

# Curative Things

Medicine / Fashion / Art

#CurativeThings



Please join the symposium using the following link

<https://zoom.us/j/91863117178?pwd=Ulg4V01jN1YzMFJWdElxcjZYNERyUT09>

Meeting ID: 918 6311 7178

Passcode: 041491



This symposium focuses on objects at the intersections between art and fashion, health and medicine. Examples might include clothing, prostheses and other wearables: things that have the potential to restrict, contain, embrace or extend the body; things that we wear and that wear us.

Curative Things is a collaborative symposium organised by Thing Power Research Group (LAU), Thinking Through Things (Northern Network for Medical Humanities Research, supported by Wellcome Trust), and Fashion Research Network.

#### Curative Things Poster Campaign

To accompany the symposium, Dr Catriona McAra (LAU Curator) and Dr Dawn Woolley (LAU Research Fellow) commissioned a series of poster campaigns that are on display in commercial advertising spaces around Leeds. The idea is to take the exhibition outside the university while our gallery is closed, and provide an opportunity for delegates to showcase their work to a broader public. Alongside *Mystical Apparatus* a specially commissioned artwork by Woolley, the selected proposals were *Office Exercises* by Lucie Armstrong (Senior Lecturer BA (Hons) Fashion Photography) and *Lacking Charm* by Dr Paula Chambers (Subject Leader BA (Hons) Fine Art).

# Schedule

**10.15-10.30:**            **Introduction / Welcome**

**10:30-12:00**            **Panel 1: Protection**

- Professor Andrew Groves, University of Westminster "Palliative Prototypes or Therapeutic Functionality? Examining C.P. Company's Urban Protection Collection"
- Dr Kirsten Scott, Istituto Marangoni London ;Dr Jonathan Butler, MMU; Dr Prabhuraj Venkatraman, MMU; Karen Spurgin, Istituto Marangoni London School Restorative fashion: "The healing powers of the mutuba tree"
- Garry Barker, LAU "The votive in transition: From sacred intersession to individual expression"

**12-1:00**                **Lunch**

**1:00-2.30**              **Panel 2: Correction / Restriction**

- Dr Anna Jamieson, Birkbeck College, University of London: "Love's Madness: Feeling, Consuming and Containing Things"
- Dr Renate Stauss, The American University of Paris: "Dress as Therapy: Working with Dress in Psycho-medical Settings – Between Control, Cure, Care and Creative Play"
- Dr Jeanne Randolph, cultural critic, performance artist and psychiatrist: "An experimental image/text collage: interpreting historical medical and fashion 'violence' upon the female body as depicted by a freeway map drawn on the surface of a naked woman's thorax..."

**2:30-4:00**              **Panel3: Extension**

- Emily Beaney, Edinburgh College of Art: "Breaking the Fall film screening"
- Dr Rebecka Fleetwood-Smith, University of Bristol : "Clothing, expression, and dementia"
- Idle Institute (Sonia Bernac and Eliot Allison): "The work of art in the age of technological entanglement"

**4:00-4:10**              **Break**

**4:10 -4:45**              **Panel discussion + Closing remarks**

Dr Paula Chambers, LAU; Dr Fiona Johnstone, Durham University; Dr Ellen Sampson, Northumbria University; and Dr Dawn Woolley, LAU

**4:45-6:00**              **Break**

**6:00-7:25**              **Creative showcase and poster campaign launch**

- Katharina Ludwig, Goldsmiths, University of London: "Woundlickers: A Rhapsodic Character Study"
- Dr Stella Baraklianou, University of Huddersfield: "The Magician's Hat: A photographic performance"
- Introductions to poster series by Dr Dawn Woolley, LAU: "Mystical Apparatus"; Lucie Armstrong, LAU: "Office Exercises"; and Dr Paula Chambers, LAU: "Lacking Charm"
- Panel discussion chaired by Dr Catriona McAra, LAU

**7:25-7:30**              **Closing remarks / thanks**

# Abstracts and Biographies

Lucie Armstrong, Leeds Arts University: *Office Exercises* poster campaign

'Office Exercises' 2018 is a photographic series translating the repetitive daily routine of contemporary society. Office exercises are promoted to the work force through the use of corporate signage around the workspace, communicating the importance of health and wellbeing. This communication is often in conflict with the realistic nature of work environments though, that can often result in a narrative of long work hours, burnout and exhaustion. The performance of the exercises symbolises the ongoing pressure to achieve and produce whilst experiencing feelings of restriction and a situation on inertia.

Lucie Armstrong is a photographer and a Senior Lecturer for Fashion Photography at Leeds Arts University/Lecturer for Photography at Manchester School of Art. She completed her MA in Photography at Manchester School of Art in 2019. Lucie's photographic practice sits between fashion and fine art, exploring life experience and the everyday through the creation of performances for the camera. She uses both still and moving image as part of her process and is currently researching the use of auto-ethnographic methods and the use of collaboration for art practice. Lucie founded the project *Forme Journal* which is an ongoing research-based project that incorporates self-publishing. *Forme Journal* is a discussion on translations of life experience through photographic practice and concentrates on the use of approach, performance and image construction.

Dr Stella Baraklianou, University of Huddersfield: *The Magician's Hat: A photographic performance*

*The Magician's Hat* (2020), is an object/prop that has been commissioned especially for my forthcoming solo show, *The Magician*. The exhibition is due to happen sometime later this year, at GLOAM gallery in Sheffield. It forms part of an installation and the idea is taken from the Tarot card 1 of the Major Arcana and the Marseille deck of cards. For the conference presentation, the Hat will perform on its own. The impact of the pandemic has forced a certain social distancing, necessary when we interact now in public in order to avoid the spread of the virus. The hat itself at the moment is residing away from me, due to the lockdown, I cannot access it in order to photograph it and finish the project as proposed. The presentation has been adjusted to a poetic reading of the current situation. There is a sense like the infinity symbol, the lemniscate on the hat, that we are constantly in a never ending loop, caught in this situation, things that we took for granted are now not tangible and objects are hidden from view and our touch. I'd like to offer the words and images for the viewer to imagine this hat. Can it perform magic for you?

Dr Stella Baraklianou (b.Greece) utilises photography, installation and writing to explore themes of the reversible. As an unstable yet poetic factor of transformation, the reversible can be found in the philosophy of light and energy distribution patterns, in natural magic, in weaving as well as in digital and algorithmic codes. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. She holds a PhD in Fine Arts from Goldsmiths, University of London Arts (2007) and an MA in Photographic Studies, from the University of Westminster (2002). She is currently Senior Lecturer in Photography at the University of Huddersfield.

Garry Barker, Leeds Arts University: *The votive in transition: From sacred intersession to individual expression*

Votives are one of the oldest art forms, and it has often been argued that their use value was that they operated as a way of making a connection between the everyday world and the spiritual plane, as well as constructing a communication channel between the individual and the divine. The idea that a physical representation could operate as a fulcrum or doorway between one type of reality and another, gradually evolved into other related forms, such as tokens or charms that were worn to ward off evil or to ensure good health. Religious folk charms are still used for healing purposes and as votive offerings in strongly Catholic societies such as Mexico and recently, as certain style magazines have informed us; “charm bracelets and pendant necklaces have risen from the dead”. Accessories as a means of self expression, have long been associated with the fact that decorative charms can have personal or sentimental attachment for the owner. This presentation seeks to explore the continuing need for a means of communication that connects our physical everyday existence to spiritual influences, including ‘fate’, ‘chance’ or ‘luck’. It also highlights the need to use physical objects in order to externalise our inner thoughts and that these objects, especially in times of grief, illness or sadness, can be useful as we seek to find new ritual expressions for formative life events. The charm bracelet as fashion item, it will be argued still performs a function that links its form back into pre-history. In particular the rising popularity of Milagros or “miracle” charms, once designed to be pinned to objects of devotion in a shrine, but now advertised as perfect for clip on fashionable charm bracelets, is explored as a sign of spiritual need in a post religious society.

Garry Barker has a DipAD in Fine Art (Newport College of Art) and a MA in Art and Design (Leeds Metropolitan University); he has published and exhibited widely, winning the 2017 Rabley Drawing Centre ‘SKETCH’ first prize, selected for the Trinity Buoy Wharf drawing prize, and being selected for the Pinault Foundation’s recent exhibition exploring narrative influences on contemporary sculpture. Commissioned for the Leeds Arts Wellbeing and Health network, to design storytelling cards, he uses a variety of drawing led methodologies to respond to individual and community concerns, using drawing as a visualisation tool to communicate ideas, drive narratives and create visual allegories.

Emily Beaney, Edinburgh College of Art: *Breaking the Fall film screening*

The film can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/443198200>

*Breaking the Fall* is an experimental collaboration with my mother, Cherrie Beaney. Processes of making are used to extend embodied, subjective and inter-subjective experiences of illness onto the physical body as a manifestation of entangled relations of care and control. Contextualised within the familial setting, the films seek to convey personal and social realities of managing long-term illnesses at home, focusing upon aspects of these experiences that may be hidden, or difficult to articulate. Often unacknowledged due to the dominance of medical studies, the family setting has been described as perhaps the most important of all relationships surrounding illness experience (Schneider and Conrad, 1983). *Breaking the Fall* examines both the ‘radical kinship’ and ‘politics of care’ that may be established within the family context, and the entanglement of such relationships and their delicate balances of care and control (Hedva, 2015) through wearables that both protect and restrict the body.

Designed to reflect hidden narratives of illness, wearables are created to reveal more than a diagnosis. This collaboration explores how acts of creation can enable the non-verbal body to become articulate in illness. Medical visualisations evidence disease only, using technologies that negate the body as a centre of knowledge. Diagnostic terms too, indicate a universalised concept of a disease that can carry value judgements which may negatively impact a person in society (Conrad and Barker, 2010). To generate a shift in representation, a body-centred approach to making aims to restore individual agency over illness by validating subjective perceptions as expressions of embodied knowledge. Collaborative approaches to making enable the representation of such lived experiences, countering stigmatic generalisations that can unfortunately accompany diagnostic terms.

Emily Beaney is a practice-based PhD researcher at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. Using experimental documentary practice, her research seeks to translate women's embodied knowledge of long-term illness. Her collaborative projects work with women in Scotland to address issues of stigma and reveal new ways of representing illness experience, focusing upon sensation and affect. Emily has presented her practice-based research at festivals, conferences and as part of Q & A panels. Previously, she has been funded by organisations in Scotland to carry-out artistic research projects, and by the British Council and Creative Scotland to conduct collaborative international residencies.

Paula Chambers, Leeds Arts University: *Lacking Charm* poster campaign

*Lacking Charm* (2021) interrogates the history and social context of the charm bracelet as an object that originated as an extension of the personal protective amulet, yet has come to be worn as feminine adornment. Advertisements for charm bracelets suggest that a woman or girl might mark the important moments in her life through the purchase of charms that represent these significant events. *Lacking Charm* is a feminist reappraisal of the charm bracelet that seeks to subvert and undermine the understanding of charm as a desirable character trait for women and girls, yet also re-presents the charm as an object whose symbolic properties offer a specifically feminist form of psychic protection.

Paula Chambers is an artist and arts educator, she is currently Subject Leader for Fine Art at Leeds Arts University. She recently completed her practice-led PhD at Middlesex University. Paula's art practice is sculptural, she works with found objects and the materiality of the feminine domestic to subvert and disrupt the social, cultural and historic understanding of women's ambivalent relationship to home. Paula's recent solo exhibition *Shoplifting at Woolworths and Other Acts of Material Disobedience* at Barnsley Civic in January 2020, was reviewed for Third Text by Dr Dawn Woolley. She has chapters published in *Feminist Visual Activism and the Body*, edited by Basia Sliwiska (2020), titled *Folding Chair for the Feminist Resistance: Activating Feral Materiality*, and in *Feminist Art Activisms and Artivisms*, edited by Katy Deepwell (2020), titled *Materialising Dissent: Pussy Riot's Balaclavas, Material Culture and Feminist Agency*.

Dr Rebecka Fleetwood-Smith, University of Bristol: *Clothing, expression, and dementia*

This paper explores some of the ways in which clothing functions for people with dementia living in a care home. Clothing can be considered a person's most immediate physical environment. It affects the way a person sits, moves, and stands. What we wear is intimately intertwined with our identity. Clothing in the lives of people with dementia can take on particular significance, whereby not conforming to normative standards of dress is often associated with cognitive impairments and is often used, in pictorial depictions of dementia, to indicate decline. This paper draws upon research that explored the significance of clothing to people with dementia living in a care home. The study focused on clothing during wear, attending specifically to the embodied and sensorial aspects of clothing, using sensory, embodied, and creative research methods. Over multiple multisensory research encounters, and object handling sessions, carried out with people with dementia and care home staff, clothing was found to afford people with dementia an expressive capacity. For example, people with dementia used their clothing to exert control over their immediate environment, clothing was used as a form of protest, and was used to provide moments of togetherness and connection. Moreover, clothing was used by care home staff to communicate with people with dementia and support understanding. Clothing practices within dementia care settings are often connected with losses associated with the condition, yet this study found that clothing practices are often expressive. Reconsidering clothing practices in this way can be a powerful opportunity with which to understand and attend to people's lived experiences, and thus enhance care practices.

Fleetwood-Smith's background is in fashion textile design and psychology. She recently completed her PhD conducting research into the significance of clothing and textiles to people with dementia, using sensory and creative research methods. She is currently Research Associate on the UKRI-funded 'Sensing Spaces of Healthcare: Rethinking the NHS Hospital'. Broadly, she is interested in the role of the arts, design and creativity in promoting health and wellbeing.

Professor Andrew Groves, University of Westminster: *Palliative Prototypes or Therapeutic Functionality? Examining C.P. Company's Urban Protection Collection*

Towards the end of the 1990s, a reoccurring theme within contemporary fashion was of the body in trauma, decaying, degraded or ill at ease. Simultaneously, as anxiety over the physical and psychological threats of ecological, environmental, and digital catastrophe intensified, a potential panacea was being proposed by the augmentation of technology within hybrid garments to alleviate these harms. This paper presents a case study of this pivotal moment within menswear design that saw the proposition of a range of garments that performed as syntheses, acting as multifunctional protective barriers between the wearer and a hostile urban environment.

In 1997 Moreno Ferrari, the newly appointed designer at Italian brand C.P. Company asked himself what threats and dangers the modern man faced, and how could he construct garments to make the wearer's daily life better. In response, he developed the Urban Protection range that incorporated complex, mostly hidden technology into each garment. Both in its materiality and its psychological performance, the Urban Protection range was prescient in foreseeing the desire for cloth-based objects that transcend superficial notions of fashionability and instead focus on the therapeutic functionality inherent within its design.

Professor Andrew Groves is the Director of the Westminster Menswear Archive, which he founded in 2016. It is the world's only publicly accessible menswear archive, used by industry, researchers, and students. It contains over 2000 examples of some of the most important menswear garments covering the last 120 years.

Idle Institute (Sonia Bernac and Eliot Allison): *The work of art in the age of technological entanglement*

Conceptualising the prosthetic as an extension can quickly fall into rhetoric of lack or limitation. In this understanding, technology (of the prosthetic) allows one to perhaps walk, see, hear, sense, influence, calculate and think *better* than ones' bodily hard/software would *normally* allow. We will prepare a paper that attempts to broaden the conceptualisation of the prosthetic in the context of artificial intelligence, as well as a densifying and expanding network of the Internet of Things (Bunz: 2018, Bridle: 2018). It presents the relation between humans and their prosthetic technology not as a dialectical dynamic—based on delineation between the natural and artificial-synthetic—but rather as a relationship based on feedback loops, dynamic and mutating assemblages (Golding: 2020, Nestler: 2018, Deleuze & Guattari: 2016, Bratton: 2015). The aim of this paper is not solely to critique capitalist desires to enhance, replace and/or expand, but rather to analyse already existing theoretical frameworks and discuss their shortcomings: a) prosthetics as a normalising device, fixing broadly understood limitation[s] b) prosthetics as a cyborg's tool - a requisite enabling transgression c) prosthetic as a threat - an add-on endangering human (or biotic) essence. Through analysing body extensions across selected contexts: medical apparatus and automata, beauty enhancement, networks of smart devices and sex toys, we propose a twofold move: implying that the human is always already entangled with the prosthetic, further prosthetics through its inevitable materiality comes with some form of aesthetics. It is suggested that the relation of the human with prosthetics follows the logic of Techne, of grasping and being grasped (Heidegger:1967). This paper will be written through a series of remote dialogues between Eliot Allison and Sonia Bernac, in relation to their narrative installation: *The itches. A gym for public embarrassments* (<http://show.idle.institute/>).

The Idle Institute (founded in 2016 by Sonia Bernac and Eliot Allison,) is a storytelling lab: a collective of writers, filmmakers, sound-artists and engineers who examine the potentialities of storytelling in anti-fascist resistance. The institute's projects build from narrative experiments: poetic traps in urban and digital spaces, online game-plays and sci-fi installations. Their work traces couplings, clashes and (re)orderings within narrative clusters of institutional jargon, fake news, conspiracy theories and hate speech. In dialogue with Bernac's PhD research, their practice investigates the contagious and pathological forms of fictioning in post-truth and post-fact realities.

They exhibited and published internationally, their selected projects and publications include: The New Solarists, Summa Technologiae by e-flux [upcoming], Fictioning as resistance, RCA London, Enigma, Folium, Lily Brooke Gallery, London, Miracle Measure. The SSN conference's answer to the imprecision of doits and tinkers, Science Museum, London, Cybernetic Fairytales, Xero, Kline & Coma, London, The trials of mosquitoes, Red Gate Gallery, Beijing, The itches. A gym for public embarrassments Xero, Kline & Coma, London.



Dr Anna Jamieson, Birkbeck College, University of London: "Love's Madness: Feeling, Consuming and Containing Things"

Drawing upon themes of protection and containment, this academic paper asks: what did it mean for women to buy, consume, own, collect, wear, display, gift or discard objects linked to love's madness in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century? It looks towards the intriguing cultural phenomenon of love's madness, an illness that developed unprecedented attention from the 1770s and functioned as a mysterious medical category and an alluring cultural archetype. Extending my current research on the connections between female insanity and material culture in the late eighteenth century, this paper addresses the material arm of the love-mad trend.

It will focus on several fashionable objects, including jewellery that depicted Laurence Sterne's melancholic Maria, and the "Crazy Jane Hat", a hat supposedly linked to the enigmatic and potentially transgressive "Crazy Jane". In doing so, this paper asks wider questions about the ways that objects which bridge the gap between medicine and culture might function as soothing, protective or ameliorating emotional artefacts. Considering the pathological dimensions of this fashionable trope, it argues that owning a love-mad object served as a compelling act of material containment, of the alarming threat of mental illness itself.

Currently based in Birkbeck, University of London's, History of Art department, Dr Anna Jamieson is a Birkbeck Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF) Postdoctoral Researcher, working on women's mental illness, eighteenth-century private madhouses, material culture and asylum tourism. Later this year, she will undertake a John Rylands Research Institute Postdoctoral Fellowship, for a 3-month project titled "A Touch of the Blue Devils": Women, Mental Health and Self-Care in England, 1750- 1850'.

Dr Fiona Johnstone, Durham University

Fiona Johnstone is an art historian whose research focuses on the intersections between art and visual culture and the medical humanities.

She is currently PI on the Wellcome-funded project *Thinking Through Things: Object Encounters in the Medical Humanities*, and Associate Editor for medical humanities platform *The Polyphony* (both Durham University's Institute for Medical Humanities). She is also an associate lecturer in Contextual Studies (Photography) at Middlesex University.

Her first monograph, *AIDS and Representation: Portraits and Self Portraits during the AIDS Crisis in America*, is under contract with Bloomsbury Press, and her co-edited volume *Anti- Portraiture* was published by Bloomsbury in 2020.

Katharina Ludwig, Goldsmiths, University of London: *Woundlickers: A Rhapsodic Character Study*

Previous iterations of the project “Wound Lickers” include text and video works, performance and installation. The Wound Lickers are invented mythical beings who act as translators of the silenced accounts of trauma (as we know trauma is beyond language) and wounds. Wounds provide sustenance to the Wound Lickers which in return lend the wounds their tongues to enable vocalisation. The wounds need to be kept open to allow for a telling that focuses on minor voices and accounts usually silenced and buried beneath hegemonic and authoritarian ideas and ideals of linearity and coherence. Wounds are acting as portals to disrupt teleological progress narratives and condition a collapse of temporalities to pave the way towards multiple histories and a poly-vocal telling thereof. A short introduction on the project oscillates between an academic paper, lecture performance and reading. It will touch on subjects such as medieval mysticism, mythology, trauma theory, psychoanalysis, narrative and linguistic theory, narrative holes and current and historical politics and economies of care.

Katharina Ludwig is an artist and writer working with text, installation and objects. Her research in the framework of the Art Research programme at Goldsmiths is concerned with narrative holes in women\*s writing and the temporalities of the “wounded text”. Katharina tries to activate textual holes as a subversive feminist practice of resistance with insurrectional potential that treats the textual wound as a political and writerly strategy in opposition to authoritarian systems. Her work has been shown, performed or read internationally and is published by a.o. 3am Magazine, Zeno Press, Chris Airlines, Ma Bibliothèque.

Dr Catriona McAra, LAU

Dr Catriona McAra is University Curator at Leeds Arts University. She has published extensively on Dorothea Tanning and Leonora Carrington with a particular interest in feminist-surrealist legacies in contemporary practice. Catriona has a second curatorial legacy project forthcoming, *Ilana Halperin: Felt Events* (The MIT Press, 2021).

Exhibitions are a major platform of Curation and Library Services at Leeds Arts University, with a dynamic programme of peer-reviewed research-practice across our two campuses and satellite display spaces. A new bespoke university gallery opened in January 2019 showcasing a range of internationally renowned cultural figures such as Yoko Ono, Ilana Halperin and Mieke Bal as well as internal research on creature design by Rosemary Chalmers, consumer culture research by Dawn Woolley, and an experimental graduate project by performance artist and writer Samra Mayanja.

Our poster campaign is a new pilot project that we hope will galvanise our curatorial practice for the post-pandemic era.

Dr Jeanne Randolph, cultural critic, performance artist and psychiatrist: *An experimental image/text collage: interpreting historical medical and fashion 'violence' upon the female body as depicted by a freeway map drawn on the surface of a naked woman's thorax...*

Haute Couture and Medical Bondage.

Melitta Schmideberg, the daughter of Melanie Klein, created a theory that art and medicine originate in the sadism inherent to the Unconscious.

The advertising industry exploits the charisma of the medical arts and fashion.

Emphasizing fashion's and medicine's products and devices that might be interpreted as sadistically inclined, would their consumers be victims, masochists or something else?

This performance will explore a range of interpretations that counter, elaborate upon and escape the confines of Schmideberg's theory and Advertising's reductivism.

Dr. Jeanne Randolph's most recent book *My Claustrophobic Happiness* is a nasty little fiction that mocks consumerism. Jeanne's photo/text project *Prairie Modernist Noir* was exhibited in Toronto last May and will be exhibited in Rome this March. Her photo/text book *Parking Lot Pandemic* is due to be published online in March. Jeanne's books, writings, performances and photo/text works emphasize philosophical ethics regarding contemporary Canadian visual arts, The Technological Ethos, the advertising industry, mass murder of the imagination, spectator sports and consumerism. Having fled the moral disintegration of the USA in 1970, Jeanne's Existential Psychiatry practice has been flourishing in Canada since 1980.

Dr Ellen Sampson, Northumbria University and Fashion Research Network

Ellen Sampson is an artist and material culture researcher whose work explores the relationships between clothing and bodies, both in museums and archives and in everyday life. Using film, photography, performance and writing, she examines the ways that garments become records of lived experience: how people and the things they wear become entwined. Sampson is VC's Senior Fellow in Design at Northumbria University, UK. and co-founder of Fashion Research Network. She has a PhD from the Royal College of Art, London and was 2018/19 Polaire Weissman fellow at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and 2019/20 Professorial Fellow in Fashion at University for the Creative Arts. Her book *Worn* was published by Bloomsbury in December 2020.

Dr Kirsten Scott, Istituto Marangoni London; Dr Jonathan Butler, MMU; Dr Prabhuraj Venkatraman, MMU; Karen Spurgin, Istituto Marangoni London School Restorative fashion: *The healing powers of the mutuba tree*

Contact with nature has been shown to be beneficial to mental and physical human health. Links between timber products and human wellbeing have been well established: even when cut and treated, wood continues to offer health benefits through its visual or tactile qualities and through its scent (Bell and Ward Thompson, 2014, Grinde and Patel, 2009, Dodge et al, 2012). What if we were to wrap ourselves in the bark of trees? How might this impact our health and wellbeing? How might fashion and medical science collaborate with indigenous communities to develop garments that are beneficial to peoples and planet?

A multi-disciplinary group of researchers, artists, environmentalists and fashion practitioners in the UK and Uganda is investigating, uncovering and developing the full potential of a radically

indigenous and endangered textile: Ugandan barkcloth, produced from the *mutuba* tree and part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Nakazibwe 2005, Rwawiire and Tomkova, 2013, UNESCO 2005). Our research methods include fieldwork in Uganda: observation, interviews with artisans, community groups and local environmentalists, the documentation of traditional skills and processes associated with barkcloth production, ethnobotany and agro-forestry; aesthetic experimentation; natural dye experiments; the development and testing of a biophilic design strategy; textile laboratory testing of strength, wear, water resistance and abrasion resistance, drape, shape and fit, CO<sub>2</sub> laser patterning and sublimation printing; and laboratory testing of the unique antimicrobial properties of barkcloth (Venkatraman et al., 2020). Through this research we have uncovered important knowledge about barkcloth that may provide significant benefits to medical science (Butler et al, 2020); the central role that the mutuba tree plays in restorative, local agro-forestry systems; created natural dyes that may confer barkcloth's properties to other materials; and have demonstrated its potential as a truly restorative, slow fashion textile through the creation of a series of luxury fashion garments.

Dr Kirsten Scott is Programme Leader for MA Fashion Design Womenswear and MA Luxury Accessory Design in London. Her background is in fashion, accessories and textiles design and she has worked for leading international designers as well as running her own label for many years. She is a member of the Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion, The Textile Institute, and the Bioladies biotechnology group. A passionate maker, Kirsten's research asks questions about the meaning and value of the hand made in this post-digital era and interrogates the paradigm of luxury today. Thinking through making, her focus as a researcher has become increasingly holistic and multi-disciplinary, concerned with fashion's potential in benign design.

Karen Spurgin is Senior Lecturer for BA Fashion Design and Fashion Business at Istituto Marangoni in London. She has a background in textile design and has worked internationally across various sectors including Film, Fashion, and Theatre. In 2007 Karen co-founded ao textiles, an award-winning design consultancy. ao's core principle is specifically to provide research, development and implementation of sustainable practices for textile production with a focus on natural dyeing. Karen's current ongoing research includes The Bark Cloth Research Network's Borrowed Cloth Project where she is investigating surfaces, finishes and natural colour.

Dr Prabhuraj Venkatraman is Senior Lecturer in Textile Technology and Admissions Coordinator at Manchester Fashion Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University. He is a Textile Technologist and a chartered Fellow of the Textile Institute (CText FTI) - specific interest in Technical Textiles - design and development of functional and high-performance engineering and textile applications. His research interests include environmentally friendly methods of denim fading/patterning; development of antimicrobial textiles; exploring the potential of bark cloth as a sustainable fashion textile; evaluation of pressure measurement devices for classifying sports compression hosiery; and designing padded clothing for rugby sports using auxetic materials.

Dr Jonathan Butler is Senior Lecturer in Microbiology at Manchester Metropolitan University. His research includes combatting antimicrobial resistance through the development of novel metal-based therapies, anti-virulence agents and antimicrobial fabrics; understanding the molecular basis of antimicrobial resistance mechanisms; and pathogenicity, detection and control of foodborne *Campylobacter* species. He is a member of the International Biodeterioration and Biodegradation Society, The Biochemical Society, the Society for Applied Microbiology and The Microbiology Society.

Dr Renate Stauss, The American University of Paris: *Dress as Therapy: Working with Dress in Psycho-medical Settings – Between Control, Cure, Care and Creative Play*

In recent decades, dress has been employed to work on the self in several psycho-medical institutions. Both historically and contemporaneously it is used to re-socialize, normalize and discipline the bodies and minds of patients, put forward as a ‘technology of the self’ (Foucault 1982). This session will introduce the phenomenon of “dress therapy” – a number of dress related therapeutic approaches to working on the self, rooted in different countries and medical disciplines: ‘Therapy of Fashion’ in a mental hospital in the US of the 1960s, sensory stimulation treatment for people with eating disorders in contemporary Germany, and *vêtothérapie* in France. Introducing “dress therapy” as a cultural phenomenon rather than a clinical technique, it will be explored as part of Western therapy culture, as a phenomenon that brings together two of the key coordinates currently said to define our experience and understanding of ourselves: fashionable dress and therapy. In its analysis, this paper draws on a Foucauldian analytical framework in conjunction with documentary and empirical research, including interviews and observations, aiming to unpack the complexity and ambiguity of “dress therapy” – between control, care, cure and creative play.

Stauss is Assistant Professor of Fashion Studies at The American University of Paris in the Department of Communication, Media and Culture. She is also a lecturer at the Berlin University of the Arts. Renate has been teaching fashion theory and critical studies since 2003 – at Central Saint Martins, Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art in London where she was part of the faculty for ten years. At Esmod Berlin she co-developed the MA Sustainability in Fashion by conceiving and teaching its Critical Studies curriculum. She completed her PhD on *Dress as Therapy: Working with Dress on the Self in Therapeutic Settings* (University of the Arts London). The focus of her teaching and scholarship lies on the sociology and politics of fashion and dress. Current research interests include the perception and potential of fashion, the emergence of fashion theory, and fashion education – how we learn and teach fashion. She is the co-founder of *Fashion is a great teacher* – The fashion education podcast and platform (with Franziska Schreiber) who launched the format of the Digital Multilogue on Fashion Education in 2020.

Dr Dawn Woolley, Leeds Arts University: *Mystical Apparatus* Poster Campaign

The *Mystical Scientist* is a character devised as an absurd embodiment of anti-aging adverts and performed at academic conferences. The artwork draws on the pseudo-science in anti-ageing advertising, blending three voices of authority that are commonly used to give credence to the advert’s claims for the commodity: mythology, nature, and science. This blend of rhetorical devices produces the voice of a mystical scientist - part-chemist, part-shaman - who extracts stem cells, pentapeptides and poly-collagen molecules, and blends them with a few drops of the fountain of youth.

Woolley is an artist and research fellow at Leeds Arts University. She completed an MA in Photography (2008) and PhD in Fine Art (2017) at the Royal College of Art. Her research aims to develop a psychoanalytically informed theory of the political economy of the body in neoliberal capitalist societies, paying particular attention to the new mechanisms of interaction afforded by social networking sites. Her book *Consuming the Body: Capitalism, Social Media and Commodification* is due to be published in 2021 by I B Tauris and her solo exhibition “Consumed: Stilled Lives” opens at Perth Centre for Photography, Australia, on Friday 19th February 2021.

# Additional Information



Thing Power is a research group co-conveyed by Dr Dawn Woolley and Dr Paula Chambers at Leeds Arts University. Positioning artefacts as active and powerful agents in human relations it explores a thing as a source of social value, a locus of emotional experience, a powerful and empowering tool, and an agent capable of disrupting dominant discourses. Defined as objects that one need not, cannot or does not wish to give a specific name to, things provide a central focus for discussion that is not limited by type, function or materiality, and may be reified, mass-produced, digital or ephemeral. Critical approaches include: feminist new materialism, object-oriented ontology, the anthropology of material culture and digital objects, and critical post-humanism.



*Thinking Through Things: Object Encounters in the Medical Humanities* is a collaborative project supported by the Northern Network for Medical Humanities Research and funded by a discretionary grant from Wellcome Trust. By approaching selected objects in Wellcome Collection as 'provocations to thought' and 'companions to our emotional lives' (Turkle, 2008), the project investigates how thinking and feeling 'through things' and can generate new understandings of health. <http://nnmh.org.uk/thinking-through-things/>



Fashion Research Network, is an interdisciplinary network for researchers in fashion studies. Through collaboration we facilitate, disseminate and promote conversations which critically examine the nature of fashion studies and the parameters of the field. FRN brings together researchers from multiple subject areas and institutions to critically examine the role of dress in society. Founded a point when the field was both less established and less defined, FRN has played a key part in shaping understanding of fashion studies as a diverse and dynamic field in the UK. We work to facilitate conversations and collaboration between those who research through practice and those who research using traditional methodologies and more broadly between practitioners, curators and the fashion industry. Past partners include FIT, University of Brighton, National Portrait Gallery and ICA. <https://www.fashionresearchnetwork.com>