

Summary

Dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of fashion from an academic perspective, the quarterly journal *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* views fashion as a cultural phenomenon, offering the reader a wide range of articles by leading Western and Russian specialists, as well as classical texts on fashion theory. From the history of dress and design to body practices; from the work of well-known designers to issues around consumption in fashion; from beauty and the fashionable figure through the ages to fashion journalism, fashion and PR, fashion and city life, art and fashion, fashion and photography — *Fashion Theory* covers it all.

In this issue's **Dress** section, we take a look at embroidery, fashion and activism.

Armida de la Garza, Claudia Hernández-Espinosa & Rosana Rosar contribute *Embroidery as Activist Translation in Latin America*.

Craftivists have long held that embroidery is a language and that it can be used to communicate. Moreover, they have also argued that it is similar to a translation since craft has a unique ability to help transcend linguistic barriers, as it can be a way to transmit messages and emotions around the world when we cannot communicate with words, either due to censorship,

a lack of resources or other reasons. In addition, this type of language is said to have specific advantages that make it particularly suitable when it comes to transforming thought and feeling into action and political activism, on account of its materiality and hapticity, which elicits empathy, among other reasons. As conflict and violence are rife in Latin America, this article draws from scholarship in both the needle arts and translation studies, applying their insights to the creative work of Latin American women's struggles for their reproductive rights and against state violence, by means of embroidery, arguing that this is a form of translation.

Puleng Segalo offers *Embroidered Voices: Exposing Hidden Trauma Stories of Apartheid*.

For many Black South African women, speaking about the gruesome and de-meaning treatment they experienced during Apartheid is not easy. Silence became normalized due to the unspeakable nature of what many of the women went through. They struggled to find a way to express their traumas and many lived and continue to live with these hidden transcripts of their lives. For some, shame and lack of safe spaces or platforms to speak/express their traumas contributed to this silence. Indeed, many women continue to struggle to find the language to express their traumas. This paper engages how, through visual narratives such as embroidery, women become active actors in the telling of their lived realities. Drawing from a qualitative approach and using visual narratives in the form of embroideries, the paper offers insights on how unspeakable lived experiences of trauma can be expressed. The paper further highlights ways in which embroidery can be used to connect both the personal and collective stories of Black women in South Africa and to show how suffering is an interpersonal experience. Finally, the possibilities and potentials of visual artwork, as a canvas that offers space for expressing stories of trauma, survival, and healing, are addressed.

Roberto Filippello's paper *Fashion Statements in a Site of Conflict* is an analysis of critical fashion practices in Israel/Palestine based on interviews conducted with two design teams: Israeli-Palestinian brand ADISH and Palestinian brand tRASHY. These two brands share a commitment to fashion design and fashion image-making as tools of community building: a project that goes hand in hand with a rethinking of systems of production and labor. The aesthetic and political dimension of their practices, however, are inevitably marked by the different experiences and positionalities (as Israelis or Palestinians) of their respective founders. I situate their creative practices in the wake of the post-Oslo Accords and suggest that such practices should be understood as part of a broader creative solidarity movement that contests nationalism, oppression, and separation. The affective labor involved in the development of community-building design projects, the cooperative creative process, and the generation of capital used to support local female workers as well as refugee and/or LGBTQ populations in Palestine are the constituents of a larger grassroots mobilization aimed at

fostering change. This article contributes to ongoing scholarly work on art practices of world-making and explores how fashion could provide a stage for rethinking both the aesthetic and the political in a contested sociopolitical landscape.

Galina Ignatenko contributes *Women's Handicraft Techniques on the Catwalk: A Place for New Meanings*. The focus of this paper is the mutual influence that can be observed between the languages of crafts and design. Taking a closer look at current trends, one notes that in recent years, handicraft techniques borrowed from folk crafts and home practices have been brought into the fashion discourse by both local and luxury brands. Drawn out from their authentic domestic environment, handicrafts such as crocheting or macramé are seeing a new interpretation. In this new context, objects with a personal history are interpreted by consumers as being connected with home, childhood, and parental care. With their long stories, they are filled with symbolism, and receive new meanings. Synthesising and accumulating interpretations, designers aim to elicit an emotional response from consumers, many of whom might feel ungrounded in today's world. The author analyses the genesis of handicraft techniques and their use in today's clothing design. Ignatenko looks at diverse cultural norms, events, and prevailing values, and their impact on the evolution of the context of interpretation.

The cooperation between houses of fashion and handicrafts involves a converging of the languages of the two worlds. In supporting projects in the crafts, fashion brands not only enrich the semantic content of their clothing, but also put out an important message. The items they design receive added conceptual value. The symbolic codes inherent in women's crafts such as knitting, crochet, embroidery, and patchwork, become not merely elements of design, but a way of communicating the values of the brand itself, and, consequently, of its consumers, also. By using fashionable crafts metaphors, brands are able to build stronger emotional ties with today's consumers. Adopting the discourse and values associated with handicrafts allows clothing brands not only to create fresh visual images, but also to connect with those who speak the same language. The use of traditional crafts fulfils the need for metaphorical symbolism, whilst helping construct a historical narrative and, thus, augment the cultural value of the brand. In her research, the author refers to photographs and video from the 2022 Spring-Summer collections of over 300 houses of fashion. As a result of this study, Ignatenko was able to describe the contemporary strategies used to bring crafts to the catwalk, and to outline the sociocultural context which demanded that clothes designers start producing new meanings.

In **Body** we turn to textiles, the sensory and emotional experiences they offer and trauma.

Sanem Odabasi's article *The Hidden Potential of Textiles: How Do They Heal and Reveal Traumas?* aims to investigate the relationship with textiles that could

both heal and reveal trauma. The theoretical framework is supported by the author's photography in various museums, exhibitions, and cities. The present paper is based on three dimensions: First, the making practices that emerged for the treatment of communities and trauma victims are discussed in detail. Second, the ability of clothing to trigger trauma due to the negative memories of the wearer is addressed. Finally, the artistic utilization of textiles in artworks that reflect traumatic social events is presented as memory-reminder tools. Based on these three dimensions, it was determined that textile objects are not mere objects but also actors that affect and transform our lives. Textiles are agents that could surface emotions such as anger, sadness, and joy.

Carol Quarini contributes *Domestic Trauma: Textile Responses to Confinement, Coercion and Control*. One result of the public health quarantine measures resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has been an increase in the incidence of domestic abuse against women. This practice-based interdisciplinary research paper considers the domestic trauma resulting from confinement, coercion and control within the home and textile responses to it. It aims to highlight these domestic concerns, challenge attitudes about coercive control and provoke discussion. Contemporary research into domestic abuse is combined with examples of domestic coercion and control described in literature and textile. Many women, both in life and literature, have used textiles as an alternative form of discourse to describe coercion and control in the home. As first-wave feminist Olive Schreiner shrewdly noted about women traumatized by domesticity "What has she but her needle?". Textiles such as Elizabeth Parker's sampler recording her domestic abuse are discussed, as well as contemporary responses by survivors and artists. As well as recording coercive control, textiles can also be used as an alternative form of discourse in the healing process. The paper ends on an encouraging note discussing textile initiatives that assist victims of domestic trauma.

Karen Nickell offers "*Troubles Textiles*": *Textile Responses to the Conflict in Northern Ireland*.

Textiles have been used as protest and testimony, storytelling and memory, from the Bayeux Tapestry to Suffrage banners, AIDS quilts and craftivism. War textiles emerged in some cultures exposed to conflict during the 1970s; for example, the arpilleras of Chile and Latin America, the story cloths of the Hmong people in refugee camps in Thailand, and more recently memory cloths depicting apartheid in South Africa. This article presents the textiles that emerged in response to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. It includes individual responses, collaborative community quilts, and artist-led projects for remembrance, healing, and peace. In Northern Ireland, religious, cultural, political, and national differences escalated in 1968 into the sectarian civil conflict known as "the Troubles" which continued for 30 years until the Good Friday agreement in 1998. The textiles discussed in this article date from the Troubles and the post-conflict (but

still deeply conflicted) period since then. Textile responses have not been included in art exhibitions or literature about the Troubles and therefore a unique response, almost exclusively by women, is missing from the broader narrative. Primary research was through recorded, transcribed interviews with makers and analysis of the processes and outcomes of their work.

Denise Jones contributes *Embroidering the Traumatized “Cloth-Skin- Body”*: *Suffragette Embroidered Cloths Worked in Holloway Prison, 1911–1912*.

In Holloway Prison in March 1909, in an astonishing act of bodily harm, the suffragette Constance Lytton punctured the membrane of her skin with two needles and a hairpin in order to inscribe the words “Votes for Women” across her skin-body. She used her own skin as the ground cloth for the inscription, and needles, hairpin, skin, body, cloth and pain were all implicated in the act. Instead of using the needle to work cloth, Lytton used it to probe the boundary of her skin-body. Skin became a projected cloth where she materially wrought and discursively wrote the beginnings of a visceral and political suffrage message, demonstrating that her quasi-“cloth-skin-body” was a political site and the locus of trauma. Whilst Lytton did not leave any tangible evidence of hand- embroidering through cloth in Holloway, several suffragette embroideries worked there between 1911 and 1912 have survived. Hundreds of women were imprisoned at this time as the militant Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) turned to breaking windows and the destruction of property. They faced the threat of the hunger strike and forcible feeding.

In this paper the relationship between trauma and embroidering through the “cloth-skin-body” is explored with reference to six suffragette embroideries. Leaning on the psychoanalytical writings of Didier Anzieu, Nicola Diamond and Stella North, as well as drawing on my own practice as research, I argue that for imprisoned suffragettes embroidering was autobiographic, situated and embodied. The paper proposes the concept of a “cloth-ego,” which can be psychically projected from the body: hyphenated in its proximity to skin and the body but abstracted and expanded into the world as an embroidered handkerchief, tablecloth, bag or panel. For suffragettes such as the embroiderer Janie Terrero, who registered her own forcible feeding and that of nineteen others on a cloth panel, I argue that embroidering through the cloth-skin-body helped to psychically remake and repair the self and filter and expel the toxic and invasive “spine in the flesh.”¹ Through the “procedural enactments”² of embroidering, I claim that the women processed their somatic and affective experiences. The material practice of embroidering allowed their “absent present”³ bodies to “speak.” It enabled the body to tell a material story above and beyond the discursive limits of language, beyond the words and images on the cloth. Thus, a story could be articulated before words were found or before feelings were put into consciousness, thought or speech.

Culture is devoted to copying, fakes and counterfeit products in fashion and opens with **Liz Tregenza's** *Copying a Master: London Wholesale Couture and Cristóbal Balenciaga in the 1950s*.

Cristobal Balenciaga is widely recognized as one of the leading twentieth century couturiers. His dynamic designs redefined fashionable silhouettes internationally. This paper will consider the impact of his designs in Britain, focusing upon how London wholesale couturiers copied, adapted and took inspiration from his garments. The majority of London wholesale couturiers' garments were copied or adapted from Parisian haute couture. They modified these designs to meet ready-to-wear manufacturing techniques, producing high-quality garments targeted at a middle-class consumer. By focusing on two silhouettes introduced in the late 1950s; the sack and baby doll, this paper discusses how these firms translated Balenciaga's designs. The sack, in particular, was rapidly adapted by London wholesale couturiers who managed to successfully modify it for the ready-to-wear market. By drawing on a range of source material, including original garments, newspaper and magazine editorials, this paper will evaluate how Balenciaga's design esthetic was translated by wholesale couturiers for consumption by a middle-class public in the 1950s.

Alice Janssens & Mariangela Lavanga contribute *An Expensive, Confusing, and Ineffective Suit of Armor: Investigating Risks of Design Piracy and Perceptions of the Design Rights Available to Emerging Fashion Designers in the Digital Age*.

The fashion industry is digitizing, enabling faster creation, production, distribution, and consumption, as well as design piracy, but the structures that exist to support and protect designers are yet to adapt to these developments. There is much debate about the rampant piracy within the sector and its impact upon fashion businesses. However, there is little academic research regarding piracy's effect upon emerging fashion designers.

This study investigates: (1) the risk of piracy; (2) perceptions of the registered and unregistered design rights available to fashion designers, considering the case of UK-based emerging fashion designers; and (3) how the risk of piracy and design rights impact fashion designers' strategies in online and offline environments. Employing qualitative analysis, we argue that significant ignorance and low usage levels render the design rights available to UK designers irrelevant. Furthermore, we suggest that emerging designers are hesitant to digitize their businesses due to concerns surrounding the protection of their products. This is reflected in the growing interest in sustainable textiles and local production, which may be employed to circumvent threats of piracy.

Matthew Ming-Tak Chew's study *Reinterpreting How and Why People Consume Counterfeit Fashion Products: A Sociological Challenge to the Pro-Business Paradigm* challenges the dominant pro-business research paradigm on counterfeit fashion products (CFPs). It offers a critical, sociological, and qualitative

alternative to the field's pro-business, psychologistic, and positivist scholarship. To support intellectual property rights claims, the pro-business paradigm presumes that the consumption of CFPs is exclusively driven by consumers' pursuit of social status and/or fashionability. This study identifies six alternative ways people consume CFPs and analyzes the unexplored sociological and normative background to such consumption. The six alternative ways involve (i) dedicated fans who collect CFPs of a brand, (ii) working-class migrants who wear CFPs to integrate into host societies, and (iii) non-wealthy individuals who buy CFPs as functional clothing, (iv) businesspersons wearing CFPs to cope with local sartorial culture, (v) amoral neoliberal shoppers, and (vi) inhabitants of the fashion lifeworld who occasionally purchase CFPs. Data were collected from 12 Chinese cities between 2008 and 2012. In the first phase, I informally interviewed over 100 individuals to delineate some ways of consuming CFPs. The second phase consisted of multiple-session intensive interviews with 31 main informants, participant observation with six of them, and informal interviews with 36 secondary informants.

In Events Lauren Downing Peters reviews *Faking It: Originals, Copies, and Counterfeits* at the Museum at The Fashion Institute of Technology New York (December 2, 2014 April 25, 2015)

In Books Karina Nikolskaya reviews *Exhibit! Fashion on Display: Exhibitions and Brand Spaces* by Luca Marchetti and Simona Segre Reinach (Milan, Pearson Bruno Mondadori, 2020); Mark O'Connell offers his review of *Fashion Remains: Rethinking Fashion Ephemera in the Archive* by Marco Pecorari (New York: Bloomsbury, 2021)

Endnotes

1. The psychoanalyst Laplanche refers to "the spine in the flesh" as an alien and intrusive group of ideas that break into our mental consciousness (Laplanche 1985, 24). Nicola Diamond adds to this definition stating that it is a sensory state that lives on in sensations and somatic dysfunction as something alien in our body (Diamond 2013, 118).
2. Nicola Diamond refers to "procedural processing and re-enactment as a form of working through and of altering semiotic-sensory set ups" as opposed to linguistic processing (Diamond 2013, 205).
3. The psychologist Lisa Blackman refers to the disavowed corporeal body as being the "absent present" body (Blackman 2008, 6).