

SCOPE SPECIAL ISSUE - FASHION

Simon Swale

Kia ora koutou and welcome to this, the second special fashion issue of Scope Art and Design. This follows the initial issue published in 2017, and like it, builds upon a successful fashion symposium organised by fashion staff at Otago Polytechnic's School of Design to coincide with Dunedin's iD Fashion Week.

As with the symposium, the theme of this special issue is 'Fashion Fluid', and like the 2017 theme 'Metamorphosis' is dedicated to tracking, reflecting and critiquing the ever-changing local and international fashion system. Once again this issue places sustainability as a central concern. This reflects not just the industry's continued and increasing need for systematic changes, but also the place sustainability holds within Otago Polytechnic's strategic framework. This issue considers a range of fashion and design contexts, featuring for instance technological developments both historical and contemporary, and traditional practices of making alongside the avant garde.

Historically focused articles encompass both the local and the global. Jane Malthus and Moira White focus on the emergent technologies of waterproofing fabric in the nineteenth century, a necessary functional, if not fashionable innovation that addressed the often inclement conditions faced by New Zealand's settler population. Such functionality would be further required with the proliferation of motor vehicles worldwide from the turn of the century, and Pam McKinlay's article considers a specifically gendered development of clothing in response to this phenomenon. McKinlay reminds us that the electric car is no recent innovation and that women were at the forefront of engaging with this technology in the early twentieth century, and demonstrates that functional dress could indeed be married with fashionable taste.

Bringing the traditional very much into the contemporary realm, Stella Lange articulates the potential of craft to operate as an alternative fashion practice resistant to the traditions and proliferations of mainstream fashion. For Lange, craft provides activist opportunities and for alternative systems of making and consumption, ones with their own highly engaged communities of practice.

One such community is discussed by Kirsten Koch in her account of the clothing upcycling seminar which she organised early in 2019. Koch discusses a range of local practitioners who work with upcycled resources and who have established a supportive and significant community here in Dunedin.

The potential for strategic innovations to be both sustainable and profitable is demonstrated in Katie Mangai's report on a presentation by Little Yellow Bird founder Samantha Jones. Jones has built a hugely successful business that draws significantly on her logistical background to create a unique business model, and her presentation 'Scaling for Social Impact' demonstrated that off shore manufacturing could be both ethical and socially engaged, with Jones working closely with her off shore supply chain to ensure Fairtrade standards.

Exploring notions of place, ethnicity and identity are cornerstones to the work of Rekha Rana Shailaj, with a life lived across the globe, Rana Shailaj draws upon her own experiences and articulates these richly, in both her writing and her design work. Responding to an increasingly globalised social order, Rana Shailaj unites cultural perspectives to form new hybridities, which simultaneously address her desire for socially responsible design.

The iD Fashion Week Emerging Designer Award competition is unique in Australasia for the global scope of its participants, and this year the contenders were all able to experience Dunedin city's unique sites through a location based photoshoot initiated by Prof Margo Barton of Otago Polytechnic. This project was facilitated and documented here by Design Lecturer Angela Lyon, who worked with a group of Communication Design students to capture the vibrancy and innovations of the international designers. This project demonstrates also the power project based, real world learning for design students.

A range of other highly innovative fashion design work is also featured within. Katie Day, Ruby van der Zanden, Maia Holder-Monk and Grainne O'Connell collectively demonstrate the great diversity of approaches and outcomes of contemporary fashion design. All four articulate their practice through their unique writing voice and all demonstrate the depth of intelligent and critical thinking that informs their own innovative design work.

Natalie Smith's focus on the art-fashion nexus provides context for understand and discuss the more avant garde creations of contemporary fashion. Smith's article provides a timely consideration on the work of New Zealand designers Deborah Crowe and Kim Fraser; specifically their award winning outfit from 1997 *Dual Outlook*. With *Dual Outlook*, Crowe and Fraser created fashion both conceptual and prophetic in a manner analogous to art. Utilising unique and typically un-fashion materials, Crowe and Fraser displayed a prescient concern for the "onslaught of digital communication" which today seems so endemic.

This onslaught has generated unlikely results that would have been hard to predict twenty-five years ago and the impact of social media upon the fashion system and beyond has been immeasurable and contentious. Representations of women on social media provides the focus of Tyla Stevenson's article, who argues for the agency displayed by woman such as Kim Kardashian. Kardashian, Stevenson argues, is a woman in control of both her body and its representation through social media, and that whatever we may make of Kardashian's use of this power, it is the shift of power from the media platform to the subject that must remain the focus.

This issue concludes with an account of a panel discussion between leading fashion professionals that occurred as part of iD Fashion Week. Comprising designer Emily Miller-Sharma, sustainability entrepreneur Bernadette Casey, PR specialist Murray Bevan and educators Sue Prescott and Donna Dinsdale, discussion focused on the extent of change faced by the fashion industry in the last decade- and thought on the continued changes likely in the future...

Our thanks go to all involved in making this special issue of Scope possible. Firstly to all the authors whose work here contributes to new knowledge and understandings for what fashion is, can, and will be become in the future.

Thanks also to all the reviewers, including those members of the editorial board, who so generously give their time and expertise to ensure Scope offers the highest quality of academic credibility.

To Paul Sorrel and Joanna Wernham, whose work as copy editor and designer respectively adds greatly to your reading pleasure and helps make this journal such a visually rewarding experience. Thank you both- it was a pleasure to work with you once again.

This publication would not be possible without the funding from the Otago Polytechnic Research Office so thanks go also to their staff and for Otago Polytechnic's dedication to promoting research excellence.

Final thanks go to Pam McKinlay and Jenny Aimers for their support and organisation and for keeping us all on track!