

All Dolled Up and No Place to Go

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This thesis is submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial
fulfillment of the degree of Master of Art & Design.

Dedication

This thesis is not the result solely of my work over the past year. It is the product of a lifetime of encouragement and support from my mother, Judith Spanhake, who has always been a woman ahead of her time.

Abstract

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This body of work is the result of practice based research, culminating in a collection of five garments featuring pictorial prints, created through digital sublimation printing¹.

The accompanying exegesis examines the place of my work within the contextual framework of related knowledge.

The exegesis explores two main contextual notions.

Firstly, the position of dolls' clothing play as a hegemonic tool in the process of learning to construct identity through self-presentation. This reflects on the practice of enculturing in girls the ability not just to do, but to observe oneself whilst doing.

¹ Sublimation printing is a method of chemically bonding ink to a polyester or acrylic surface such as fabric, using extremely high heat and pressure. In this research project I am bonding images of photographs to polyester and acrylic fabrics.

Secondly, the role of garments and fabric as liminal² markers at the transitional space between interior and exterior, domestic and public, self and not-self.

My analysis is centered on the creation of original pieces of clothing. The garments are questioned by the issues explored in this exegesis. The research makes an original contribution to the body of knowledge by the nature of the creative work, and its analysis involving contemporary theoretical debate on the nature of fashion.

² In this exegesis I use the word liminal to describe an occupying of an ambiguous space, on the threshold between one thing and another.

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Table of contents

Introduction	1
Positioning Statement.....	3
Review of related theory, knowledge and information	12
<i>The doll as art</i>	12
<i>The doll in fashion</i>	14
<i>The doll in sociological terms</i>	16
<i>Fashion theory</i>	19
<i>Drapery</i>	20
<i>Subjectivity</i>	22
Methodology.....	24
<i>Heuristics</i>	25
<i>Exploratory experiments</i>	31
<i>Recording the research process</i>	32
<i>Framing and reframing</i>	39

<i>Move-testing experiments</i>	43
<i>Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action</i>	45
<i>Seeing-as and doing-as</i>	47
<i>Summary</i>	49
Exegesis	50
<i>Dolls as fashion inculcators</i>	50
<i>Doll clothing play as presentation of the self</i>	52
<i>Play location</i>	55
<i>Domestic space as feminine space</i>	57
<i>Drapery as intrinsically feminine</i>	59
<i>Drapery as art</i>	60
<i>Drapery as liminality</i>	62
<i>Doll clothing play: tension between interior and exterior locations</i>	63
<i>Fabric as skin</i>	64
<i>Fabrics</i>	66
The engagement of the work with the contextual issues.	69

Appendices	74
<i>Appendix A: Amphibian Dress</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Appendix B: Mangrove Coat</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Appendix C: Yacht Dress</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Appendix D: Graduation exhibition, Nov 2005, St. Paul Street Gallery</i>	<i>79</i>
Reference List.....	80

Table of Images

Figure 1.1: My mother, grandmother, and me, cruising in the Hauraki Gulf, circa 1976.....	7
Figure 1.2: Self-portrait, circa 1976.....	10
Figure 2.1: Bullard (n.d.) <i>Mountain Gate</i>	12
Figure 2.2: Holmes (2003) <i>A Woman of Letters</i>	13
Figure 2.3: Holmes (2000) <i>AlphaBetty</i>	13
Figure 2.4: Bellmer (1935) <i>Poupee</i>	14
Figure 2.5: Galante (2004).....	15
Figure 3.1: Soft doll with dress (2004).....	26
Figure 3.2: Mixed-media art-doll (2004).....	27
Figure 3.3: Mixed-media art-doll (2004).....	28
Figure 3.4: Clay sculpture (2004).....	29
Figure 3.5: Photograph of 1970's Cindy doll head (2005).....	30
Figure 3.6: Page of designers' journal.....	33
Figure 3.7: Page of designers' journal.....	34

Figure 3.8: Patternmaking journal functioning as research log.....	34
Figure 3.9: Design sketches.....	35
Figure 3.10: Design sketches.....	35
Figure 3.11: Sketches mounted on workroom wall.....	36
Figure 3.12: Sketches surrounding the pin-board area.....	36
Figure 3.13: Close-up of soft doll showing opening to internal cavity.....	41
Figure 3.14: Art-doll made of flexible clear plastic.....	42
Figure 3.15: Side cavity of art-doll.....	42
Figure 3.16: Resin button with encapsulated image of doll face (2005).....	43
Figure 3.17: Resin button with layered images of dolls (2005).....	44
Figure 3.18: Resin button with image of doll face and child's face (2005).....	44
Figure 3.19: Resin button with encapsulated image of child (2005).....	45
Figure 3.20: Detail of dress with large bow.....	48
Figure 4.1: Versace Barbie (Mattel, 2004).....	50

Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person now material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

24 October 2005

Introduction

Playing with dolls and their clothing is a common childhood past-time in New Zealand; it is a cultural influence that many of us share.

This thesis critically examines my own personal experience of doll clothing play. I grew up enjoying an archetypal Kiwi outdoor lifestyle; mangroves, beaches, the bush. Yet the garments in which I dressed and redressed my dolls were completely unsuited to this environment. These were clothes designed to facilitate the performance of oneself in a public environment. They were not clothes to do things in; they were clothes to be seen in. This situation raises the notion of Berger's (1972) split gaze, and the role that doll clothing play has in its development.

In this research project I develop this idea of the dual gaze and the dialectic between clothes and the body. I examine the dichotomy of the actual location of doll clothing play and the imagined location of this play, through a collection of garments developed using sublimation printed fabric. The imagery for the fabric has been selected from childhood photographs appropriated from family collections.

The collection of garments critically examines notions of interior versus exterior.

Throughout this exegesis I use the term *dress*. Through this term I encompass a wide variety of clothing styles, accessories and ways of changing one's appearance, including the Western system of fashion. I align myself with Eicher and Roach Higgins (1992) who define dress as "*an assemblage of body modifications and supplements displayed by a person in the presentation of self*" (p. 4).

In this context, the economically structured system of Western fashion sits within dress as one method of body display.

In this exegesis I include some exploratory work which occurred outside of the duration of the thesis year. This is because my research methodology incorporates an investigative stance (as detailed in my methodology) that takes place over an extended time frame. What would prove to be crucial parts of the research process occurred in the year prior to the thesis year.

Positioning Statement

I was born in 1969 to an unmarried part-Maori teenage mother. In an amalgamation of traditional whangai³ and the then surprisingly common Pakeha custom of grandparents raising the child of a young unmarried daughter as their own child, I was parented by a triumvirate of two grandparents and one mother.

My father was not named on my birth certificate, never visited nor saw me, and played no part in any stage of my upbringing.

My grandfather comes from Kaingaroa and is of Te Aupouri and Ngati Porou descent. My grandmother's family comes from the Orkney Islands, north of Scotland, and settled in Dunedin. My grandparents married hastily at the close of WWII; my grandmother was pregnant with her first child.

³ Whangai is a traditional Maori custom where the first born grandchild is 'given' to the grandparents to be raised. The grandparents don't pretend to be the parents of the child; the extended family and larger social group acknowledge the special position of the biological parents, who maintain a strong relationship with the child. In the past whangai has seldom been formalised through adoption procedures or guardianship, and prior to the 1980's the custom was not looked on with favour by New Zealand government agencies.

Under my family's innovative blend of these two child-raising customs, I knew my mother was my mother, but it was equally clear that the people who were in charge of my standards of behaviour were the other two adults in the house. What they said, went; not just for me but for my mother as well. My mother was very conscious of the shame she had brought on the family, and was most concerned with seeking the infrequent approval of her own parents for being a good daughter. She was content to let my grandparents raise me to their standards.

As an illegitimate child I was regarded by my family as innately riskier, more prone to going astray. I was the subject of an ever-present watchful gaze.

As Foucault states,

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself (as cited in Bordo, 2003, p. 27).

The ever-present gaze of disapproval in my family led me to grow very aware that I fell short of some unspecified standard. I had to be apologised for to other family members. There was something about me that inspired pity in others. Domestic voices whispered about me.

Additionally my grandmother was acutely embarrassed by my family's Maori heritage. We had no contact with my grandfather's Maori family unless it absolutely could not be avoided. My grandmother made every effort to 'correct' my speech and grammar, and weekly would attempt to inculcate in me traditional feminine, European, middle-class accomplishments such as dinner-table setting and flower arranging.

To this end, at great expense and personal sacrifice by my family I was sent, aged four, to a private school. Here the students were overwhelmingly white and affluent.

One can imagine how well the illegitimate part-Maori child fitted in to this social group. The conundrum is that I *look* white. Although school-friends often invited me back to their house to play, and I was initially treated with warmth and friendliness, reception of my family when they arrived to collect me at home-time all too frequently led to chilly silences and pursed lips. Inexplicably to me at the time, my friends would thereafter cool towards me, or even indulge in taunts and jeering.

Invitations were seldom repeated. Eventually I mostly played at home alone, frequently with dolls and their clothing. My dolls' clothes were bought mainly from local community fundraising stalls, and were made by women from the local community, out of fabric scraps from their own home-made

garments. Although made and purchased in the mid and late 1970's they harked back to a design ethic of the 1950's and 1960's.

The vast majority of my play was solitary. On very infrequent visits to relatives I was ridiculed for my posh accent. It confused me when I was called stuck-up for my reserve, and my hesitation to assume I would be welcome in the games of others.

I was on the periphery of both cultures, at home in neither.

Around this conflicted upbringing revolved a wider world that in many ways was the archetypal, perfect Kiwi outdoor lifestyle.

We lived in a sturdy brick three-bedroom house, on a quarter acre section, covered in native bush. At the bottom of the section was a mangrove swamp with tidal creek, small jetty, and access to the Waitemata Harbour.

Through a friend my grandparents had the free use of a 40ft cruising yacht. I grew up a competent sailor, and knowledgeable about the ocean, but never at home upon it.

Summer holidays were spent sailing to the Bay of Islands, Great Barrier Island, and around the Hauraki Gulf.

Additionally when I was eight years old my grandparents bought a section on Kawau Island⁴, in the Hauraki Gulf and hand-built a traditional Kiwi bach (complete with a lovingly collected assortment of kina shells ranged in size order).

Figure 1.1: My mother, grandmother, and me, cruising in the Hauraki Gulf, circa 1976



From this time every weekend and all school holidays were very reluctantly spent on Kawau. Here there were no other children at all, and so my play became even more solitary.

Lynch (1999) states that “children learn normative standards of appearance and behaviour by monitoring and responding to the reactions of others to their dress styles and actions” (p. 4).

⁴ Kawau Island is a sparsely populated island in the Hauraki Gulf that up until the late 1990's was remarkable for a complete absence of roads and cars. Baches were scattered, often remote, and accessible only by boat. Residents took pride in a 'number 8 wire' culture of self-reliance. Kawau had only one small general store and no cafés, restaurants or shops.

It appeared to me that it did not matter what dress styles or actions I selected, I still could not gain approval. I did not at the time realize that my appearance was a separate construct to my inner self – the two were very much bound up together in my mind.

Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1992) discuss the challenge of both defining and separately identifying dress from the body

We recognize that the dressed person is a *gestalt*⁵ that includes body, all direct modifications of the body itself, and all three-dimensional supplements added to it. Further we acknowledge that only through mental manipulation can we separate body modifications and supplements from the body itself – and from each other – and extract that which we call dress (p. 13).

From the age of five through ten, far from being able to separate the dress from the body, I was equally unable to separate the body from the dress. If I, as a gestalt organism, was not worthy or complete, then the three-dimensional supplements that I attached to my body were as much at fault as the breathing form beneath them. The shame and embarrassment I attracted

⁵ Here *gestalt* is used to indicate an organised whole; a form that cannot merely be described as the sum of its parts.

could perhaps be ameliorated by a change of dress. Changing my external dress would literally change *me*.

Wilson (2003) elaborates on this notion.

Clothing marks unclear boundaries ambiguously, and unclear boundaries disturb us...it is at the margins between one thing and another that pollution may leak out. Many social rituals are attempts at containment and separation, devised to prevent the defilement that occurs when matter spills from one place – or category – into another. If the body with its open orifices is itself dangerously ambiguous then dress, which is an extension of the body yet not quite part of it, not only links the body to the social world, but also more clearly separates the two. Dress is the frontier between the self and the not-self (p. 2-3).

My dress; the garments appropriate for my Kiwi lifestyle - my jeans, T-shirts, hand knitted sweaters, my shorts and my skirts – all were failing to contain my defilement.

Wilson (2003) further suggests that, *“The naked body underneath the clothes and paint is somehow unfinished, vulnerable, and leaky at the margins”* (p. 9).

This indicates that dress is not protecting the body from society, but that dress is protecting society from the body. That is exactly how I felt.

The interior of garments are always regarded as existing in a marginal zone, standing between the corporeality of the body and the public presentation of the self. The inside of a garment is neither one nor the other, but takes a unique liminal position. Rubbing against the skin, garment interiors are covered in discarded skin cells, hairs, sweat and other body secretions. They are intrinsically unclean.

However the great thing about dolls is that they don't leak. No epithelials are shed. My dolls had not defiled their clothes. Perhaps it was the clothes themselves that gave dolls this miraculous ability to remain 'unleaky'. Dolls' clothes certainly looked different to mine and to those of the women around me. They seemed somehow more real – more perfect – more clothing-like.

I rationalised that if my dress was failing me, then I needed to appropriate new dress. The dress of the other people around me was exactly like my dress. Changing to that wasn't going to achieve anything. The only other three-dimensional supplements around that I could see, that might do the job, were those belonging to my dolls.

If I could dress in these clothes instead of my own, perhaps those elements of the sacrosanct would rub off on me.

Figure 1.2: Self-portrait, circa 1976



Additionally, it was dress appropriate to my outdoors-oriented and traditionally Kiwi lifestyle that was failing me. My dolls' clothes were overtly not designed for mangroves, garden lawns, sandy beaches and family kitchens. The very spaces in which they should be inhabited differed from the spaces I saw around me. Perhaps it was in those spaces that I would find my fit.

Upon this realisation my childhood drawings of myself changed from sketches of stick figures, to those elaborately clothed in garments.

I was never too interested in the dolls themselves – I never considered dolls to be real in any meaningful way – it was simply their apparel I coveted.

This thesis began as an attempt to explore the deeper meanings behind my fascination with doll clothing play, and to create a synthesis of these memories and the theoretical constructs with which they are entwined.

Review of related theory, knowledge and information

This thesis project is informed by the areas of cultural studies, feminist theory, sociology, and fashion theory.

Research in the area of the doll, often linked with women's self image, exists in a large body of work by doll-makers, artists and academics. As dolls are objects with an ostensible use, much of this work sits outside the academic art establishment, and is placed in the areas of folk art, craft and outsider art.

The doll as art

Bullard was one of the first artists to champion the role of the doll as art. She used wooden doll sculptures to address her concerns that education was the only way to improve the societal position of women, in early 20th Century rural America. Her work raised notions of transformation; specifically that of women from the uneducated working class outsider (with concurrent associations of being, as Storr (2002) states "*ignorant, dirty and irresponsible ... vulgar ... common ... and unrespectable*" (p. 22), to a position of knowledge and power.

Figure 2.1: Bullard (n.d.).
Mountain Gate



Bullard's work has informed my thesis by her addressing of larger societal issues through the medium of the doll.

Holmes also works in a similar area, but on a larger scale. Her installation pieces, such as *AlphaBetty* (2000), and *A Woman of Letters* (2003) mix hand-crocheted and sewn elements with traditional sculptural material such as

Figure 2.2: Holmes (2003), *A Woman of Letters*



Figure 2.3: Holmes (2000), *AlphaBetty*



sheet metal and epoxy. Using this approach she creates both full scale and doll-sized garments. Holmes examines the influence of both clothing and traditional handcrafts on women's shared world experience. Holmes' work has informed this research project by highlighting the position of garments as works of art, secure in their position as exhibits in a public sphere.

Bellmer produced an extensive body of doll-related work in his 1930's series of mannequin-based sculpture. In various pieces such as *Poupee* (1935),

Figure 2.4: Bellmer (1935), *Poupee*



Bellmer explores not just the exterior surface of the mannequin, but opens the interior up to our view. Bellmer attempts to cross the boundary of the public and the private by allowing the viewer's gaze to roam within the internal structure of the doll. This disruption of the interior/exterior dynamic is explored in this research project.

The doll in fashion

The commercial fashion system has itself lately embraced the doll as an ironic reference to early fashion socialisation.

Lorna (1997) describes how McQueen's 1996 couture catwalk show featured models given the appearance of dolls come to life. The models' bodies were contorted by metal frames attached to their wrists and ankles, forcing their walk to become jerky and mechanical. Lorna discusses how McQueen's show was influenced by Bellmer's dismembered dolls; appropriate when so much of McQueen's work features dismemberment of the traditional couture ethos.

In this doll-based fashion show, McQueen appears to have been exploring the notion of female fashion consumers as giant dress-up dolls. He can enjoy dressing and re-dressing them as he desires. Here the intrusion is into their free will to choose their clothing, as well as their freedom of movement.

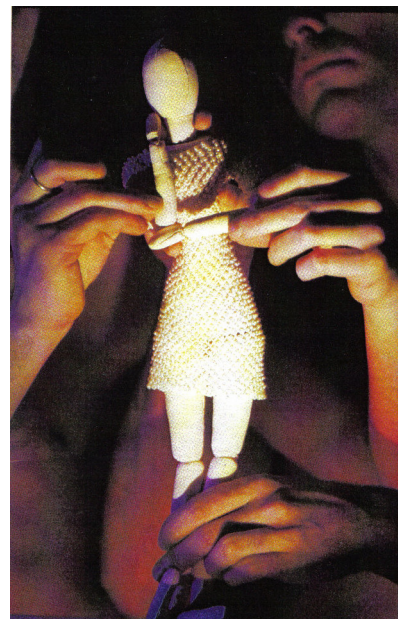
Additionally, mirroring the way Bellmer's doll-based works included intrusions inside the doll form, McQueen's fashion ranges often involve intrusions into the female body. The themes for his shows have included *Highland Rape*, with disheveled models wearing torn garments, and *It's A Jungle Out There*, where McQueen stated "The idea is that this wild beast has eaten this really lovely young girl, and she's trying to get out" (Smith, 1997).

The way McQueen engages with the resemblance of fashion customers to dolls, and also the play between the interior and exterior, has similarities to the focus of this research project.

Galante's work has also been an important step in legitimizing the doll in the fashion area.

In Galante's 2004 Paris couture collection he displayed his garments as one-fifth size replicas, displayed on fabric reproductions of artists' wooden models.

Figure 2.5: Galante (2004)



Mignon (2004) describes Galante's ironic take on the influences that doll-play has on inspiring women to love fashion. His work also engages in the "Fashion as Art" debate, as evidenced in his choice of model for the fabric mannequins. As a couture designer, Galante also pokes fun at the notion of couture garments being investment pieces that will be kept for a decade or more due to their high price tag. His work suggests that this excludes his designs from the very notion of fashion (with its short consumer life span). Associated with adherence to high fashion is the purchasing of accessories and add-ons in a never ending spiral of consumption. This arguably places fashion into the realm of a toy. This thesis project similarly contrasts popular considerations of fashion as ephemeral and high art as eternal.

The doll in sociological terms

A vast field of research has been undertaken in the area of Barbie doll-play.

Most relevant to this thesis is the work of Dickey (1991). She undertook a survey of the effect of narrative play with these toys. Dickey studied how doll-play affected a section of American girls who are now career women. The vast majority of respondents spoke about how "*pretending and changing the costumes were the most enjoyable aspects of playing with the doll*" (p. 29). This study has at its heart the examination of any residual effect of doll clothing play on the adult. Dickey's main focus is on the types of occupations women

were encouraged to pursue in spite of, or because of, the experience of playing with Barbie. This angle differs from the focus of this thesis, which is framed around the play itself, rather than any specific flow-on effects.

Coleman, Coleman and Coleman (1975) have produced an exhaustive record of originals dolls' clothes and their social importance. Their book *The Collectors' Book of Dolls' Clothes* provides an in-depth discussion of both home-made and commercial dolls' garments for antique and vintage dolls. This book is an encyclopaedic guide for doll collectors and social historians. While excellent background reading on the phenomenology of dolls' clothing and its importance to girls, the text does not consider either the experience of engaging with the clothing in the act of play, or the realm of personal experience, while these are the central concerns of this thesis.

Robertson (2004) has researched the phenomenon of *porcelain collector dolls*, or PCDs, from an anthropological approach. PCDs are commercially produced dolls, having the appearance of babies or toddlers, and marketed to adult women. These dolls are often promoted through television shopping networks, and Robertson has found that the typical PCD purchaser will purchase multiple dolls. Robertson's study focuses on the reasons that women choose to invest large quantities of money on these dolls, and on displaying and caring for them, and the needs that PCDs may meet in order to offer a

return on that economic and emotional investment. The study, while an interesting insight into adult doll collectors, does not address the issue of doll clothing play that is explored by this thesis. This is because PCDs are designed to be looked at, and not played with. They are considered by their owners as collectibles, not toys.

Peers (2004) has produced an extensive book on the fashion doll. She states,

The term 'fashion doll' is used generally to distinguish the field of collecting Barbie dolls – and other dolls with strong reference to fashion and culture from the late 1950's to the present day – from more securely established collecting genres such as antique dolls, vintage dolls ...limited edition 'artist' ...dolls or even the postwar favourite of tourist souvenir dolls (p. 15).

Peers' book, *The Fashion Doll From Bébé Jumeau to Barbie*, covers in detail the artefact of the fashion doll, including those categories of dolls which do not fall into her definition. Peers (ibid.) notes the important role of the fashion doll in disseminating fashion. She suggests, "from the 1950's onwards dolls have been a key means of engagement with elite styling for spectators who cannot access the world of high fashion so frequently celebrated in various forms of media" (p. 36). Peers also briefly discusses the role of dolls in learning to create identity and present the self. She argues, "dolls who advertised beauty products did not induct young girls into maternalism as

much as provide a grass roots understanding of the obligation of high fashion, and an apprenticeship to its rituals” (p. 137).

However, Peers’ research is an examination of the various types of fashion doll, their manufacturers, the social development of the artefact of the fashion doll, and the experience of doll ownership. Peers does briefly mention doll clothing, but only as an accessory to the main artefact of the doll itself. She does not discuss the process of dressing or undressing the doll, nor does she examine the location of clothing play, and these areas are the primary areas of engagement in this research project.

Fashion theory

In terms of fashion theory, this thesis project is informed by the research of Holliday (2001). This researcher has written extensively on the way the British queer community experience and construct their identities through clothing, and the semiotics they apportion to garments. Although focussing on queer identities, Holliday’s work is important to my research as she argues that those who feel positioned outside normalised behaviour (such as members of the queer community), are far more aware of the effect of their behaviours in negotiating their identity.

Holliday (2001) explores what she calls *comfort*. This may be defined as harmony between one’s inside account of/for oneself and one’s outward

appearance as self expression. She discusses the “*playfulness of identity*” (p. 217), and how identities, through clothing, can be “*taken up and thrown off at will*” (ibid.). Holliday calls this “*the desire to become a writerly text*” (p. 228). This process of construction of identity through dress is one of the key topics of this research project.

The same topic is examined by Davis (1992), who explicitly positions clothing as a mechanism for self-identity. He states,

It can be said that in very large part our identities ...take shape in terms of how we balance and attempt to resolve ambivalences ...clothing comes to share in the work of ambivalence management as much as does any other self-communicative device at our disposal (pp. 25-26).

Working in a similar area is Kaiser (1997), whose book *The Social Psychology of Clothing* is of large importance to this research project, as it one of the most widely disseminated texts in fashion studies.

These explorations of creating self-identity through dress are key concepts explored within this thesis.

Drapery

Hollander has written extensively on the role of drapery and clothing in art. She describes a “*dialectic of cloth and body*” (1993, p. 5), and states that “*common*

nakedness is thus transformed into artistic nudity simply by the very presence of drapery" (ibid., p. 169).

Doy (2002) has also written extensively on drapery. She suggests that "*drapery stands in for the absent body, or connotes larger, more abstract concepts such as femininity*" (p. 19), at the same time as it also holds a "*traditional function as an aestheticising signifier of high culture, civilization and elite values*" (p. 57).

Both of these researchers comment on the way imagery of draped fabric creates the impression of interior space. For example, here Hollander (1993) describes Boucher's *Diana at the Bath*;

The yards of blue fabric cascading down the right side ...are too voluminous for clothing and too bunched for a tent. They are there to make an instant bedroom out of the forest clearing in which the nude goddess sits with her nude attendant nymph. The folds alone suggest many similar indoor scenes of mistress and maid performing the intimacies of the toilette amid just such oceans of bed curtains (p. 169).

This research project draws heavily on the work of both Doy and Hollander in describing the location and associated subtexts of doll clothing play.

Subjectivity

One of the critical areas of my research is its positioning within a subjective frame. Until recently academic study has been characterized by the overt appearance of an objective, neutral stand – an investigation of a topic from a place of distance in a disassociated manner.

However recent academic writings have introduced the importance of the personal narrative and the acceptance of the researcher as an innate part of the subject studied. An example of this would be the fashion writings of Adam (2001), who as a plus-size woman writes from a close personal vantage of the relationship the institutionalized fashion system has with women larger than a standard size 14.

Additionally the feminist writings of hooks are an excellent resource to model the appropriate use of personal narratives in an academic context. Hooks (1997) discusses how the experience of different girls will be diverse, and how the documenting of these differing experiences is important. Feminist theory requires varied experiences to draw upon, so that generalized and culturally inaccurate conclusions can be avoided. Hooks believes that there is a place for each woman's own subjective view; a necessity to record and share her culture as it was experienced in her community.

My approach to this research project adopts this stance of the researcher as intrinsically situated within the subject of study.

Methodology

The research methodology for this thesis may be understood inside the paradigm of creative research.

Scrivener (2000) has discussed the difference between a traditional research project, with a question that must be solved and a proof that must be demonstrated, and research project based on creative production.

Scrivener (2000) states that the creative production research project is undertaken by conducting the research through the very act of art-making or design-making, and that the artefacts arising from the research cannot simply be conceived as by-products or an exemplification of *“know-how”*. Instead, they are objects of value in their own right. The knowledge gained is a *“by-product of the process rather than its primary objective”*.

Traditionally, the position of the researcher has generally been understood as neutral and objective. However, in creative production design research the researcher may be conceptualised as one who is involved in a two-way process – she doesn’t just shape the research, but is in fact, shaped by it.

Therefore, in this present project I may be considered as having been personally engaged in a reflective and dialogic process with the research question.

Heuristics

A key feature of the research methodology employed in this project is that during the initial, framing, stages the researcher worked in a variety of media to explore the topic in ways that were new or unusual.

This process placed the research methodology for this project within an overarching paradigm of heuristics. Heuristics has been historically used in philosophy and the natural sciences. It can be defined as a method for solving a problem that has not been solved before, and so no has no existing formula for solution. Kleining & Witt (2000) have analysed the ways in which a heuristic research approach is an appropriate methodology for discovery, and describe a qualitative heuristic approach as one utilising “*explorative methods and procedures*”.

Kleining and Witt (2000) further argue that “*data should be collected under the paradigm of maximum structural variation of perspectives*”. This approach in the methodology for this project enables research methods to avoid “*one-sidedness*” (ibid.) in the development of design.

By working with a variety of media I wanted to increase the chances of discovery through unique connections. By positioning the research so the data gathering and processing were richer, heterogeneous, and more flexible, I

created a greater chance of both developing and discovering synergies and serendipitous connections.

When I began the research process I had an amorphous research question, centering on the notion of doll clothing play. Scrivener (2000) describes how during the framing of a creative-production project *“the project’s topic of interest and goal may change as the work progresses”*. The question or focus of the research may not be known until after it has been explored.

Schön (1983) states *“the practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion”* (p. 68). By exploring the research topic, through a variety of media, concurrently with the tentative framing of the research problem, the researcher allows themselves to experience such states, and can use these as avenues to explore unexpected connections.

To develop avenues of exploration I investigated this topic in a variety of ways.

Initially I created a traditional soft doll, and traditional doll clothing. When complete, I engaged in play with the doll. The play was entered into with no definite outcome in mind. I allowed myself to experience the

Figure 3.1: Soft doll with dress (2004)



physical sensations of the doll, and to revisit the process of dressing and undressing the doll.

Approaching this activity from the viewpoint of the researcher enabled me to record and examine the process of anthropomorphising the doll, and to think about the roles that doll play fulfilled in my childhood. Reliving these experiences allowed me to gain insight that I did not achieve merely through the memory of doll clothing play.

Additionally, the process of creating a selection of doll clothes made me critically examine my existing body of personal knowledge relating to pattern making and fabric selection. It became apparent that garment construction and design conventions that are appropriate for human bodies are inappropriate for doll forms, and this gave me insight into ways human clothing may be made more doll-like.

Concurrent with this process was an investigation into the work of other artists working with the form of the doll.

Figure 3.2: Mixed media art-doll (2004)



The resulting artefacts are generally known under the term of art-dolls⁶.

These have been used both historically, and as a contemporary art form, by many artists as a method of expressing their experience of being women.

Figure 3.3: Mixed media art-doll (2004)



As an art practitioner, the creation of work is an important part of my research process. Scrivener (2000) suggests that creative practitioners “*conduct the research through art-or-design-making*”. It is from the reflection on the development and change within the emerging artifact that questions are raised that drive the project forward.

Although the focus of the research is the production of an artifact (or artefacts) that are of a professional quality and will stand up to examination in

⁶ The term ‘art-doll’ has arisen over the last twenty years, derived from folk-art and outsider-art sources. Its meaning varies from artist to artist. One understanding of the term is an artifact with the basic figure of the human form, through which the creator communicates a concept to the viewer. An art-doll is not a plaything. The difference between an art-doll and a traditional child’s doll is the search for meaning through the creation of the artifact. An ongoing debate in the art-doll arena is whether the term is applicable to industrial reproductions, in commercial quantities, of an original work, or if the term applies only to the original works themselves.

a public sphere, such as exhibition, (Scrivener, 2000) this does not negate the value of exploratory work that underpins it.

I believe that if work is only undertaken in the expectation that it is worthy of exhibition, then a valuable learning tool is lost.

As an addition to creating art-dolls, I also investigated the typically female form of the doll through clay sculpture.

One reason I investigated the clay form is that the medium in which I normally work is fabric. Working with fabric involves cutting apart and then sewing together. Fabric can be manipulated without first being cut, but once it is cut it remains separate.

Figure 3.4: Clay sculpture, 2004



I wanted to investigate the research area in a medium that is additive. The researcher can create with clay, and then add more clay which can be integrated seamlessly.

Additionally, the process of creating with fabric is linear. Although work can progress organically, what has come before unavoidably affects what can be achieved next. If a change of design is desired, this often involves beginning

from scratch. Working in an additive medium allowed me to disrupt this linearity.

Exploring doll-like forms through a completely different medium in this way enlarges my appreciation of the research topic, and increases the chances of discovering unexpected outcomes.

Also feeding the research was a collection of vintage dolls and their clothing I had amassed from my childhood, and through more recent gifts, hand-me-downs, and purchases. I used photography to record these, and collate a sample of investigative imagery that might be of inspiration.

Figure 3.5: Photograph of 1970's Cindy doll head (2004)



This was particularly useful, as it not only provided me with a base of imagery I was able to utilise in the button-making process, but it also enabled me to develop an understanding of the visual forms of the dolls. The images spoke to me in terms of design; colour palettes and sculptural shapes, but also in relation to the deeper meanings behind the doll play of my childhood. The Cindy doll head pictured, with her sideways-glancing eyes, was a catalyst in

the process of beginning to question the ways in which I had engaged in doll play.

Exploring the topic through a variety of different techniques enabled me to really see the topic through a variety of dimensions. This facilitated my ability to approach the topic through my specialist skills (garment design and construction) in ways that had not been immediately apparent to me at the beginning of the research process.

Exploratory experiments

Schön (1983) suggests that exploratory experiments, like photography, clay modeling and art-doll making, may be understood as “*action undertaken only to see what follows*” (p. 145). Therefore, I was making these works only to see what they might possibly communicate to me about the doll, and dolls clothes, and the process of playing with dolls.

In reality, working with and between these media is a form of play. This process positioned me closer to the topic of doll clothing play, and I was able to be more receptive to unusual and potentially productive approaches to the research.

The processes and results of these exploratory research experiments are recorded in a designer’s journal.

Recording the research process

A *designer's journal* is an important tool in my initial concept framing and subsequent research. Newbury (2001) states that the very act of keeping a research diary or journal “*can in itself sensitise the researcher to the visual.*” Newbury lists the type of information that may be found within a journal. This includes “thoughts and reflections, a record of reading (with comments/summaries/quotes), a record of phone calls and meetings, notes on methodology, observations, unresolved problems, issues or questions, plans for action, keywords, visual material”.

In the development of this present project I recorded all of the above, along with images, fabrics, sketches and conceptual notions. These were housed in a series of spiral-bound journals. A liberal use of entomology pins was made, both to fasten three-dimensional objects to the pages, and also to allow re-organisation and selection of collected elements. By cutting and removing collected ephemera from their original place in the journal and re-sorting and pinning into place with later items of inspiration, I was able to identify themes. This process may be understood as Kleining & Witt's (2000) fourth rule for optimising the chances of discovery when employing a heuristic methodology. They state that the analysis of collected material “*locates*

similarities, accordance, analogies or homologies within the most diverse and varied data. It tries to overcome differences”.

The physical ‘doing’ of hand-stitching within the journal provided for the development of a contemplative and open frame of mind for a stretch of some hours at a time. In this state, creativity was allowed to develop, and ideas and images could flow freely and intuitively without the application of internal editing or analysis.

Figure 3.6: Page of designer journal

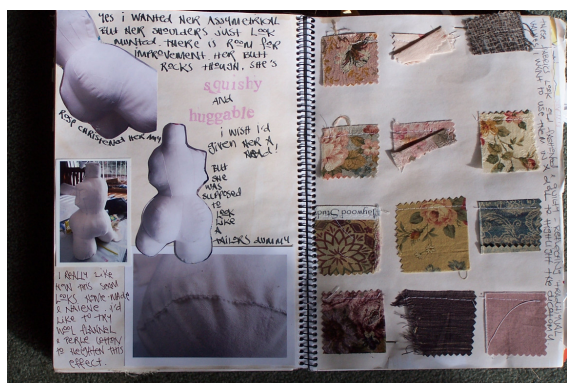
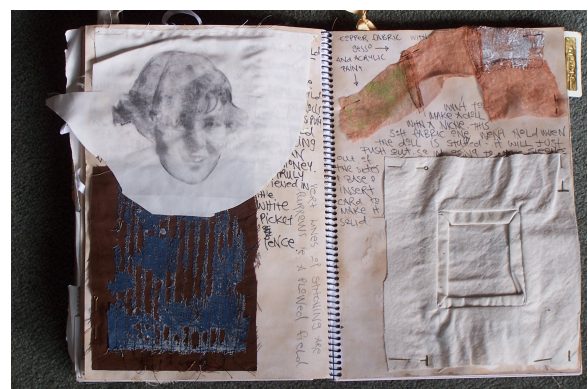


Figure 3.7: Page of designer journal



As a researcher I have had a dialogic relationship with this designer's journal. It was not simply a place to record and control information. Instead it operated as a site where relationships between components were considered, tested and dialogued.

Additionally, the physical making of the designer journal was a helpful tool for me when I felt stuck, or intimidated by my larger thesis works.

In discussing the writing of a doctoral dissertation, Bolker (1998) suggests,

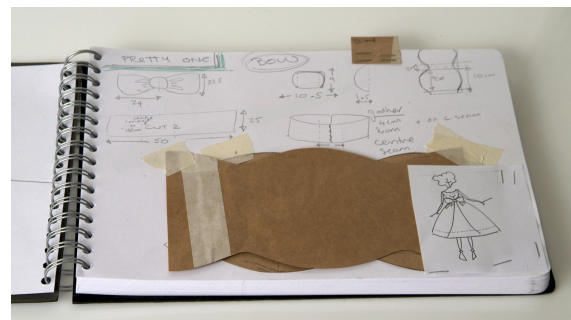
Writing is writing, and if you can't write your dissertation, just continue writing – anything – to keep your muscles in shape, and to keep yourself from getting phobic. At times when you feel you can't write, the strategy is to keep writing (p. 94).

This approach to the designer's journal allowed me to remain in dialogue with my emerging ideas. When I had an unproductive day, a free-form filling-in of a page of my journal allowed me to keep my creative muscles in shape. If I felt I could not make a garment pattern, I made a sketch. If I felt I could not make a sketch, I could at least make a colour wash over a single page. Usually just the physical act of setting out supplies, mixing dyes and paints and picking up a brush provided the impetus that I required to start asking myself "Now that I've done this, what if I went further and did that?".

The designer's journal also afforded me a place where success in work might be judged simply on the physical act of its making. A small success allowed me to gain more confidence and lead to larger successes in more important work.

In this research, the designer's journal was separate to several *research logs* that I ran simultaneously. Although similar in format, these other journals

Figure 3.8: Pattern making journal functioning as research log



were an objective record of experimental results regarding pattern-making, dying, fabric testing, printing, screen manufacture and other analytical aspects of my practice. Newbury (2001) defines the research log as *“a thorough record for the researcher, with sufficient information to replicate the results”*.

In addition to the bound designer’s journal I used a non-folio format of journal. This consisted of a series of manila technical drawing folders containing a collection of unbound sketches and informal notes. As seen in the selection pictured, these sketches include aide de memoirs, suggestions of possible fabrics, garment silhouettes, cultural references, display possibilities, queries and unresolved problems.

Figure 3.9: Design sketches

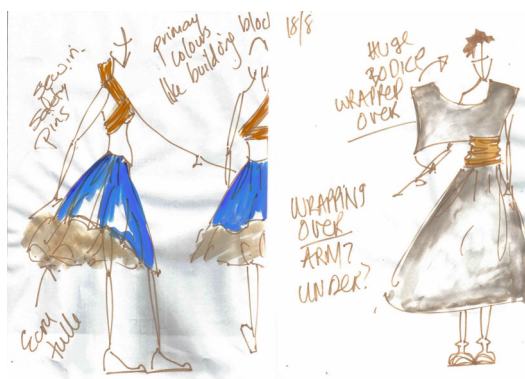


Figure 3.10: Design sketches



Although at a glance the sketches appear randomly sorted and badly organised (compared to a bound journal), this very fluidity allowed for an intuitive and random juxtaposition of ideas that could lead to design

innovations and challenges. In the process of the research the folder was regularly revisited and new connections were made.

Figure 3.11: Sketches mounted on workroom wall



Sketches that caught my attention from the unbound collection were displayed in a more coherent manner, stuck by blue-tack to the wall of my workspace. This space faced the large cutting table where I made patterns and cut out garment pieces.

Arranged in a more linear pattern, this montage allowed me to mull the ideas over in my head, during an extended period of time. I could see these images at the same time I was working on design, patterns or construction of other concepts. This allowed new ideas to filter through my subconscious and enter my creative process.

On the inside of the door to my workspace was a separate montage, consisting of two cork pin-boards. This space was one that I saw many

Figure 3.12: Sketches surrounding pin-board area



times a day when entering or leaving my working area.

This area was a collection point for ephemera of all kinds – packaging materials, photographs, scraps of fabric, articles from magazines, small toys, items from nature, post-it notes and found objects.

The items I pinned, taped or blue-tacked in this space were those that I did not immediately see as having a connection to the current research, and yet seemed to me to be interesting, important, or worth further exploration. This system particularly allowed me to investigate colour juxtapositions or thematic concepts that I would have liked to follow up further, but which had not yet coalesced into a conscious idea or desire. I arranged the items in anticipation of finding similarities that are not immediately apparent, but that will with time, become clear.

This process is analogous to Kleining and Witt's (2000) method of enriching outcomes, and the potential for discovery, in a heuristic research methodology. The theorists propose that heuristic research "locates similarities, accordance, analogies or homologies within these most diverse and varied data ...out of complex phenomena the homogenous will be extracted ...and the dissimilar paralysed".

In my research methodology items were added and removed in a non-linear organic progression. When the boards were too full to allow the addition of

more material, the collection was culled. Items that no longer seemed to be of interest to me were removed and stored in a succession of large foolscap file boxes. Items that I still felt intrigued by were rearranged on the boards, allowing room for more material to join them.

From time to time, I removed items from the sketch wall and transferred them to door surrounding the pin-board area. There they could sit next to ostensibly unrelated material, and I could see them in a new light. New visual connections could be formed. Newbury (2001) refers to the designers' journal as *"a melting pot for all of the different ingredients of a research project"*, and this is the way in which the pin-board operates – a melting pot of diverse ideas, originally unrelated but contributing to a unified whole.

From this melting pot I was able to make links and articulate relationships between new material and my current area of research. To keep this process in momentum I often removed sketches, images, photographs, or artefacts for further rearrangement. These items were photocopied (sometimes enlarging or reducing the scale) and placed into my designer's journal. Sometimes portions of sketches were collaged with found material and other sketches to create a new whole.

Ideas danced between the series of manila folders, the sketch wall, the pin-boards, and my journal. Progression was not one way – sketches might be

transferred from the manila folder to the sketch wall, to the pin board, then ultimately placed back in the manila folder if I decided not to develop the ideas further. This process may be aligned to what Schatzman and Strauss (1973) call an *“ongoing developmental dialogue”* (p. 94). By this they mean that the act of note-taking and recording is not simply a listing of what has occurred. It is instead a way of saving events and impressions, for later review. Returning to the stored information after the lapse of some time allows the records to speak to the researcher in new, previous unnoticed ways. Schatzman and Strauss (ibid.) suggest that *“overly self-conscious”* (p. 95) notes are a hindrance to the developing dialogue. The researcher does not need to understand the use that the records will be, at the time they are made. Only with reflection will the value of the note-taking become apparent.

Framing and reframing

Deciding to develop concept sketches into garments, and deciding which ideas to develop, was a complex and largely intuitive process. Schön (1983) calls this, *“practice which depend[s] upon the spontaneous exercise of intuitive artistry”* (p. 240).

Often the prompt for selection is simply that I wanted to see the proposed garment in three dimensions. This necessitated the making of a pattern and a

toile⁷. Through past experience I have come to understand that how I imagine a garment will look is not the same as how it will look in physical form. The actual making, and the matching of the result against the expected, was an important part of developing both my designs and my ongoing skill base.

Sometimes I was prompted to develop an idea into a garment because I was not sure how to do so. If a sketch suggested something unfamiliar to me I would be intrigued by how I might develop its actual representation.

For example, when I first sketched garments with large buttons, I became curious as to how I could adapt traditional plackets⁸, button extensions⁹ and button holes to physically cope with a greatly enlarged button. The technical difficulty challenged me. I began the process of drafting a pattern and sewing a toile, not because I felt that this was an excellent idea that needed further

⁷ A toile is a mock-up of a garment, made in an inexpensive fabric similar in handle and drape to the proposed final fabric. It allows the designer to test fit and adjust patterns without making a costly investment in its development.

⁸ A placket is a slit in a garment, usually at the neckline or cuff, that creates an opening big enough to put the garment on with ease. Plackets can be fastened with domes, buttons, hooks and eyes, Velcro etc., or may be left unfastened.

⁹ The button extension is a section of fabric that extends behind a buttonhole on a garment. It provides an area for the button to be attached to the garment, and also prevents the wearer's skin or undergarment from being seen through the button hole.

exploration, but solely because I didn't know at the outset how I would achieve the result I wanted.

At other times I selected preliminary ideas for further development because on some level they resonated with me. This is an emotive, visceral response, and one that is difficult to quantify. Some aspect of a sketch, or notation, caught my eye, and found within me a connection to another idea I had been working with. My subconscious was seeking out patterns and rhythms within the material. Kleining and Witt (2000) describe this as a *"tentative grouping"*. Although patterns may initially be unclear, by continuing in a process of tentatively grouping, reviewing and regrouping *"the overall pattern, showing the structure of the topic, will gradually emerge"*.

By keeping a designer's journal, I was able to track these tentative groupings and observe their development.

For example, at the beginning of my research process, when I created a soft rag-doll, rather than just creating the basic exterior form I gave her a vulva, and an internal cavity.

Later, while creating art-dolls, I created one made of transparent plastic, through the

Figure 3.13: Close-up of soft doll showing opening to internal cavity



walls of which you can see the internal stuffing (made up of recycled clothing).

Figure 3.14: Art-doll made of flexible clear plastic



Another example of an abstract sculptural doll form had a cavity in her side. I had constructed matching shapes, featuring images of different objects, and these could be attached within the cavity by a dressmakers dome.

Figure 3.15: Side cavity of art-doll



Although, at the time of making these pieces, no clear topic had yet consciously emerged, by recording both the process of their development, and my reflection on their development, it is possible to see a gradual progression towards concerns of the interior contrasted against the exterior.

Kleining and Witt (2000) suggest that the process of heuristic research may be such that

The topic of research is preliminary and may change during the research process. It is only fully known after being successfully explored. The topic may be overlapped by another one or turn out as part of a different problem...changes of this sort should be regarded as a positive sign of accumulation of knowledge.

My framing of the initial research question required of me an exploration of the physical form of the doll. By the conclusion of the research the question had evolved into an investigation of the tension between the exterior dressing of the doll (reflecting an interior identity), and the location of this clothing play as exploring public (exterior) identities within a domestic (interior) space.

The process of researching through exploratory experiments, and tentatively grouping research outcomes together until a whole emerges organically, is the keystone of the methodological system designed for the project.

Move-testing experiments

The process of developing initial concepts into something more substantial may be likened to Schön's (1983) notion of "*move-testing experiments*" (p. 146).

These he defines as "*a deliberate action undertaken with an end in mind*" (ibid.).

Figure 3.16: Resin button with encapsulated image of doll face (2005)



While involved with the idea of the large garment button, and having made large plain resin and urethane buttons, I experimented with the inclusion of doll faces within the button. The aim of this was to enhance

the communication of my concept to the viewer. To test this I made a button with a doll's image caught within it.

As Schön posits, in this kind of experimentation there are only two outcomes.

A) - the move is affirmed, and the researcher believes that the image of the doll in the button communicates the tension and incongruity of the interior vs. exterior nature of doll clothing play. Or, B) – the researcher believes that the inclusion of the image has not helped communicate the concept. In this case the move is negated.

Figure 3.17: Resin button with two layered images of dolls

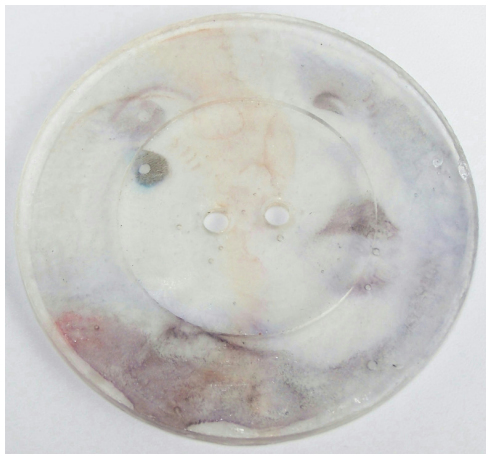


Figure 3.18: Resin button with image of doll face and child's face



In this research I made further move-testing experiments by including dual images of dolls within the buttons, and then including an image of myself as a child, overlaid by an image of the doll.

Figure 3.19: Resin button with encapsulated image of child



Finally I created a button containing solely an image of me as a child.

With each move – the inclusion of different images within the buttons – I decided if I had negated or affirmed my

intention of increased communication of my concepts. The question I asked of these designs was, did the inclusion of different imagery in the button give the viewer any sense of my own engagement with doll play as a child? Did they communicate to the viewer any notion of location within a particular environment?

Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action

Beyond affirmation or negation, the process of move testing experiments causes the experiments (the buttons) to “*back-talk*” to the researcher (Schön, 1983, p. 148).

When I started the button experiments it was with the understanding that the focus of the research was the doll and its clothes. However the buttons began telling me something different. The back-talk told me that my own images in the buttons resonate in a way that the images of the dolls do not.

My ability to acknowledge resonance within the research relies on my *"intuitive understanding"* (Schön, 1983, p. 147) of the material, of the images, and of the finished garment (although it only exists at the time in potentia).

The back-talk demonstrates that the process of research is not one way. The artefacts produced in research produce a dialogic relationship with the researcher.

The artefacts alter the original focus of the researcher. They raise questions of 'what if' and 'how'; different questions from those that were the original focus of the artefact's creation.

Schön (1983) states, "Moves stimulate the situation's back-talk, which causes them to appreciate things in the situation that go beyond their initial perceptions of the problem" (p. 148).

The back-talk from the move-testing experiments resulted in reflection (that the doll imagery in the buttons had not achieved the results I intended) and this enabled me to reframe the research question. The question was now, how can I bring my own experiences of doll play to the buttons? This prompted a new phase of the tentative grouping, and a repeat process of making new works – of experimentation. This was analogous to what Schön (1983) describes as *"transforming the situation from what it is to something he [sic] likes better"* (p. 147).

This continual reframing, elicited by back-talk, is what Schön (1983) explores in his concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Schön argues that “our know[ledge] is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing” (p. 49). He proposes that therefore our knowing is *in* our action.

As I made each button I was unconsciously using my knowledge of the materials, processes and images. Concurrently, I was engaged in considering each work as it develops; reflection-in-action. Once I had a group of buttons made, I could regard them as a unit of work; I was able to engage with them in a different way. I began reflection-on-action.

At this point in the research the artefacts as a group began to offer information to me, in the form of back-talk, and the reframing process began. The process of experimentation entwined with that of both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action in the reframing and continued development of my work.

Seeing-as and doing-as

The process of creative-production research raises technical challenges that must be solved to advance the research. To resolve design challenges I relied on my tacit knowledge of pattern making, fabric, and garment construction, to relate unfamiliar situations to familiar ones that I have solved in the past.

Schön (1983) describes this as "*Seeing this situation as that one, one may also do in this situation as in that one*" (p. 139). He gives a label to the phenomenon; "*seeing-as*" and "*doing as*" (ibid.).

In creating an extremely large bow for the front of a dress I encountered a problem. The heavy upholstery fabric used caused the bow to sag under its own weight.

Figure 3.20: Detail of dress with large bow



Although I had never made an over-sized bow before, or made any garment in upholstery fabric before, I had made large, wearable mascot-type costumes from polar-fleece¹⁰. These often required stiffening and support in the form of EVA¹¹ foam internal framework and inserts to force complex structures to hold their shape.

¹⁰ Polar-fleece is a heavy winter-weight fabric with a thick pile, made from polyester or acrylic fibres. It is often used for team-wear, warm utility wear and children's clothes as it is hard wearing, thick and relatively cheap..

¹¹ EVA is an acronym for Ethylene Vinyl Acetate. It is a closed-cell, flexible, thermoplastic foam product extensively used in the theatrical and film costume industries for costume items, props and sets. It is valued for its ability to resist both water and oil, accept paint finishes, and it can be easily recycled.

Similarly, I had made a jacket with a detachable bustle-like structure, using an industrial-weight stiffener to give the bustle shape and strength to withstand repeated wearing.

I have the professional ability to “*see unfamiliar situations as familiar ones, and to do in the former as we have done in the latter*” (Schön, 1983, p. 140), and subsequently I was able to see that supporting a large bow was similar to stiffening a bustle, or giving internal structure to a large cartoon-style serpent’s head costume. I was able to see how I might apply solutions to previous problems to this problem. Solving this problem “*contribut[es] to the practitioner’s repertoire of exemplary themes*” (Schön, *ibid.*), and gave me another successful example of problem-solving to use when I encountered a similar problem in my future practice.

Summary

The methodology utilised in this research project employs a heuristic approach that engages experimentation combined with reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. This reflection involves Schön’s (1983) concepts of seeing-as and doing-as. This methodological design enabled me to rigorously challenge the research area, to frame and reframe the problem, experiment and test hypotheses, and finally produce artefacts that satisfactorily resolve the challenge of communicating the research concerns to the viewer.

Exegesis

This thesis engages in many contextual issues, including Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity, Bell's (1996) Pakeha myth, and hyperreality. However, within the limited scope of the exegesis I have chosen to focus on the inherent tension between interior and exterior as it is located in the doll clothing play dynamic.

Dolls as fashion inculcators

Doll play has long been a form of fashion education and inculcation. Boehn (1972) notes that Marie de' Medici, just prior to her 1610 marriage to the French King Henry IV, enquired of the ambassador to Florence about current French court fashion. Henry's reply was to send her several model dolls dressed in miniature versions of current garb.

Figure 4.1: Versace Barbie (Mattel, 2004)



Boehn (1972) suggests that dolls were widely used to disseminate fashion throughout Europe from the 17th to the late 19th century. Charles-Roux et al (2002) say that at the close of WWII, in 1946, a group of French couturiers sent 237 dolls, wearing miniature version of the latest Parisian couture garments,

on a tour of North America and Europe in an effort to promote their garment-related industries and restore French couture to pre-eminence.

Contemporarily, couture labels such as Versace license Mattel to produce self-branded Barbies, making real couture in miniature within the reach of collectors, and conceivably increasing desire to own the real thing.

Early Barbie advertising centered solely on the clothing as purpose for the doll play. A 1950's Barbie advertisement claimed,

Barbie is a busy Teen Age Fashion model who has a complete wardrobe of lovely new fashions to wear! You can dress Barbie in the latest Paris fashions ...in glamorous party dresses ...in school sportswear ...swimsuits ...accessories from the Barbie Teen Age Fashion collection styled exclusively for your Barbie doll to wear. Barbie Fashions are tailored of quality fabrics, for perfect fit and finished with zippers, buttons and dressmaker details (Billyboy, 1987, p. 26).

This pre-eminent role of fashion for the doll makes dolls one of the first influences quoted by many contemporary fashion designers. In Gregg's (2003) biography of Wellington designer Zana Feuchs she reports "like most fashion designers, she started by making clothes for her Barbie dolls before working her way up to her own dresses" (p. 123).

Clothes are a vital component of the enjoyment of the doll; the pleasure is taken in dressing, undressing and redressing. As Boehn (1972) states, “the sheer joy taken in clothing dolls and in attending to them, which includes dressing and undressing, has at least a good deal to do with the child’s love of the doll” (p. 175).

Doll clothing play as presentation of the self.

The practice of dressing and redressing the doll may be considered practice for dressing and redressing the self, and through that it may be understood as an agent in the construction of identity. Dressing the doll becomes a stand-in for dressing the self – by virtue of the greater ease of acquisition of a variety of clothing for identity play.

Stone (1965) theorized “dress-up behaviour of children as an experimental phase in which different identities are tested against the reviews of a significant audience, often other family members and parents” (p. 226).

These reviews of the significant audience can be considered in terms of Foucault’s gaze;

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own

overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself (Foucault cited in Bordo, 2003, p. 27.).

Silverman (1986) explicitly sees clothing as part of the identity. She states *"Clothing is a necessary condition of subjectivity ...in articulating the body it simultaneously articulates the psyche"* (p. 146).

Kaiser (1997) elaborates on the end result of this process.

Through a process of self-identification, individuals place (locate or identify) and express their own identities. Appearance management allows them to anticipate what identities they would like to have in a social situation, so they can present themselves accordingly to others ...just as an audience may be comprised of other people, it may also be comprised of the self. In this way, appearance management can enable people to understand themselves and to reflect on identity. The self can become a kind of audience (as when looking in a mirror) that evaluates one's own image and places it in context (pp. 186-187).

Rather than looking in a mirror, as Kaiser suggests, the child may become the audience of the self through the medium of the doll. While dressing the doll (and identifying with the doll) the child looks at the doll from the outside (as audience). The child is both interiorizing the dressing experience, and observing the dressing experience.

This makes the medium of doll clothing play an express vehicle for the learning of Berger's split gaze.

A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself ...from earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the *surveyor* and the *surveyed* within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman ...her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another (Berger, 1972, p. 46).

The doll is an ideal medium for this intersection between doing, looking, and being looked at.

Kaiser (1997) suggests the way to disrupt that duality is to perform the action, and not to picture yourself performing the action. However the child can never turn wearing the doll clothes into a performative act. They can only go back and forth across the edge of seeing the garment as an exterior object, and internalizing the garment. The doll garment can never be inhabited by any other than the doll.

Hollander (1999) sees clothing play as integral to the construction of identity through to adulthood.

A modern woman may keep visually transforming through clothing with no loss of personal integrity or consistency, preserving her

emotional equilibrium by dressing all the parts that she plays in the continuing drama of her inner life, besides simply getting dressed for her outer one" (pp. 146-147).

Hollander further states, "Clothes make the man, not because they make up or invent what the man is or dress him up for show but because they actually create his conscious self. You are what you wear" (1993, p. 444).

This makes doll clothing play a powerful tool in the creation of identity, but also in the inculcation of the dominant hegemony. Learning to construct identity in this way has become so vital to girls, because, as Bordo (2003) posits, "*Femininity itself has come to be largely a matter of constructing ...the appropriate surface presentation of the self*" (p. 170).

Play location

Children's doll clothing play, with its associated roles of identity construction and self-observation, occurs largely in interior domestic spaces – in bedrooms, living rooms or informal family gathering areas at one's own house, or at a friend's house.

In her autobiography, Gildiner (2002) recalls the typical experience of playing with dolls clothes, in a domestic interior; in this case with doll versions of the 1950's singing Lennon sisters.

Susie, the eldest of the sisters, placed each of us on the floor of my living room and we each had a home for our Lennon sister under the skirt of a wing chair. We had to keep our clothes in neat piles, with casuals in one pile and formals in another ...Susie held her doll in the middle and said we were all going out on "a convertible date". Everyone got dressed ...then Susie held her doll out and walked around the room (p. 119).

Clothing play can occasionally be moved to the garden or driveway, however the small nature of dolls' clothes and accessories means that this makes it more likely precious items will be lost. Indeed, due to the delicate nature of doll's clothing, even playing indoors can have its hazards as Gildiner (ibid.) recounts; "The skirt of the chair kept knocking my apparel askew and the heating vent behind the chair kept blowing my wardrobe from one end of the wing-chair home to the other" (p. 119).

This type of home interior is very much the same kind of interior in which children typically engage in doll clothing play.

Interior spaces are defined by doors and walls, but most of all by the presence of a curtain able to be pulled across the windows.

Hollander (1993) defines the purpose of curtains by stating "They may divide large spaces into small sections, shut out drafts and light, and conceal the presence of anything that does not smell or make a noise" (p. 26). I posit that

this list omits one of the major reasons for the use of curtains; that is, to prevent the view of anyone present in exterior, public space from intruding into interior, domestic space.

In discussing modernist architecture in the 1950's, Sparke (1995) tells us that,

The ideals of architects who planned the houses were frequently at odds with the way their inhabitants embellished and used them ...[the inhabitants] insisted on introducing net curtains into their new, open, light and open [*sic*] spaces ...the architects had not anticipated, and clearly had no understanding of the importance that privacy ...played in these women's lives (p. 177).

In a typical middle class, Western-style living room, it is this draped fabric, in formal French pleats, that separates the safe, secure, domestic interior from the eyes of the public world. In Gardiner's case, the skirt of the chair is forming yet another curtained space for her doll. She is creating another, doll-sized interior, within her own larger interior space.

The draped curtain comes to define and control the domestic space.

Domestic space as feminine space

The domestic interior is considered an appropriate place for doll play, as in a Euro-centric culture children are inextricably linked with motherhood and femininity.

For several centuries domestic space has been considered, by a Western cultural hegemony, as the appropriate location for femininity – indeed as a symbol for femininity.

This attitude is perhaps typified by late Victorian-era economics writer Veblen (1899), in his oft-quoted remark regarding women; *“Her sphere is in the household, which she should ‘beautify’ and of which she should be the ‘chief ornament’”*.

It was a woman’s responsibility to beautify her home with draped fabrics and upholstery, and herself with cut and sewn fabrics in the form of fashion.

Sparke (1995) pinpoints the European Industrial Revolution as the beginning of this cultural concept, arguing that it was the *“the period when the concepts of ‘woman’ and ‘domesticity’ became, effectively, one and the same”* (p. 15).

This has led to a contemporary situation whereby, as Weisman (1994) argues, that for the father who works in the public environment,

... for him, the house is still a place of renewal. For mother, private space and the status, adulthood, and sense of individuality it affords are glaringly absent. For her, the house is still her “boundary”, her “sphere” and a never-ending, specialized workplace devoted to the growth, development, and fulfillment of other family members (p. 98).

Weisman (ibid.) further explores the continuance of this demarcation by explaining that “girls are taught to relate to personal body space, interiors, and the domestic sphere and boys to reflect upon public, outdoor space” (p. 28).

Drapery as intrinsically feminine

This equating of interior space with femininity had led to a situation where the presence of interior fabrics, such as drapery, has prompted the viewer to associate the scene with feminine space.

A photograph by Bernard (1887) of painter Alexandre Cabanel’s studio, titled “Photograph of Cabanel’s Studio”, features a partly-nude female model, amongst a large swag of draped curtaining around the exterior walls of the studio. Discussing this photograph, Doy (2002) states, “The huge amount of cloth here gives us the impression that curtains are being drawn aside to allow us (gendered as masculine) to view a peep-show, where men are absent except as viewers of a feminine sphere” (p. 14).

Even knowing, from the title of the piece, that this space is explicitly not a domestic interior, but instead a semi-public artist’s studio, belonging to a male painter, Doy proposes that the presence of drapery alone renders the space as domestic, and feminine. Doy further states that this makes the viewer

gendered as male; she is arguing that in order to be positioned outside the domestic space, one must be male.

A definition of the curtain, from Webster's Dictionary (Kellerman, et al. 1972), states that a curtain is "*hanging drapery*" (p. 248). Drapery is further defined as "*fabric coverings, hangings, or clothing disposed in loose graceful folds*" (ibid., p. 300).

This definition entwines the notions of the domestic curtain-style drapery, and drapery as used as a signifier in high art.

Drapery as art

Hollander (1993) has examined the way draped cloth is used in paintings of the nude or naked female figure. She describes drapery as "*a moveable architectural element*" (p. 27). Hollander argues that imagery of drapery immediately communicates to the viewer a location within interior space.

In an outdoor nude scene, the presence of overhanging fabric somehow creates an unmistakable bed out of the place under it, even if the stuff performs no other obvious function such as sheltering or screening (p. 169).

Paradoxically, the presence of the drapery in painting does not automatically cause the space to be read as feminine. Although Doy (2002) suggests that "*drapery stands in for the absent body, or connotes larger, more abstract concepts*

such as femininity" (p. 19), at the same time drapery also holds a *"traditional function as an aestheticising signifier of high culture, civilization and elite values"* (p. 57).

This is also asserted by Hollander (1993), who argues (regarding draped fabric in the ancient Greek model);

Visual references in art to these antique domestic simplicities carried connotations of all the other antique virtues, including an elevated concept of personal physical beauty. Nudes could thus acquire a certain extra aesthetic credit through artful juxtaposition with Classical-looking bedding (p. 169).

Contrasting to the domestic sphere, high art has been considered the domain of the traditionally masculine, as Sparke (1995) contrasts;

The separation of private and public spheres had driven a wedge between the amateur world of taste and domesticity, and the professional world of art and design. Whereas the latter belonged to the arena of public, male-dominated institutions...the former...inhabited an enclosed private sphere (p. 51).

These arguments position images of drapery in painting or sculpture as upholding classical ideals. Drapery creates a perceived elevation in meaning and tone, in keeping with a masculine field of high art. At the same time,

drapery in actuality, gives rise to connotations of domesticity and the feminine sphere.

Drapery as liminality

This paradox places drapery as a liminal marker, standing at the very crux of the dislocation between interior and feminine, and exterior and masculine.

This mirrors the interesting dichotomy whereby fashion, consisting of garments constructed of cut and sewn cloth, is often considered ephemeral and ultimately frivolous, whereas uncut cloth, painted in the form of draperies, can, according to Hollander's arguments, legitimise art.

Indeed, fabrics in the form of furnishings and drapery are often articulated as fashion for architecture. Lebeau (1994) unequivocally states "*Upholstery is clothing for houses*" (p. 143) and goes further to liken the furnished house to the body. He argues that during the 19th century, deep buttoning on upholstery was seen as "*a sublimation of the most bourgeois part of the body, the belly*" (ibid., p. 156). In the popular redecorating television show *Changing Rooms*, towards the conclusion of each episode, the designers would cry, "*Dress the room!*" and a montage would proceed of the teams putting up curtains and bringing in cushions and bed throws. (Christie, 2000)

Doll clothing play: tension between interior and exterior locations.

Doll clothing play engages with this liminality by its very nature. The doll dresser sits within the interior feminine space, separated from the eyes of the exterior by curtained drapery. The dresser prepares the doll, through changes in garment, for imaginary excursions into exterior public space.

If we return to Gildiner's recollections of one specific instance of doll clothing play, the Lennon sisters dolls were consecutively dressed for driving in a convertible, attending a debutante ball and going to a 'splash party' (Gildiner, 2002, p. 119-120). These are typical types of activities engaged in with doll clothing play. Indeed they are archetypal locations for imaginative Barbie fashion play.

The Mattel practice of naming doll garment collections gives overt messages about the social situations their creators envisaged for them. A quick survey of Mattel doll fashions immediately produces a preponderance of titles involving activities that would take place in a public, exterior, environment; Suburban Shopper, Drum Majorette, Fun on Ice, Friday Night Date, Busy Gal, Graduation, American Airlines Stewardess, Senior Prom, Rally Day (Billyboy, 1987).

Dress activities with these types of doll clothes involve play in an interior location. The dresser is preparing the doll for the public presentation of the self in an exterior location. Through this medium the child learns appropriate strategies for negotiating appearance and the construction of identity. The irony is that the doll will never enter the exterior space, but can only parade the imagined self within the draped, feminine interior.

Fabric as skin

As draped fabric forms a liminal marker between private and public, interior female and exterior male, so fabric in the form of clothes fulfils the same function as a container for the private - the skin and the body, and the public - the social presentation of the self.

Early fashion theorists often described dress as a protection of the body from the elements, or the intruding gaze of strangers. Costume historian Boucher (1987), in the introduction to his seminal work on European costume history, lists as reasons for covering the body with fabric and ornament "such physical conditions as climate and health ...religious beliefs, magic, aesthetics, personal status, the wish to be distinguished from or to emulate one's fellows ...modesty ...ideas of taboo ...magical influence and the desire to please" (p. 9).

However Wilson (2003) advances a different theory. *"The naked body underneath the clothes and paint is somehow unfinished, vulnerable, and leaky at the margins"* (p. 8).

This presents dress as something not designed so much as to protect the body from society, but to protect society from the ambiguity of the body.

Wilson (2003) goes on to state

Clothing marks an unclear boundary ambiguously, and unclear boundaries disturb us ...if the body with its open orifices is itself dangerously ambiguous, then dress, which is an extension of that body yet not quite part of it, not only links that body to the social world, but also more clearly separates the two. Dress is the frontier between the self and the not-self" (pp. 2-3).

Clothing sits within the same liminality as the draped curtain. As the curtain divides architecture into the exterior (subject to the gaze of all) and the interior (subject only to the private gaze), so clothing separates the human being into the social self (subject to the gaze of all) and the leaky, interior, ambiguous self (subject only to the gaze of a very few).

Right at the very edge of the two – the interior of the garment and the exterior, the leaky orifices and the presentation of the self to the social world - are the buttons.

I posit the button as being the specific location of this liminality. Buttons mark the boundary between the unclean – the epithelials and blood and shed hairs and sweat and the very evidence of our corporeality - and the smooth, seamless staging of ourselves to the world.

One noticeable difference between dolls' dress and human dress is that although it clearly has an outside and an inside, the inside of a doll's garment does not have the same connotations as the inside of a human garment. Dolls aren't leaky. They have no fluids. The inside of the doll garment stays perfect and clean forever. Dolls have no ambiguous self that the exterior world must be protected from, and I suggest that this is why a naked doll does not engender the same strongly emotive reaction as a naked human, even when molded as anatomically correct.

Fabrics

The differences between fabrics believed culturally appropriate for the liminality of domestic drapery, and the liminality of personal clothing, are worth noting.

The Australia Wool Testing Authority¹² (n.d.) states that the criteria for furnishing fabrics include durability and strength, light-fastness, resistance to abrasion and soiling, and ease of cleaning. While these qualities are considerations for many garment purchasers, fashion fabrics are frequently marked 'Dry-clean only', and usually feature little resistance to soiling or abrasion. Garment fabrics are usually associated instead with the attributes of softness and drape.

However the most significant difference between drapery and fashion fabrics is one of scale. In order to appear scale-appropriate when dressing the larger space of a room patterns are enlarged from those found in fashion fabrics. This practice can often be subverted by fashion designers, as De la Haye and Glenville (1997) observe when commenting on 1960's British fashion. They describe "*floral patterns on such an immense scale that they resembled furnishing textiles*" (p. 126).

This contrast of scale is observable with dolls' clothing. Although large commercial doll clothing manufacturers, such as Mattel, have access to runs

¹² This information was sourced from the Australian Wool Testing Authority, rather than the New Zealand Wool Testing Authority, as the New Zealand organisation is a commercial enterprise that undertakes testing for private fabric producers and commercial consumers. The NZWTA does not provide any publicly accessible publications.

of purpose-designed small scale fabric, dolls' clothing made in a domestic setting often utilises human-scale fabrics. This affects the scale of the print on the doll – it appears over-large.

The scale of the fibres in the fabric is also noticeable in doll clothing. Even where the print is small-scale, the fibres from which the fabric is woven or knitted are not able to be altered. Without the addition of stretch fibres, doll clothing seldom hugs the contours of the doll. Instead the relative stiffness of the fabric accentuates pleats, seams and curves by making them stand away from the doll form. Fashion fabric behaves on the doll form, the way upholstery fabrics would behave on a human form.

These notions of dolls' clothing and related identity construction, location, drapery and scale have been explored through the practice-based research comprising this thesis.

The engagement of the work with the contextual issues.

The thesis practice is not illustrative of the contextual issues, but instead is questioned by the theoretical framework developed in its resolution.

The garments in the thesis exhibition are designed to subvert the division between the exterior and the interior.

I have constructed my final range of garments from interior fabrics. These fabrics required rethinking of garment design, as on the body they do not behave like fashion fabrics. Small details become oversized to allow for the volume of fabric thickness when turning right side out. This gives the garments the appearance of having substantial bulk. They are not gauzy pieces of fabric hanging in a closet, waiting for a human figure to give them form and life. The furnishing fabrics give the garments so much weight that they can almost stand alone. Even when empty they hold the shape of a figure. These garments would impose their form upon a figure.

This stiffness, as well as the overall silhouettes of the garments, references the work of French couture designer Dior. His post-WWII Corolle line was designed to make independent women into “flowerwomen” (Buxbaum, 1999, p. 63). Dior wished to remove women from the public sphere, where they had worked during the Second World War, and return them to an interior space, where they could be nurtured like hothouse flowers. The resulting dresses

from the Corolle line, dubbed by the media as the New Look, were stiff enough to stand up by themselves. Plessix Gray (1996) describes Chanel as having voiced her disapproval by stating, “Dior? He doesn’t dress women, he upholsters them”.

Dior’s garments, as the garments in this thesis exhibition, resemble the interior environment in which they are worn.

The furnishing fabrics used in these exhibition pieces feature large scale floral designs, bringing the outside in the form of the garden, inside. The floral patterns are overlarge for clothing. Indeed, the pattern scale is so large that often no repeat is visible. In places the fabric has the manifestation of abstract design, as even with large garment pieces, not enough of the fabric is apparent to allow the pattern appear coherent. The textile designs overwhelm the sculptural forms of the garments.

The drape of the fabric used in these garments does not correspond to the drape of fashion fabric. This is exacerbated by the use of curtain-style pleating and gathering. The garments feature large areas of gathered fabric, reminiscent of drapery. This gives the garments the quality of camouflaging any form within them – the contours of the garment, not the body, are those that would be seen.

Through this scale of fabric and pattern the garments come to resemble the dolls' clothing from which they are inspired.

Each exhibition garment features oversized hand cast polyester resin buttons, with encapsulated images. The images are taken from my collection of 1970's candid family snapshots. They show me as a child, participating in family outings and activities, and are typical of the whole collection of photographs. Overwhelmingly these images show my location at an edge – beaches, fence lines, mangroves. As a collection, these photographs reinforce my position in liminal space – always occupying a space between.

The location of these images in buttons reinforces this liminality. The buttons draw attention to the point of division between the inside and the outside of the garment.

At the same time, the inclusion of an eye in many of the garment buttons means that while we look at the garments, they appear to look back. They are disrupting Berger's (1972) split gaze. The garments are not passive, they return the gaze.

The areas of the garments that contain printed images are on the insides of the garments; pocket linings, under collars, within bows. The images of the exterior are hidden in interior locations. At initial glance the garments appear to be standard fashion clothing, with perhaps a skewed detail of scale. Only

with close examination of the garments does the narrative become apparent. One must spend time to unravel the location of stories.

In the interior location of their display, within the Gallery One window, the viewer cannot get close enough to the garments to examine the garment spaces that include images. The narrative prints may not even be detected.

The garment colours have been chosen to give the impression of moving through the body, from bone, to flesh and blood, and skin. Not the tan, café-au-lait colour of my skin, but the smooth, perfect, milky colour of the heroine's skin in my childhood stories.

The dresses, rather than separating society from corporeality, resemble corporeality itself. The garments create a body-double – one identity worn over our own identity. In this way they may be seen to appropriate a notion of fragmented post-modern identity. Wilson (1992) states that *"identity is always to some extent a fiction ...the concept of identity is an ideology of false wholeness"* (p. 7). The garments, intertwined with the stories of my early childhood, create a narrative of identity. The nature of the fiction or otherwise of this identity cannot be judged by the outsider. They are truly costumes for the creation of a fluid identity.

Yet these garments are displayed, not on living bodies, but on mannequins. They cannot be used to create identity as they are not being worn by a human.

Without the presence of a body they become, as Wilson says “*oddly abstract and faintly uncanny*” (ibid. p. 15). The garments perform the same function here as my dolls’ dresses did; one can imagine ones’ self in the garments, but one can never inhabit them. They will not be offered for sale, they will never be soiled or bled on, they will never be laundered. This lack positions the garments as being something other than fashion. They are not real clothes.

They are constructs for the communication of narratives of identity.

Appendices

Appendix A: Amphibian Dress

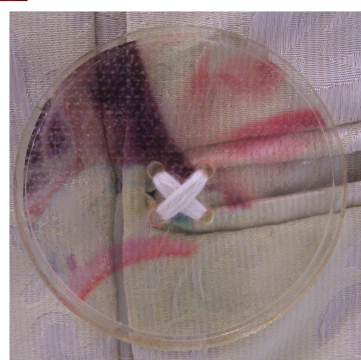
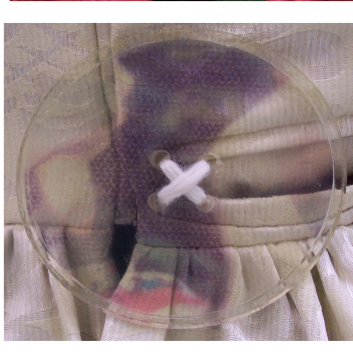
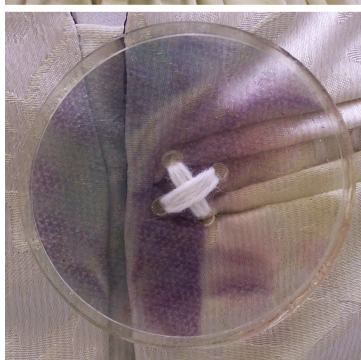
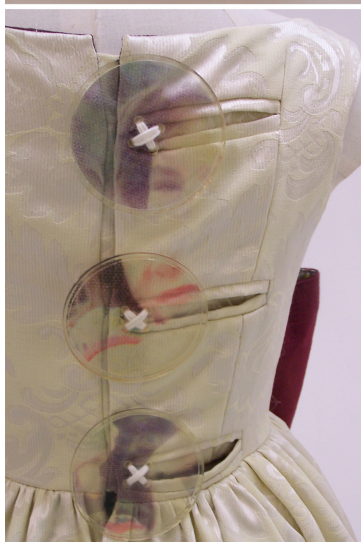


Appendix B: Mangrove Coat





Appendix C: Yacht Dress



Appendix D: Graduation exhibition, Nov 2005, St. Paul

Street Gallery



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