Foucauldian analytical framework it explores how the relationship between dress and self is discursively constructed in *vêtothérapie*, and how these discourses are formative of particular therapeutic practices. This paper argues that *vêtothérapie*, in its socialising and self-revelatory use of fashionable dress, is employed as a normalising and disciplining technology of the adolescent self. As such, this therapeutic approach is directly implicated in what has been described as Western therapy culture, and more specifically our confessional culture. Within *vêtothérapie* the adolescent patients are impelled to reflect on the self and reveal themselves – not only through the mirror. They are obliged to take care of themselves, to be/come well and look good. Accordingly, the notion of self at the heart of this therapeutic approach is both image-based and fashion-able. In its practice *vêtothérapie* is predicated on regimes of looking, most powerfully on an internalised gaze which is largely naturalised. My paper also asks in how far this therapeutic approach runs danger of reducing its patients to an image and fashion to a series of shifting facades. Moreover, it poses the wider question of the extent to which the notion of the gaze, haptic or other, can help us analyse and understand the fashioned body and the multi-sensory embodied practices of fashionable dress in their three-dimensional materiality.

Renate Stauss has been working as a lecturer for fashion theory and critical studies since 2003, teaching at, among other institutions, the Royal College of Art London, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, Esmod Berlin and the American University Paris. The emphasis in her teaching and writing lies on the sociology and politics of fashion and dress, covering subjects such as the relationship between dress and identity, fashion and socialism, globalisation and sustainability of the fashion and textiles industries, or the sensory significance of dress. She has recently completed her PhD at London College of Fashion on “dress as therapy”, on working with dress on the self in therapeutic settings.
This paper will explore the uneven distribution of power between and of the black/white female dichotomy and, while using them as a strategic tool within my visual work as an artist-researcher, question the implications of skin colour in constructions of femininity. It will call for a conscious process of breaking away from a representational language based on the phallocentric and white supremacist thought, towards that which is unmarked; enabling new ways of thinking through black and white women’s positions within the politics of looking, power and the ‘authoritative’ gaze.

As a core case study, I will use the controversy of black female athlete Caster Semenya’s win in the Rio Olympics 800m, to highlight the ongoing encounter of the black/white female relation. Lynsey Sharps statement echoes the controversial 1940s comment from Olympic official Norman Cox, who said that in the case of black women, “The International Olympic Committee should create a special category of competition for them — the unfairly advantaged ‘hermaphrodites’ who regularly defeated ‘normal women.’”\(^1\) (Rhoden, W. 2007). As a result of such readings, female bodies outside of these ideals are frightened into wearing make-up and looking pretty so that they are not accused of having high levels of testosterone.\(^2\)

There have been many responses to this issue, typically attached to accepted norms of beauty and feminine ideals both in and outside the realm of sport. My approach will use a practice-leading theory methodology as I engage with my own image-making practice, using *Women of Olympia* (2017) a new video work to highlight the complexities of the debate. It will also use contextual material made up of other artist’s images to unpick a collective strategy of tackling this encounter.

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**Ope Lori** is a moving image and photographic artist. Seminal shows include I Want Me Some Brown Sugar (2013) at 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning, La Parole aux Femmes: Women Speak Out (2014/15) at La Fondation Blachère, France, where she exhibited alongside Kara Walker and Ayana Jackson and recently ‘Now! Now! In more than one place’ (2016) at Chelsea Triangle Space, curated by Sonia Boyce (OBE, RA). She was awarded a PhD from University of the Arts London in 2014. She currently holds a Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at TrAIN, UAL and is a Lecturer on both UAL & Leeds College of Art Fine Art Programmes.

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2. Hida Viloria from Organisation Intersex International, states that these policies are frightening women into having to wear make-up and look pretty, so they won’t be accused of having high levels. The full panel discussion *on the topic of ‘No Games For Women With ‘Too Much’ Testosterone’ aired on ‘The Stream’*, can be viewed at [http://ajnn.tv/b7w3](http://ajnn.tv/b7w3)
EDA ÇAKMAK AND COLLEEN SIVITER

The Glitter Hive: Fashion, Femininities and Cross Cultural Queer Narratives

We are two queer women, ten years apart in age, one U.S. Born and living in New York and one living in her birth home of Istanbul, Turkey. We met in the Parsons MA Fashion Studies program in 2013, where we pretty quickly recognized each other as the only queer people in our class. As Eda wrote in one email, "It is striking that, even though I grew up massively immersed in Western culture, as somebody that had barely been in the country for four days, I was able to read some code and caught an inkling you might be queer." What are these codes and how have we experienced them culturally? What are the crossovers that are identifiable and what is lost in translation? How do they inform our dress practices and sense of community (or don't)?

Over the span of two years, we both pursued research exploring the connections between queer identity and dress practices through respectively different methods. After submitted our MA theses, we realized that there was still much to be said about everyday queer dress, not just the black and white but the glitter, the pain and the anger of it. Glitter Hive is an ongoing non-linear research project that is both a continuation of the academic and emotional work we put into our theses, and not a project at all; it is correspondence between dear friends. Using a digital platform to organize our varying methods of inquiry – narrative memoir writing, correspondence, conversation, photo documentation, archival images – a story emerges of how queerness is experienced cross culturally. The project explores cultural understandings of queer and fashion as we move out of theory and into everyday practice in highly accelerated political times in both the U.S. and Turkey.

Our research and exploration centers on and started with the gaze. We are two people on the feminine spectrum that don’t fit visible queer stereotypes. And as research into queer dress practices indicate, so much about queerness (not fitting the norm, passing, feeling safe/unsafe, dating, making friends, being able to get work/jobs) has to do with who is coding and who is decoding.

Eda Çakmak is a fashion theorist with a background in Anthropology and Psychology and an MA in Fashion Studies. For her Master’s thesis “Queering the Dressed Body: An Auto-ethnographic Investigation on Queerness and the Body” she conducted a fieldwork in her own dress practice. Since going back to Turkey, she has been writing critically about fashion in multiple Turkish language media outlets and has won a fashion writing competition launched by Vogue Turkey. She blogs about fashion culture from a body positive, feminist and queer point of view. Eda also designs workshops and education programs in fashion culture and is the country coordinator for Turkey of Fashion Revolution, an international organization for promoting sustainable and ethical production in fashion.

Colleen Siviter is a graduate from the MA Fashion Studies program at Parsons School of Design and holds a BA in Magazine Journalism from the University of Oregon. Her graduate thesis “Dark Creatures, Slutty Grannies and Marimach@ Tomboys” explores the complexities of queer feminine dress practices and intersecting identities while offering a critique of second-wave feminist gender theory. Her writing has appeared in magazines, art publications and in a Lambda Award winning anthology and her professional work spans film, television, publishing and digital engagement. She currently works as a producer for a gay tv network and serves as Associate Editor at The Fashion Studies Journal. She is dedicated to engaging in and supporting new ways of thinking, imagining, and doing that create space for future possibilities.
**DR. CATHERINE BAKER**

*Queer female spectatorship, masculinities, and the gaze: revisiting the desire/identification/fashion cycle*

In 1997, aged 15 and unable/unwilling to interpret my own gaze towards fashion and female bodies as anything more than ‘noticing women I wanted to look like, then trying to look like that’, a much more socially acceptable way of looking at celebrity images than labelling it ‘lesbian’ or ‘queer’ – I turned my confusion into disruptive behaviour that almost saw me being asked to leave my all-girls’ school. Further confusing me was the then popularity of Britpop-influenced androgyny in women’s fashion, unsettling even what lesbian ‘subcultural competencies’ I had acquired.

The years when I was struggling to recognise identification and desire as processes that female gazes towards fashioned female bodies might combine, far less to understand that identificatory desire-to-resemble and sexual/romantic desire-to-be-with could run parallel, turned out to be precisely when key work rethinking the female gaze by accounting for lesbian as well as heterosexual desire (e.g. Evans and Gamman 1995; Lewis 1997) was being written.

As a postgraduate, reading Jackie Stacey adapt Kleinian projection/introjection to explain women’s identifications with stars through ‘extra-cinematic practices’ of fashioning the self, I both recognised how common most of my own practices had been and understood that feminists had already theorised what I couldn’t then express – something many queer teenagers today, with access to online spaces that routinely translate intersectional feminist theory into self-aware critical gazes on media/fashion, would have more resources available to understand.

Yet even Stacey’s model in *Star Gazing* was limited by only asking women about female stars: what of gazes that introject elements of masculinities back on to female bodies (by which I understand the body of anyone, regardless of assigned gender, who always or sometimes knows herself to be a woman)? Placing another cultural studies scholar who applied Klein simultaneously with Stacey – Graham Dawson, whose 1994 study of boys’ identification with ‘soldier heroes’ I also read during my MA – and ‘female masculinities’ literature alongside 1990s lesbian and queer extensions of the female gaze makes visible the problem of where masculinities belong – a problem which, this paper contends, trans feminist disentanglement of gender identity from gender expression can resolve.

**Dr. Catherine Baker** is Lecturer in 20th Century History at the University of Hull. She is currently developing a book project, *Embodying New Wars*, that will draw on perspectives from feminist and queer media studies on identification with popular culture to intervene in feminist International Politics approaches to ‘militarisation’ in society since the late Cold War. Her books include *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991* (2010), *The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s* (2015) and the edited volume *Gender in 20th Century Eastern Europe and the USSR* (2017). Her articles have appeared in *International Feminist Journal of Politics, Rethinking History* and elsewhere.
Photographic protest: Transgender ‘hypervisibility’ in the work of Bettina Rheims

Gender discourse has for years presented the masculine and feminine as opposing binaries; as a dichotomy within which the masculine is rendered superior and the female as both a symbol of guilt and submission. Transgender and gender fluid identities serve to challenge this dichotomous notion by blurring the distinctions between these opposing physicalities. French born photographer Bettina Rheims gained critical acclaim in 1981 for a series of photographs of acrobats and striptease artists, and is now most noted for her controversial and erotically charged images of female nudes. Her 2015 project Gender Studies furthers her artistic impetus, which challenges conventional imagery of the physical body, acting this time to render visible the ‘taboo’ surrounding the coalescence of the physical masculine and feminine within transgender identity.

Jean Baudrillard called photography the ‘prototype of a literalness of the world without intervention of human hand. The world producing itself as radical illusion, as pure trace, with no simulation, no human intervention, and above all, not as truth.’ This paper examines Bettina Rheims’ photographic series Gender Studies, in the context of a contemporary society within which the majority of images are seen through what I am calling a ‘digital gaze’; consumed in excess by viewers through screens and manipulated digitally. Due to media over-exposure and consumption, in which all distance between subject and object is abolished, both objective reasoning and analysis, and imagination and illusion, are relinquished. This paper argues that the honesty and realism behind Rheims’ analogue photographic project demand an objectivity and transparency that digital media cannot, creating a ‘hypervisibility’ of gender fluidity, and thus promoting a positive acceptance of transgender bodies from its audience. The paper thus discusses how this transparency challenges any idea of a ‘gendered gaze’ through a form of photographic protest against transgender taboo. The paper ultimately aims to highlight the power of the traditional photographic medium to incite emotive responses to a subject, and thus as a tool for challenging taboos relating to transgender and gender fluid identities.

Sophie Bramley is a MAR student in French Contemporary Culture and Gender Studies at the University of Leeds. Her thesis explores the relationship between the masculine and feminine within the work of novelist Virginie Despentes and photographer Bettina Rheims, specifically addressing how contemporary technological dependency and the rise of social media serves to influence this relationship. Alongside her research, she works as an events manager organising high profile charity fundraising events and conferences.

NOOR BHANGU

Shadow Archives: Thinking Through Diasporic Fashionability

This paper is concerned with the ways in which aging diasporic bodies employ the visual language of fashion to embody presence and movement. I rely on Meera Sethi’s series *Upping the Aunty* to understand how mature South Asian diasporic women live through the intersection between fashion, migration, race, age, and gender. I read the painted “representations” of *aunties* constructed from the “real” archive of photographs collected by the artist in Canada and India.

Women, especially older women, are invisible in discourses on diaspora and fashion. In the South Asian nations and diaspora, older women, affectionately called *aunties*, have been denied active movement through these dialogic circuits because of their age and its corresponding unfashionability. Sethi’s work disrupts these assumptions by re-articulating the *aunties* into movement and accentuating their colourful, and eccentric individual styles. The women’s fashioned and highly feminized brown bodies fight for space in South Asian cultural spaces while simultaneously entering what Vanita Reddy calls the “diasporic articulation of belonging.” I contrast South Asian readings of *aunties* with Canadian settler colonial ways of looking at difference. In particular, I interrogate the absence of South Asian women in the visual history of Canada by considering the nation’s long history of exclusion and colonization of brown bodies through its immigration laws. In this paper, I argue that the visual materialization of fashion on aging brown bodies disrupts colonial narratives and recognizes the agential diasporic-ness of women, historically placed outside of diaspora and diasporic expression.

**Harnoor Bhangu** received her Bachelor of Arts in History of Art from University of Winnipeg, where she is currently working on her Master of Arts in Cultural Studies: Curatorial Practices. She focuses primarily on South East Asian, Central Asian and Middle-Eastern artists who interrogate gender, religion and diaspora in their work. After the completion of this program, she intends to pursue a PhD in contemporary Islamic Art.
SHALINI GUPTA

Age and ‘The Gaze’ in Urban India

If the term ‘male gaze’ were seen as two words that constituted meaning independently rather than the connotation that Laura Mulvey has laden on the term, one could make the argument that it is merely - a man looking. This ‘good gaze’ has been the corner stone of flirtation and romance as witnessed extensively in the visual arts like popular cinema. The look or gaze when directed at a woman, of a similar socio-economic stratum, appreciatively, could manifest as welcome and even flattering to some. The hide-and-seek older women play with this concept, especially in India today, has various cultural and moral explanations. Traditionally, Indian women marry early and the idea of enjoying post nuptial male attention is something of a taboo. With India opening up as an economy and global factors affecting a change in moral perception in urban society, there is a push for independence and freedom of expression, especially among metropolitan women. However, even today the Indian populace finds it difficult to accede to women expressing or acknowledging sexual desire. It is a widely known fact that the greatest erotica finds its roots in India, famously in the form of the Kamasutra and the temples of Khajuraho to name a few. Here the female body, more importantly, that of full figured, voluptuous mature females, symbolized beauty, prosperity, wealth and fertility. She was respected, celebrated, beheld and reveled in, openly and without shame. These sculptures and erotica echoed a sense of pride where now India has regressed into a shell of shame and intolerance with respect to the female body and more specifically the mature female body. Consequently, when unappreciated, women are known to feel unattractive which is known to lead to social anxiety and this is specifically true for women over the age of thirty. Employing a research design that covers secondary sources of literature that comment on the past and present appreciation and lack thereof of the female body as well as primary information gathered by means of qualitative and quantitative methods, this research outlines the positive implications of the male gaze on mature urban Indian women. Contextualizing culture, traditional values and the impact of global visual media it draws a connection between the ‘good gaze ’and a healthy, positive body image for this group.

Shalini Gupta is currently Associate Professor at Pearl Academy Delhi. She leads the BA Hons. program in Fashion Styling & Image Design. She Graduated from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Mumbai in 2000 with a Bachelor in Design. With 17 years of experience in the design and styling industry in India she is presently pursuing her Masters in Fashion & Textiles. She has a keen interest in the history of costume and design, fashion as communication and innovations in technology related to fashion and design.
DR. NAOMI WOODSPRING

Seeing and Being Seen: On older women and the gaze

The meaning of the gaze shifts throughout our lifespan. For older women, the gaze, historically, has been a monitoring one, an evaluation, and a judgement. Yet, throughout the Western world, there continues to be the narrative of invisibility and, now, for many older women, there is a desire to be seen, to be acknowledged. Perhaps, this has always been so. There are a number of research questions embedded in this long held belief of invisibility including: Are old women really invisible? And, in what ways? And to whom? Is invisibility a myth engendered by internalised ageism? Do we actually see each other - each other being other older women seeing older women? Or even older men? These questions, like many feminist research questions come from a seed of personal experience, observations, and/or curiosity. The desire to be caught in the gaze is to be acknowledged for the physicality of who and what it is to be ageing and female. There is a boldness in this desire. For many diverse, ageing women, embedded in the desire to be seen is a consideration of fashion, even a playfulness with appearance. Is this a symptom of consumerism or is there another hidden history of older women and fashion and the gaze? The old strictures of 'mutton dressed as lamb' are eroding and, in their place, an appreciation that can be experienced through the gaze - being looked at and, maybe, even seen. Collaborative and conspiratorial, older women are seeing each other in competitive but, also, cooperative ways.

This paper is based on a current research study investigating ageing and beauty. The reflections in this paper are based on interviews with a diverse group, in terms, of class, ethnicity and race, and sexual orientation, of thirty-two women and men who were born between 1945-1955 – the first wave of the postwar generation.

Dr. Naomi Woodspring is a Research Fellow, Centre for Appearance Research and Public Health and Well Being Research Group, University of the West of England. She is also a Fellow with the Schumacher Institute. Prior to returning to university as a late life learner, she had her own consulting firm working with non-profit agencies and for-profit businesses seeking sustainable solutions to organisational and community challenges. She has also worked as a psychotherapist in a wide variety of settings from a managing a community prison project to Native American communities. Woodspring's book, Baby Boomers, Time, and Ageing Bodies was recently released (Policy Press. Her research interests include beauty, ageing and visibility.
BETHAN BIDE

Materiality and the researcher’s gaze: rethinking what it means to look at historical clothes in a museum collection

As a researcher in museum collection, the everyday rules of looking at other people’s clothes cease to apply. Removed from the bodies that once wore them, the researcher is given freedom to closely scrutinize garments as detached, lifeless objects. But with a growing movement to consider biography through historical clothing, it is time to revisit the power dynamics of the researcher’s supposedly objective gaze in the archive. Although the bodies that once wore these garments are gone, they are still present in the marks of wear they have left behind – in the sweat stains and pulled seams and patched elbows. The lingering presence of individuals in these garments demands the researcher consider how the implicit bias of their gaze towards certain types of body shapes their understanding of the object. When they note the dubious stains around the groin of a pair of trousers or the seam that has been let out where the owner put on weight, what judgements do they make about these bodies, and how do these judgements reinforce or challenge contemporary dialogues about those body types?

Drawing on my own personal research experiences with historical garment collections, this paper calls for researchers to think again about how they look. Cultural historians such as Carolyn Steedman and Gillian Rose have noted the impossibility of approaching an archive with total objectivity, free from the desire to appropriate objects to tell your own story. Researching garments without subjectivity seems especially difficult due to the shared bodily knowledge through which we relate to clothes that contain a shared language of wear in frayed hems and loose stitching. This paper discusses how I negotiated my desire to take ownership of archival objects through my researcher’s gaze, looking at them in a way that suited my understanding of historical bodies. Instead of denying this urge, it considers how researchers might consider using it to challenge historical orthodoxies. Finally, it asks how collaborative approaches between researchers, museums and curators might create a dialogue between different ways of looking

Bethan Bide is an AHRC CDA funded PhD candidate, working on a project entitled ‘Austerity Fashion’ at Royal Holloway, University of London and the Museum of London. Working with the Museum of London collections, her research aims to tell an alternative history of 1940s London through the material culture of fashion. Bethan recently published an article entitled ‘Signs of Wear’ in Fashion Theory and has articles forthcoming in The Journal of Design History and Area. She is also working on a series of podcasts for the Museum of London and recently contributed to the Imperial War Museum’s Fashion on the Ration exhibition. She has an MA from the London College of Fashion and a BA from the University of Cambridge, and works as a visiting lecturer at Nottingham Trent University and Middlesex University.
DR. FELICE MCDOWELL

Gazing into her space: the mediatization of fashionable lives in ‘The Top Shelf’

The notion of the gaze – whether male or female – has been employed as a useful conceptual tool in the critical analysis of various forms of fashion media. From print to digital platforms, the gaze has helped to unpack many of the complexities regarding the ways in which audiences engage with visual culture, and in particular with ideas regarding identity, gender and the fashioned body. Yet, as this paper seeks to further explore, the gaze and associated processes of identification in terms of how fashion and the female body is looked at within representations of different socio-spatial planes, requires closer attention.

This paper revisits the gaze in its examination of how one looks at and reads particular representations of lived-in everyday spaces, and in particular those attributed to professional figures, or intermediaries, of fashion. It focuses upon the beauty/fashion blog and website ‘Into The Gloss’ and its ‘The Top Shelf’ page. Typically a fashionable female figure provides an interview that briefly details her personal background and professional credentials and then a synopsis of various beauty products she uses from skincare, make-up to hair body. The intimate tone of this text is accompanied by 10 or more photo-images, which include pictures of said beauty products, as well as portrait shots of the interviewee, situated within her own home.

This paper proposes that the gaze can provide a way of critically engaging with this instance of fashion media. And in doing so it also suggests how the narrative interplay between text and image, identification and the presence/absence of the fashion professionals body, extends upon prior discussions regarding the ways in which the gaze, as a form of power, participates in the production and consumption of digital fashion media (Rocamora 2011). Here it also draws upon the concepts of ‘mediatization’ (Rocamora 2016) and ‘fashionable personae’ (Titton 2015) as a framework that invites a discussion of self-fashioning and life-narratives (McDowell 2017) as it considers the ways in which the gaze, digital fashion media and auto/biographical practices intersect with one another and between the author and reader of the mediatized self.

References:

Felice McDowell is an Associate Lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies at the London College of Fashion. Her doctoral research is a history of British fashion media and the representation of public cultural spaces in editorial photo-spreads. Work from this study has been published in the journals *Fashion Theory, Photography & Culture and Clothing Cultures*. Her current research interests are in methodologies of fashion history, archival research, critical theory, life writing, and the visual and textual representation of fashion ‘work’.
DR. ALEXIS ROMANO

Reframing the Gaze: Prêt-à-porter and the Urban Fabric in 1960s French Magazines

This paper explores magazines’ symbolic production of fashion in mid-1960s France through an examination of city space, readymade dress and bodies in the publications *Elle* and *Jardin des Modes*. In the context of new photographic technologies and heightened television spectatorship, it asks how journalists and photographers including Frank Horvat, Guy Bourdin and Fouli Elia envisaged the body in space, as it related to actual and metaphorical places and spatialisations. It studies in particular models’ self location, monumentalisation and movement, through the lens of Jean Baudrillard’s notion of postmodern hyperspace.

In contrast to photographs of old, iconic, and static Paris (which traditionally upheld the symbolic construction of haute couture), these images visualised modern Paris in perpetual construction and expansion. Visual shifts reflected the city’s rapid postwar urbanisation, the erection of low-income housing estates and the expansion of Paris to incorporate La Défense, the business district on its western outskirts, which transformed underdeveloped land and factories into skyscrapers throughout the 1960s. The government promoted the new spaces and buildings as symbols of France’s economic modernism and ‘progress,’ yet they increasingly began to symbolise state regulation and the revalorisation of domesticity for women. In spite of this, in mid-1960s France, women began to achieve long-awaited legislation for their rights and the family planning movement gained ground.

The concurrent, large-scale development of the French readymade industry, with its own ties to industrial production and notions of progress, cast another layer onto imagery. For instance, adaptable, standardised clothing such as shift dresses and suits, were pictured in ways that corresponded to ambiguous modernist architectural settings, that blurred the boundaries between public, residential and professional, or that rendered bodies anonymous in relation to threatening, panoptic architectural spaces.

Alongside the continual expansion of the urban fabric and the readymade clothing industry, women’s access and place was indeterminate and peripheral, and the fabrication of their modern identities fluctuated. In this context, this paper considers the ways photographers conceived of the dressed body’s relationship to space, which entailed a shift in the gaze of the model, as well as viewers’ ways of seeing.

**Alexis Romano** is a historian of design and visual culture. She completed her PhD in 2016 at the Courtauld Institute of Art, and her current research stems from her doctoral thesis which, titled, ‘Prêt-à-Porter, Paris and the Image of Women, 1945-1968’, explores the development of the readymade clothing industry, and how it connected to France’s wider project of postwar modernisation and reconstruction, and to conceptions of national and gender identities, and modernity. Alexis is Exhibition Reviews Editor of *Textile History*, co-founder of the Fashion Research Network, and is currently co-curating the exhibition ‘Sonic Stories: Art and Clothing’ (2017).
ROSEMARY CRONIN

Gaze, Interrupted

How can contemporary artists and pop culture figures interrupt a loaded and historic gaze? How can phallic signifiers be hacked to open up gender politics?

Focusing on the work of Missy Elliott and Wendy O Williams (of The Plasmatics), together with digital gaming platforms such as The Sims. Initially I started using The Sims (the popular Life Simulation game) as a way to trial out my live performances. I was making ambitious live performances that were costly to produce (such as three girls trashing five electric guitars), therefore The Sims was the perfect maquette in helping to push the planning process. But then I realised how much could be done with The Sims and how I could use the gaming experience in a broader context that drew on my own research of feminism and psychoanalysis. I started to create all female communes and trialled out alternative lifestyles using the Life Simulation experience, creating an ideal world that allowed women to live beyond a patriarchal system; The Sims allowed me to create a l'ecriture feminine in a different space.

I would like to present my process, performances, work and future projects that use The Sims and more traditional publishing formats, as well as performance, as a space to trial the subversion of patriarchy. I would also like to present how Missy Elliott and Wendy O Williams influenced me into using the performance space as a space for critical dialogue.

Rosemary Cronin is an artist, writer and lecturer with a research-based practice focusing on gender, psychoanalysis, subcultures and subversion; currently researching the matchgirl strike and contemporary burnout. The work is realised through performance, print and sculpture. Cronin has exhibited at South London Gallery, ICA London, National Portrait Gallery and The Wallace Collection.
Mirror, Mirror: Establishing the Gendered Gaze in Louise O’Neill’s *Only Ever Yours*

Through the theoretical lens of gender theory and psychoanalytical deconstruction, Laura Mulvey’s *The Male Gaze* will be used throughout this paper to analyse Louise O’Neill’s debut novel, *Only Ever Yours*. Released in 2014, *Only Ever Yours* critiques gender inequality and the Western fascination with female perfection. The theme of female submission is evident from the onset of the novel which portrays the life of the eves, genetically modified girls who are created for male pleasure, and how the strive for bodily perfection manifests both cognitively and physically. The cognitive connotations of imposed femininity are illustrated through the central protagonist, frieda [sic]. All eves are enrolled in school where education is dominated by the male expectation of the perfect companion. The girls are not independent of their exterior appearance, the unauthentic appearance associated with female beauty is discussed throughout the novel. Each mirrored image is fabricated and made distant from the individual woman. They adhere to the scientifically allocated manufacturing of perfection and strive for better:

> I do this every morning, a part of me hoping…that I’ll wake up and be paler, thinner, different. *Better* (2014: 11).

PO1 Metallic Silver hair, the computer chanted. #76 Folly Green eyes. Muted gold-coloured skin, frosted-pink lips, a few small freckles over a neat nose (2014: 8).

The self-aggression frieda associates with her physicality reflects the pressure of the female body from the social gaze. Both desirable and shameful, the female body is criticised and shunned for a lack of perfection, and as the central protagonists of *Only Ever Yours* highlight, such internal and external tension weakens their cognitive ability. Such physical aggression is associated with both internalised and externalised catalysts. For instance, the male gaze is a strong signifier of female oppression throughout the novel, and indeed, is pivotal to the cognitive structure of frieda. Despite the lack of a physically present male gaze in *Only Ever Yours*, the eves’ obsession with personified perfection dominates their existence. Subsequently, the male gaze exists through the mind of the eves. They unconsciously subject themselves to the male gaze, an unconscious bias which reflects the patriarchal misogyny inflicted throughout the novel.

**Jade Dillon** is a Ph.D. Research Student and Departmental Assistant within the Department of English Language and Literature in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. Jade’s Ph.D. is entitled *Voicing Gender: Gender Identity, Ideology, and Intertextuality* associated with Victorian Children’s Literature, and focuses primarily on Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass alongside Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie. Her research interests include: Children’s Literature, Gender Theory, Psychoanalysis, Adaptation and Intertextuality, Film Studies, Young Adult Fiction, Illustrated and Animated Texts, Social and Political Ideology, Victorianism, Popular Culture.
Bodies made for Gazing: The Spectacle of the Fashion Display Mannequin

The paper situates the display mannequin as a cultural site for the female gaze. As an artefact of historical female ideals, the fashion mannequin occupies a unique position as a three-dimensional object produced for a female audience. Designed for the gaze of the consumer in its role as a fashionable cultural form the mannequin began as part of the modernistic gaze in fashion; a facsimile illustrative of a fashionable feminine ideal that became a significant object in public spaces, with display as a new form of spectatorship.

Representations of the mannequin were equally consumed by flâneurs, artists and photographers and the mannequin performed as a spectacle for multiple gazes, its forms arousing social and sexual anxieties. As an emblem for the modern woman the fashion mannequin came of age, described variously as ‘spooky beauties’ (Ganeva 2008:151) and as exemplars of fashionable aspiration their forms were read voyeuristically and speculated on as images of female desire and introspection. As an eloquent tool in display the appearance of mannequin figures shifted, altering perceptions of how mannequins were expected to look. In a gaze reset by fashion, the mannequin could be recast as a feminist text (Grosz 1995) mediating new images of female bodies.

This paper examines the authorship of these images and the collaborative practice of designers and sculptors in the making of the mannequin. It is a process of making influenced by several professional gazes that inform the design of the mannequin figure and the context of its appearance, gestures and attitudes, shaping its visibility and looked-at-ness (Mulvey 1975) for new audiences of consumers. This paper draws on primary industry based interview research with mannequin designers, sculptors and visual display directors to examine the position of the mannequin as a repository and agent of the female gaze. A position that remains central to discourses on the female body in the spectacle of fashion.

June Rowe is an associate lecturer at Central Saint Martin’s and the London College of Fashion and is a PhD candidate at UAL. Her thesis is an examination of the display mannequin, ideals of beauty and fashionable feminine silhouettes. June has presented papers on her research at the University of Wolverhampton for CHORD, at the Association of Dress Historians, the University of Southern Denmark and the Research Department of the V & A. She has recently had a chapter accepted for a Bloomsbury book publication, Fashioning Professionals.
Parallel Session 5A:
Producing Images of the Self for the Gaze

DR. ANDREA KOLLNITZ

Compelling Gazes. Empowering Self-Representation in the Life and Work of Leonor Fini

This paper aims to give new perspectives on artistic self-expression through fashion, costume and self-stylisation and thereby problematize the marginalised significance of self-fashioning in notions of the artist’s professional and personal identity construction. Focusing on an evocative but hitherto hardly investigated case, it highlights the self-fashioning and self-representation of the Italian Surrealist painter Leonor Fini in photographs. Having gained an international reputation as a skilled Surrealist artist and author, Fini was not least known as a constantly photographed beauty icon in close collaboration with the fashion and theatre world. Being passionately interested in her own self-representation in photographs and creating a large number of mesmerizing costumes to be displayed at balls and public occasions in the Paris art world and society, Fini may be understood as an artist who demonstratively made her personal appearance an artwork. Consciously combining notions of beauty with notions of power in her costumes and public performances as well as in her paintings, she promoted her own self-fashioning and self-presentation as creative artistic expression and as part of a socially provocative artistic life-style. She may be seen as subverting the objectifying gaze of her Surrealist male colleagues through actively taking control of her self-image in a constant and consciously staged roleplay. My study will thus revise the male dominated discourse of Surrealism, which has partially devalued and overlooked Fini’s self-fashioning practices as feminine superficiality and vanity instead of recognizing them as creative expression confirming Fini’s artistic and personal autonomy. Fini’s practices and photographic representations will be examined in conjunction with Fini’s theoretical writings on fashion, costume and the creative act of dressing up. Relating her case to the self-promotional strategies of Renaissance artists and to notions of liberation through becoming, the investigation will discuss female empowerment through a self-directed gaze in a subject enjoying and displaying her personal transformation and sartorial expressivity as part of a total art work.

Dr Andrea Kollnitz is assistant professor in fashion studies and art history. After her PhD at the art history department at Stockholm University with the dissertation *The National Identity of Art. On German and Austrian Modernism in Swedish Art Criticism 1908-1934* (2008) she has been employed as an assistant professor at the Centre for Fashion Studies, Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University. Her current research combines areas of fashion studies and art history/visual culture and is focused on the self-fashioning of the avant-garde artist, nationalist visual and textual fashion and art discourse, fashion display in museums, fashion images and caricature, and Scandinavian fashion photography. She is the co-editor of a recently published anthology on Fashion and modernism (*Modernism och mode*), soon to be published also in English, as well as of a forthcoming anthology on the Cultural History of the Avant-garde in the Nordic Countries 1925-50.
LEREN LI

Beyond the Photoshopped Sherman: Manipulating and Exhibiting Female Gaze Through Fashion Photography in the Digital Age

Cindy Sherman, the feminist photographer known for subverting the male gaze with her twisted self-portraits, who also embraces the digital alterations of photographs in works, is one contemporary figure who has managed to blend fashion and art in a way that receives success in both museum curatorial space and fashion advertising campaigns, like Marc Jacobs and Comme des Garçons. Over the past 40 years, Sherman’s self-portrait photographs have acted as critical objects that challenged the way contemporary art is conceived. Since 2000, Sherman has slipped on collaboration with fashion, and created two major photographic series in a period of intense activity and achievement: ‘Balenciaga’ 2007-08 and ‘Chanel’ 2010-12 – Sherman collages her women into mostly bleak, desolate landscapes. The women are both matched and mismatched to the scenery, creating a staple of romanticism and the pathetic fallacy. In this new century, digital photography has transformed the way Sherman makes her images and our expectations of them. By using herself as a fashion prop, and staging in the museum space as various characters: the fashion victim, the aging doyenne, the delirious clubber, Sherman gazes at the audiences and presents her audiences with a dilemma – can you be a critical observer of fashion and still be a fashionista?

In this research paper, it explores the female gaze through the lens of fashion photography after the 2000s, especially demonstrating the reworked fashion images exhibited within and out of the museum space. Compared with exhibiting garments on the pale mannequins, fashion photography captures more variable postures and facial expressions. Using Cindy Sherman as the case study, digital platforms provide even more possibilities for her to ‘transform’ her facial features exclusively through digital means, from performance to post-production. In this case, this research tries to find out: how do we redefine fashion photography in museum exhibitions within the digital era? How does Sherman manipulate her ‘female gaze’ in fashion photography? Further more, this paper will also discuss the way new technologies in image creations engage audience and communicate with viewers.

Leren Li is currently a PhD research student at Royal College of Art in London. Her current work is focusing on East Asian patchwork in the context of transcultural design studies. She received a Master of Arts degree in Fashion Studies from Parsons the School of Design, and she worked in Oscar de la Renta in 2015. Combining theories with practices, her research concentrates on subculture studies, creative industries in Asia and contemporary Chinese fashion in the context of material culture and visual culture studies.

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The Internalised Dissecting Gaze of the ‘Cutting Scalpel Eye’: Fashioned Bodies on Social Networking Sites

I am a practicing artist specialising in still life photography and site-specific social media projects that respond to contemporary commodity culture and advertising. I examine different forms of self-presentation, including selfies, thinspiration, and fat fetishism as expressions of, and responses to pathological relations between consumer culture and consumers.

To determine the modes of address that underpin relations between consumers and commodity producers I use the model of four discourses described by Lacan, and the later fifth discourse Lacan alluded to but did not fully develop: the discourse of the capitalist. The structure of the discourse of the capitalist enables me to identify predominant modes of address in consumer culture that emphasise the visibleness of my body to compel me to consume commodities and fashion my body to conform to body ideals. The modes of address I have identified are; the sadistic commands of capitalism voiced by adverts, magazine articles, and make-over TV programmes; a contagious, hysteria-like self-presentation exemplified in the selfie; and a dissecting, scalpel gaze produced by viewing adverts of fragmented ‘problem’ areas of bodies. These discourses circulate and support the dominant ideology of consumer culture, trapping me in my visibleness.

This paper will examine how the dissecting gaze is internalised by consumers and represented in fetishistically fragmented bodies in selfies, thinspiration, and fat fetishism. Using Lacan’s discourse model, I will extrapolate a fourth discourse; a discourse of critical theory that challenges the other discourses of the capitalist. I hypothesise that abject fascination is the mode of address that destabilizes the others. On fat fetishism social networking sites such as Fantasy Feeder, the body is fashioned and presented in a way that is not recuperated by dominant sign-values. It holds my gaze with abject fascination because the body seems tactile, tangible, and in close proximity. It threatens to touch me. I will use the idea of abject fascination to hypothesise different forms of online self-presentation that could challenge the dissecting gaze of consumer culture.

GRACE ADAM


I have taught Life drawing for a number of years in many different situations; church halls, universities, The Royal Academy of Arts, Tate, schools and colleges. I have been a life model just once. I am interested in the act of trust that has to occur when a group of people sit down and tacitly agree to look or be looked at.

Life drawing is odd and relevant. We all have/are bodies. It is the most rigorous form of looking. The human body is beautiful, complex, politically loaded and every gaze carries its own agenda. I include that of the person drawing, and the person being drawn, who is most often still female.

Linda Nochlin, amongst many others has argued that the barring and subsequent limited access of women from drawing the nude has significantly impeded women artists’ success over the centuries. We know the tired visual clichés and the perpetuated stereotypes of museums, galleries, magazines across the land. In this session, I would like to explore what life drawing can mean right now.

We will work with an experienced female model for a short session of drawing 45 mins/60 mins. (All materials provided). Poses will be short, and subtly different in order to engage the viewer in varying ways. We will follow this with a discussion about the act of that looking, the issues or joys this may engender, the judgements, (visual or otherwise) we made. What were our approaches to that looking? What about the experience of being looked at? What of the wider politics of directing or receiving the gaze? Does Life Drawing fall into a legitimate way of looking and recording? Is it increasingly or decreasingly relevant in the age of digital communication?

I will lead the discussion, but I look forward to seeing where our conversation leads us.

Grace Adam is an artist and lecturer, interrogating environments; how we build, negotiate, populate and use them; in the everyday and notions of beauty. She exhibits widely, and produces site-sensitive temporary installations. She teaches at the University of Arts London, Tate, Whitechapel, National Portrait Gallery and The Royal Academy of Arts. Grace has taught life drawing in many different institutions and situations and reviews contemporary exhibitions in London on TheArtChannel.
DR. ROSIE FINDLAY

“Inspired by real life”: Examining ‘aspirational realness’ on the websites of Glossier and Maryam Nassir Zadeh

The permeable boundary between ‘real life’ and its depiction online has fascinated scholars since digital connectivity was first extended to consumers in the early 1990’s. In recent years, a number of fashion and beauty brands have developed digital interfaces that deliberately blur this boundary, circulating an aspirational quality imbued with relatable and unstudied cool around their brands. This is achieved in a number of ways: the models shot for their campaigns and product images are cast from Instagram or are friends of the designers; these images are shot documentary-style, on the street or in extreme close-up, revealing squinting, blemishes, freckles, and stray hairs. Yet rather than overturning the aesthetic ideal that is the stock in trade of the fashion photograph, these stylistic choices foreground the casual beauty of the women shot and the off-kilter charm of the products they wear.

This paper will examine two distinct brands that both generate this quality of (what I have dubbed) ‘aspirational realness’ around their products: beauty brand Glossier (glossier.com) and fashion retailer Maryam Nassir Zadeh (mnzstore.com), both of which are based in New York City. I will argue that both of these brands employ a style of shooting their product that harks back to fashion photography of the 1990’s, which also prioritised the fresh glamour of ordinary people, whilst communicating discourses of feminine independence in a distinctly millennial context. In what ways can we understand this ‘aspirational realness’ as a reaction against the airbrushed polish of social media sites and celebrity-saturated visual culture? How do these brands circulate discourses of female camaraderie whilst also generating an aura of unapproachable coolness around their models and the products they display?

I will study how these competing discourses are generated through the words and images of these two websites, considering them in light of scholarship on the ‘real’ in fashion photography, the ‘fashion gaze’, and by considering Joseph Roach’s essay on the phenomenon of ‘It’ (2004).

Rosie Findlay is a Lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies at the London College of Fashion. She researches fashion media and new media, fashion photography, and embodiment and dress, and her work has appeared in a number of journals including Fashion Theory and Cultural Studies Review. Her first book, Personal Style Blogs: Appearances that Fascinate, will be published in October 2017.
Open any tabloid magazine today and you will find a page titled “Who Wore It Better?” or “Who Wore It Best?” These features place photographs of female celebrities wearing the same ensemble side-by-side and rate each woman’s appearance to determine (as the title suggests) who wore it better. They often ascribe alphanumerical values to each woman’s look—sometimes they are shown as percentage points attributed to the polled opinions of readers, other times they are presented as a school grade bestowed by the publication’s editorial staff. These tabloid features are not a unique phenomenon in contemporary culture. There are many blogs and television programs, such as The Fashion Police and GoFugYourself.com, that center on the practice of body shaming, thinly veiled as sartorial evaluation.

This paper will examine the proliferation of these features, looking at their incarnations in print media, television, and the digital space. It will consider how fashion is used as a tool by which to judge, dissect, and stigmatize the female body in contemporary culture, and will assess the degree to which this form of organized judgment has become a socially “acceptable” practice. The paper will also attempt to put the features in historical context, with examples from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visual culture that demonstrate how fashion has been used to stigmatize the female body and marginalize certain aesthetic and physical types for centuries.

The paper will build on my research for the upcoming exhibition *The Body: Fashion and Physique*, which will open at The Museum at FIT in December 2017.

*Emma McClendon* is the Associate Curator of Costume at the Museum at FIT in New York. She has been at the museum since 2011, during which time she has curated a number of exhibitions, including *Uniformity* (2016) and *Denim: Fashion’s Frontier* (2015), and co-curated *Yves Saint Laurent + Halston: Fashioning the 70s* (2015). She holds an M.A. in the History of Dress from the Courtauld Institute of Art and an M.A. Honours in Art History from the University of St. Andrews. Recent publications include *Denim: Fashion’s Frontier* (Yale University Press), which accompanied the exhibition of the same title.
ELLEN NOLAN

The experience of being looked at.

Four years ago I inherited my great Aunt Nita’s archive. Nita was an English actress who won a beauty contest for Paramount Pictures in 1933 and was summoned to Hollywood and signed by Paramount. Before that time and throughout her acting career, Nita experienced being looked at by two different lenses. One was the industry lens, an example from this relentless gaze is recorded above in a still from a 35 mm Nitrate casting film, where the camera pans up and down Nita’s body, as she is clothed in a satin bikini, stood behind a white chalk line and asked to turn slowly around. The other constant gaze came from her mother, who seemed to collaborate with her daughter in creating a different type of performance for the camera. This performance was creative, playful, emotionally seductive and passionate. (Please see the montage ‘Dance of Salome’ that I created from one of their many domestic collaborations.)

Throughout my project, Nita, the experience of being looked at is examined through these two lenses. Questions such as, In what way does the performance and experience of being looked at differ with the intention? On viewing the two-minute casting film of Nita what becomes immediately apparent is her terror at the experience of being looked at (in this way). Up, down and around. 360 Degrees. Here is a document of a brutal form of both looking, examining and recording. It seems that there is little of any two-way process here, only direction and acquiescence. The experience of being looked at in the domestic images taken by Nita’s mother seems involve a reciprocal process where even though there is a ‘performer’ and ‘director’ there is a performance within the photograph itself that breaks the mold of the two roles making them interchangeable: the experience of being looked at is taken on and served back to the camera and viewer with relish.

In order to explore this further in the extensive archive I have worked with montage, collage, and text to create a narrative of two lenses. All the text is from the archive and is either words uttered by Nita from letters or diaries, or by the film industry through media articles, correspondence or contracts, circa 1933.

Ellen Nolan is an artist and lecturer. Her practice explores representation and performance within the domestic and constructed image. These ideas are explored within her latest body of ongoing work, Nita’s Archive. She has exhibited photographic projects in the UK and internationally including showing selected work at The Photographers Gallery, Four Corners Gallery and The National Portrait Gallery, where she has five works housed in their collection. Prior to this she worked as a fashion and portrait photographer for fifteen years for i-D, Sunday Telegraph, Vogue Homme + and British Vogue. She shot advertising campaigns for the likes of Dries Van Noten, Nike and Levis. Along with directing prestigious pop videos, short films, fashion films and album covers. She lives and works in London.
‘This will be your version of what happened’: Performance, Perspective and Control in Jackie (2015)

This paper will examine recent biopic Jackie (dir. Pablo Larrain), about Jackie Kennedy’s experience of the days following the assassination of her husband. The film raises issues of performance, both around the films lead, Natalie Portman (who was tipped to win an Oscar for her distinctive physical and psychological depiction of this iconic figure), but also around Kennedy herself, as the film’s central concern is with her attempts to offer a convincing public performance that negotiates propriety and protocol, whilst battling personal feelings of grief and with her determination to craft a legacy, a glamorous myth of ‘Camelot’ around herself, her husband and the political administration he spearheaded.

Melodramatic in subject and tone (for example, the soundtrack was singled out repeatedly in reviews for providing the ‘unifying emotional glue’ for Portman’s mannered, alienating performance), combining original archive material with restaged footage (of the 1962 TV special A Tour of the White House with Mrs John F Kennedy which showcased the restorations Mrs Kennedy oversaw in the White House carefully positioned Kennedy as a model First Lady, the archetypal home maker, possessor of excellent taste and protector of American historical identity), shot in a saturated colour pallet strongly reminiscent of early home movies and produced with a preoccupation with visual detail that saw the film compared to other popular media depictions of 1960s America such as Mad Men, Jackie problematically seeks to balance emotional realism, subjective experience, and received representations of the past, with historical accuracy.

Elsewhere the films’ narrative device raises issues of subjectivity, veracity, memory, nostalgia and ultimately, control due to the fallibility of the storyteller, her subjective experience of her grief, her attempts to shape public perception of herself (as First Lady, wife/widow, mother, style icon, role model, celebrity, modern western woman) and her husband and his administration and because of the range of issues inherent in the filmic reconstruction of (and hence a new perspective upon) significant historical events and figures.

Dr Ellen Wright is the Vice Chancellor’s 2020 Lecturer in Cinema and Television History at De Montfort University, Leicester. She has taught film studies, media studies and photographic theory and specialises in the study of leisure industries, consumer culture and broader social contexts surrounding Hollywood cinema in the early, to mid-twentieth century. Amongst other academic publications, she has written ‘Betty Grable: An American Icon in Wartime Britain’ for The Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, ‘Spectacular Bodies: The Swimsuit, Sexuality and Hollywood’ for the Sport in History special edition on leisure industries and ‘Having Her Cheesecake and Eating It: Performance, Professionalism, and the Politics of the Gaze in the Pinup Self-Portraiture of Bunny Yeager’ for Feminist Media Histories.