

BIAS

Journal of Dress Practice



Fashion + Healing

DRESS PRACTICE COLLECTIVE
MISSION STATEMENT

The Dress Practice Collective is a student-run organization at The New School which joins elements of visual culture, fashion theory, design studies and personal practice through a variety of media. We hope to spark conversations and initiate collaborations between students, faculty, and members of the wider community through publications and events.

FASHION
HEALING

BIAS

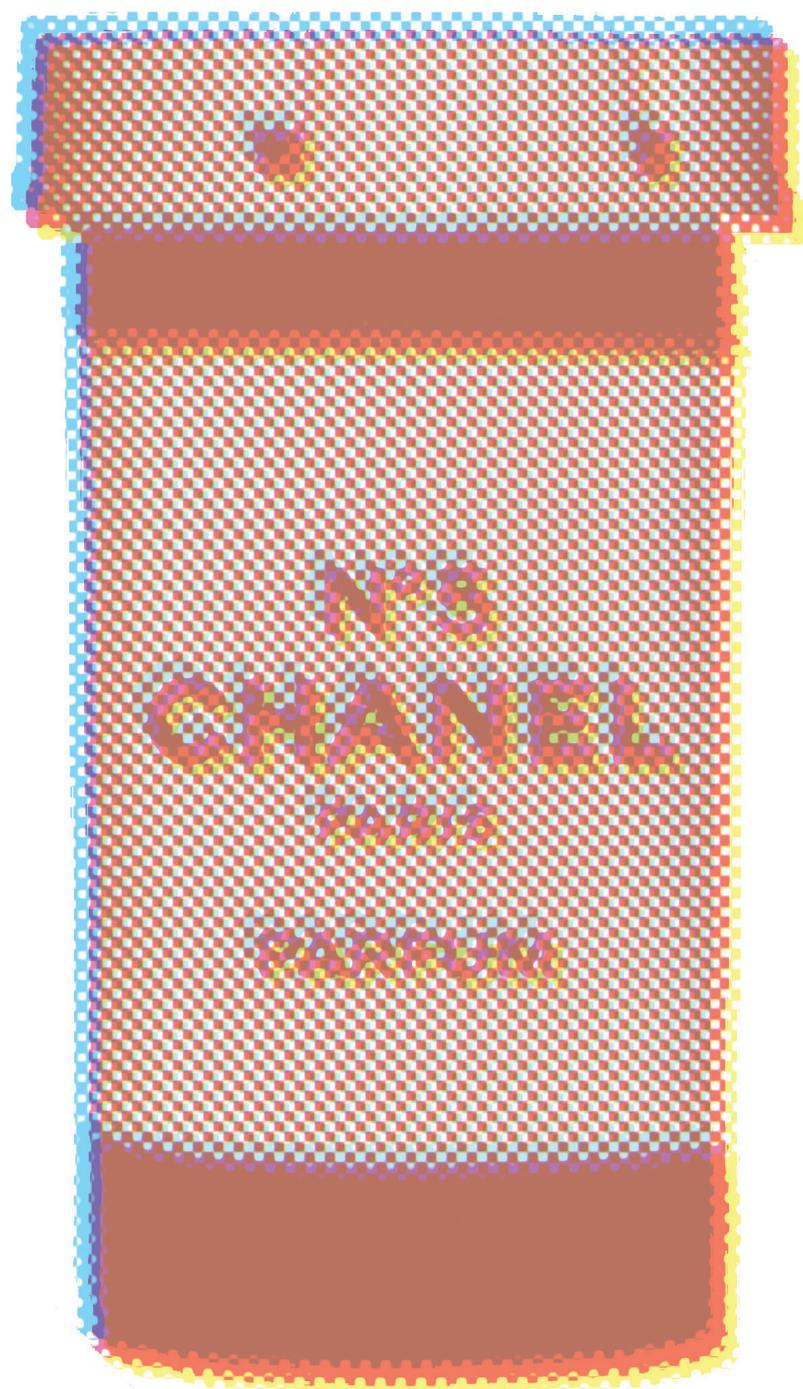
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ON THE COVER

Eleni Papaioannou wearing
prosthetic fashion by Annelie Gross
Photographed by Matt Jackson

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ISSUE 1
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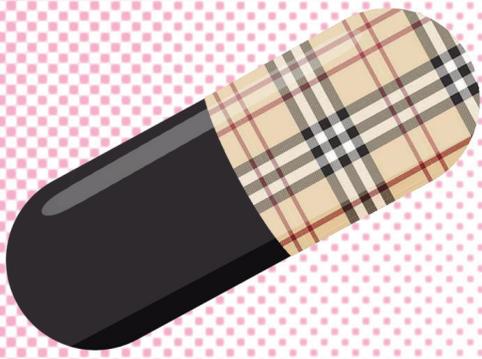
N°5
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BIAS
ISSUE 1
EDITOR'S LETTER

Fashion has an immense power to heal. Clothing can become a safety blanket, garments can act as a protective shield between our inner selves and the outer world. This issue was created to explore some of the areas where fashion and healing intersect on both wide cultural levels and in intimate personal realms through a series of articles and artwork.

The act of creating fashion can push boundaries of physical healing, as we see in the work of Annelie Gross with prosthetics. Designing and making clothes can also bring forth emotional healing, as Madeline Provost experienced. Recent research published here also notes how divesting emotionally and culturally charged garments can become healing, such as re-selling a wedding dress after a divorce. Another article considers the implications behind the plethora of pills popping up on runways and in retail recently. New technologies are changing the way that clothing interacts with our bodies and our bodies interact with clothing, as Rachel Kinnard's study points out in the example of an undergarment that "heals" a cellulite-ridden rear by infusing caffeine and lotions into the skin through the textile.

The relationship between fashion and healing will develop in new and unexpected ways in the future, and this issue invites you to consider two related and complex questions: how can fashion heal you? and how can you heal fashion?



FASHION'S JAGGED LITTLE PILL

A prescription for profit

text.....Sara Idacavage
artwork.....Mike Thompson

In December 2012, satirical artist and Parsons alum Jonathan Paul (a.k.a. Design Obtain Cherish) debuted his newest concept pieces at Miami's Art Basel show. They were literal "Designer Drugs"—a series of resin casted acrylic sculptures made to look like larger-than-life pill sleeves. Instead of the typical pharmaceutical brand names, the candy-colored pills were inscribed with the monikers of fashion industry giants including Hermès, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Yves Saint Laurent. One could surmise that the artist was trying to comment on society's addiction to luxury goods, or how people use materialism to ease their pain.

But however you choose to interpret his work, one thing is for sure—the fashion industry has been pushing pharmaceutical imagery down the public’s throats for years and consumers seem happy to swallow.

During the same month as Paul’s Art Basel presentation, the Olsen twins released a crocodile skin bag from their label, The Row, adorned with a colorful array of pill appliqués in collaboration with controversial artist Damien Hirst. The accessory looks like it was made with someone who went overboard with a hot glue gun and cupcake sprinkles, and the pill-covered bag became notorious for its own outrageous selling price: \$55,000, or simply “chump change” if you happen to be named Mary-Kate or Ashley Olsen. (This is still not terribly surprising when you consider that it came from a collaboration with an artist who once covered a human skull with diamonds and allegedly sold it for \$100 million.)

The Row’s pill bag was not the first occasion that fashion designers have peddled pharmacy-inspired goods to wealthy buyers. For Chanel’s Spring 2007 ready-to-wear show, Karl Lagerfeld sent his models strutting down the runway in pill-encrusted dresses with dangling pill charm bracelets.

A few years later, in 2011, fashion bad boy Jeremy Scott showed a fall collection that featured vibrant dresses and leggings covered with a blown up graphic print of multihued pills. This motif was also translated into a bag he did with in collaboration with Longchamp. The relatively demure Cynthia Rowley 2012 resort collection delved into edgier territory by featuring a tubular pill-shaped clutch in a rainbow of colors. French shoe designer Christian Louboutin also created a pill-shaped plastic clutch in 2012 for his 20th Anniversary capsule collection. For those not looking for an expensive way to tote around meds, the aptly named accessories brand Cast of Vices offers an entire line of jewelry based on Valium, Xanax, Klonopin, and Oxycontin pills, with each metallic piece packaged in its own pill bottle. For shoppers with a modest-sized wallet, fast-fashion retailers Urban Outfitters and Nasty Gal each peddle a different set of pill-covered socks. All of these products, combined with an occasional pill-popping heiress-themed magazine editorial, make it hard to miss the association between pharmaceuticals and fashion.

Although it now seems quite commonplace, medicinal use has not always been a topic that has been celebrated in popular culture. So when did it become fashionable to wear, quite literally, your pharmaceuticals on your sleeve? (Or around your neck, or under your arm...)

From a medical standpoint, the link between pill addiction and shopping addiction is blaringly obvious. The pharmaceutical industry and the fashion industry are both high-grossing giants that use marketing to tell people what they must have to feel happy, and considering the significant rise in use of antidepressants over the past several years, it appears to be working. Of course, there are also people who take pills to distract from the non-medical problems in their lives, and fashion can serve the same purpose. Whenever a shopper is feeling sad or insecure, they can go shopping, and with a quick purchase, the pain seems to subside from the transaction faster than a Tylenol or Xanax could ever abate pain. Although it sounds relatively harmless, relying on the relief of a shopping 'high' is a very slippery slope, especially when it leads to a never-ending cycle that ends with regret and depression that is only alleviated by further purchases. Yet even for people who don't have a clinical addiction to shopping or pills, pharmaceutical imagery in fashion can still remind the consumer of the relief they feel from popping a pill or making a purchase. By wearing an item with pill imagery, the individual is also making a subconscious connection with millions of other people who use pharmaceuticals daily. Taking medication is a serious issue for many people, but incorporating the concept into fashion can make it seem more lighthearted while allowing the consumer to feel less ashamed about their issues.

Perhaps this bizarre trend also stems from the public's fascination with style icons that have fallen victim to pharmaceutical dependency, including Edie Sedgwick, Marilyn Monroe, and Judy Garland. Although their untimely demises at the bottom of the medicine bottle are unquestionably tragic, there seems to be something strangely romantic about these women who turned to "mother's little helper" to cope with fame. By wearing an item that is adorned with pharmaceutical imagery, a consumer is distinguishing him or herself as being connected to fashion icons that have come to be widely associated with their pill-popping habits. The glamorization of pill addiction could also be fueled by *The Valley of the Dolls*, Jacqueline Susann's cult classic novel (and later film) about three beautiful women who rise to stardom with a closet of glamorous clothing and a hospital's supply of barbiturates. Today, people become attached to pill-popping television characters including House and Nurse Jackie. Addiction provides a way for television writers to humanize these characters while inadvertently leading the public to become more accepting of real life celebrity addiction. Regardless of the celebrity drug-related deaths in recent years (including Heath Ledger, Brittany Murphy, and Michael Jackson), the private issue of pill abuse has ceased to be a private issue now that mainstream media has over-exposed us to the problem.

Whatever the reason is behind the stylish association of pill usage, it surely has not gone unnoticed by fashion's culture-absorbing designers who have taken this as an opportunity to capitalize on society's fascination with pill-addled celebrities. It's also not surprising that consumers would want to emulate tragic celebrities in order to feign an air of mystery and danger, especially when they have become bored with their own lives. All in all, it's a pretty innocuous way for a consumer to get a taste of rebellion, and what says "I'm special because I've got issues" more than a charm bracelet of dangling Vicodin tablets?

As long as pharmaceutical usage is a major part of people's lives, fashion brands are likely to continue to manufacture items that remind use of what we use to feel good. However, it's important to remember that the fashion industry can have a profound impact on consumers' perceptions, thus designers should be careful about the potentially inappropriate messages that are transmitted through their designs as they can't be sure how an impressionable young person may interpret such imagery. Instead of glamorizing medication use (and abuse), perhaps designers should stick to using motifs that make us happy without having to remind us of pharmaceuticals. Besides, isn't that what fashion is for in the first place?



Taken the
Measurements of My
Crown (Healing)



Gynnifurr (Charley Parden & Bailey Nolan)



UNDERCOVER AGENT



Exploring the transformative power
of slimming underwear

text.....Rachel Kinnard

This article considers the Push-Up Panty as a contemporary garment that articulates cultural anxieties about achieving the ideal fashion form. The Push-Up Panty is manufactured by a French company and sold in a skincare and wellness product line of an American spa chain with international locations. As a fashion object, the panty offers a slimming method which shapes the flesh both externally by compression and internally through releasing micro-encapsulated caffeine and mango butter. The slimming garment, and specifically the Push-Up Panty, is of interest because beyond squeezing a body into an ideal shape, they claim to work by enriching the skin with “microencapsulated firming, smoothing and moisturizing ingredients...which are unleashed throughout the day as the garments rub against your skin.” Expanding beyond the traditional techniques of body shaping, squeezing into tight second skin garments, the slimming garment claims to leave a lasting effect on the body itself. The Push-Up Panty and similar products raise questions surrounding the construction of beauty. Is beauty a vehicle for achieving happiness? How do these garments materialize beauty? Is there an interdependency between garment and the body in the construction of the self?

For this article, I am interested in the transformative aspects of the garment. The Push-Up Panty does not only physically shape the body by tugging and squeezing, but the garment claims to emit substances designed to “de-dimple” skin. The transformative relationship between fashion and flesh is clearly animated in garments like the Push-Up Panty.

The retailer’s website provides a mission statement that reads “And while we’re firm supporters of flawless skin, we believe it doesn’t end there. Our philosophy is that happiness is the highest state of well-being, and it’s infused into everything we do.” The chain sells products intended to improve physical appearance, which according to the company, will ultimately lead to a higher state of being. Among products like body butter, anti-aging creams, exfoliating face masks, and personal oxygen systems, a full line of slimming garments is marketed. The brand that makes the Push-Up Panty also offers garments meant to slim almost every part of a woman’s body below the neck. The Push-Up Panty is a skin tight, highly elastic garment which resembles a bicycle short. On the catalog model’s form, the panty rises to about hip level and extends on each leg to mid-thigh.

Constructed from a polyester elastane blend, the panty is available in a very light tan shade and black. Only the tan shade is shown in the image and the option is named “ivory.” The fabric is smooth around the body of the garment and gains texture and opacity in the bands at waist and mid thigh. The smooth buttocks and upper thigh vary in fabric sheen and density. The lower body is segmented by these varying textures and transparencies, recalling an anatomical muscle diagram. The garment is clearly utilitarian, but its sleek transparent design acknowledges the popular aesthetic of second skin undergarments and athletic wear. The product description states that the garment is guaranteed for up to 30 washes, but the disposability of the garment is unclear. It can be assumed that maximum effect would come from direct touch to the skin, so women probably wear the Push-Up Panty as a replacement for their usual underwear. The panty is meant to serve its purpose without intrusion to the look of the outer garments. Its design provides camouflage through a tight fit and neutral colors, while animating the utility of the garment through varying textures and transparencies.

The barrier between the body and clothing can be hard to determine. The body gains significance through dress and finds an ideal form through participation with fashion.

That said, it may seem obvious that the consumption of female figure-defining undergarments is closely linked with the history of dress. In the introduction to her book, *Dress and Undress: A History of Women's Underwear*, Elizabeth Ewing reflects on a quote made by Christian Dior, "Without foundations there can be no fashion," Ewing then reverses the words, speculating, "Without fashion there can be no foundation" (1978, 11). As long as fashion has interpreted the female form into an idealized shape, underpinnings have existed to aid women to fit that shape. It is clear that dress socializes the body. What is evocative about slimming garments such as the Push-Up Panty, is the interpretation that by inhabiting fashion objects we are practicing bodily management. The experience of pulling on and feeling the squeeze of a compression garment intersects the body with social discipline.

In consideration of the Push-Up Panty, it is relevant to understand how the design of the brassiere evolved closely with the demands of fashion. In *Uplift: the Bra in America*, Jane Farrell-Beck and Colleen Gau trace the evolution of the twentieth century bra from corsets of the nineteenth century. Women's history and dramatic changes in fashion are major themes influencing the history of the brassiere in America.

Farrell-Beck and Gau write, “The softening of women’s dress silhouettes and the reduction of bulk of their clothing helped pave the way for the acceptance of brassieres” (11). It is worth considering how, from a historical perspective, fashion impacts the demand for the Push-Up Panty and other body slimming garments. For example, the fashionable princess silhouette of the late nineteenth century created demand for a reformed corset to match. When the ideal shape of fashion changes, do the bodies of women change to correspond? What does the second skin nature of the Push-Up Panty’s design reveal about the current state of fashion and the ideal form?

Farrell-Beck and Gau note the early form of smart fabric technology, an active agent in slimming products such as the Push-Up Panty, writing that towards the start of the twentieth century, women avidly sought to maintain a fashionably slender figure, increasing their receptivity to new diets and rubber undergarments that promised ‘easy’ reducing. Dr. Jeanne Walter “offered ‘medicated’ Para rubber undergarments...basing their appeal on reducing without diet, exercise, or medicine” (Farrell-Beck, 24). According to the authors, the use of rubber undergarments ended by the 1930’s due to new innovations in undergarment design, the broadening appeal of weight loss through diet and exercise, and a distaste for the odor caused

from wearing rubber to sweat off pounds (68). The historical nature of medicated garments is useful for interpreting the Push-Up Panty as a cultural product. Although diets, exercise, and other forms of weight loss and body shaping solutions have gained an incredible increase in popularity since the beginning of the century, why do women still consume body shaping garments? The fabric has changed and garments are dramatically less bulky, but the simple idea of utilizing clothing to manage bodily shape is still in use over a century later. What does this dress practice reveal about our relationship to fashion and dress? How will technology or smart fabrics influence or enhance these shaping practices?

Slimming garments like the Push-Up Panty animate the lived experience of bodily management and social discipline. In a contemporary context, body slimming garments have come into association with wellness, happiness, and the spa experience. The spa experience can loosely be defined as practices focused on the sanitation of the body with the intention of achieving a higher state of being through the perceived result of obtaining beauty. Generally, spa treatments and products manage the flesh directly through creams, gels, and other products meant to be absorbed by the body.

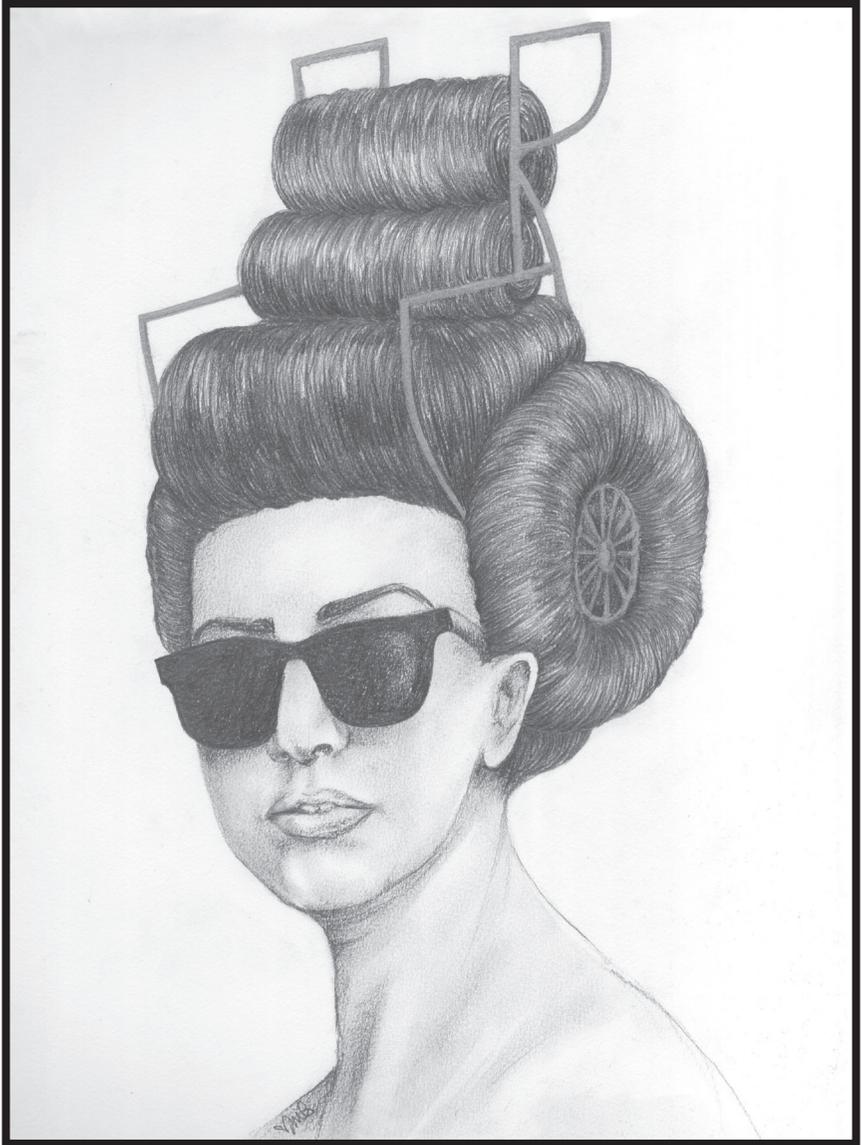
It is interesting to note the presence of the Push-Up Panty in the spa context and the inclusion of “microencapsulated firming, smoothing and moisturizing ingredients” in the fabric, meant to be absorbed by the skin. The Push-Up Panty slims the body both externally and internally, intersecting fashion and medicine. The slimming garment works to dissolve the barrier between garment and body. The second skin design of the garment itself animates this desire for an intimacy and a merging of fashion and the body.



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Hair has historically operated as a potent site for the expression of personal and political ideologies; the art was redefined in the 18th century, when women such as Marie Antoinette used elaborate pouf styles as a means of commemoration and communication. Pop performer Lady Gaga has identified herself with this practice with her outré hairstyles, which are changed as often as her outfits. Lady Gaga's recent hip injury has her wheelchair-bound, but she has characteristically turned the situation into a spectacular performance. In this piece, I imagine Lady Gaga immortalizing her customized wheelchairs through a Marie Antoinette-inspired pouf: hair as art imitating life.

Maureen Brewster

FASHIONING A RITE OF PASSAGE



Resilient dress practices of
divorcees

text.....Kim Jenkins

My motto is “trash the dress and everything it represents.” I want to show young women that it’s OK to get divorced. That they are not failures and should take this as an opportunity to start over and get everything in life they want and deserve. Divorce in your twenties may be the end of life as you knew it, but not your life as it was meant to be.

–Joelle Caputa, author of *Trash the Dress: Celebrating Divorce in Your 20s*

This article considers how divorced individuals engage in dress practices of resilience through three techniques of creative expression, participating in the marketplace with emotionally-invested garments and using craft to create value. Two key manifestations of resilience that I work with are autonomy and industry, mainly pulled from Edith Grotberg's text, *Resilience for Today: Gaining Strength from Adversity*. Autonomy is defined as the independence and freedom to make one's own decisions (2003: 2). A sense of autonomy can also be incorporated into concepts of personhood and agency put forth in the Fashion Studies-related disciplines of anthropology and sociology. Industry, which can be dovetailed with Michel Foucault's "technique of the self" (Heyes 2007), involves the drive to work diligently at a task, such as interpersonal relationships and self-image (Grotberg 2003: 9). In keeping with the key manifestations of resilience in a divorced woman's dress practices, autonomy and industriousness, this article presents phenomena that illustrate how divorced women are obtaining agency by confronting their past and reshaping their future through self-fashioning.

Pointing to three techniques discovered by dress practices online, divorced women are using digital platforms as a critical path in participating in a market economy, by constructing resilience as a value-loaded commodity through the labor practices of Foucault's techniques of the self. Though the cases presented here are varied, a common thread runs through them, as the three techniques all find agency as an end to its means. The three techniques are 1) Creative expression—which involves the subversion of socially-constructed ideals through performance, 2) Participation in the marketplace—which involves the trade, sale or re-assigning of value to emotionally-laden clothing and accessories, and 3) Craft—which involves the creation of value for clothing and accessories through do-it-yourself projects.

The first technique, creative expression, led to my study of a phenomenon of wedding dress “trashing”, which has gained momentum and notoriety over the years as a symbolic act of retribution, with the wedding dress re-assigned value by the wearer to materialize both a sense of resilience and closure. The wedding dress, a garment that, in varying cases, is symbolic of purity, fidelity and new life, becomes an inverse symbol of something that has become tainted, unfaithful (in certain cases) and dead.

The emerging ritual, known affectionately by its participants as “trashing the dress,” involves a performance of recently divorced women ceremoniously extracting the permanence of their wedding from their lives. In a 2008 article “Here Comes the Slob”, Boston Globe journalist Paysha Stockton Rhone illustrates a case of dress trashing, as former bride Angela Kazarlyga sought a photographer to capture her trashing her dress as a symbol of letting go and embracing the future. Choosing a reflective and dark visual narrative which seems to convey “growth through suffering”, Kazarlyga opted to lay across railroad tracks in her gown, paired with a leather jacket and knee-high boots. When this picture is juxtaposed with her original wedding album, Kazarlyga reflects with satisfaction that she can now reclaim the power in her image sans the ex by her side: “It actually felt really, really liberating. It’s fun and empowering and freeing” said Kazarlyga. The singular performance of “trash the dress” is in most cases photographed professionally in effort to visually memorialize the participant’s redemption, yet simultaneously subverts the time-honored ritual of professional wedding photography which traditionally features the woman standing by her husband’s side.

Tinkering with the uncanny nature of the garment, which upon divorce can be considered to be dead matter, divorced women who “trash the dress” command their own destiny through destruction, invoking new life following the death of their marriages. The wedding dress, a garment loaded with meaning both socially and culturally, becomes desensitized of all the well-wishes and promises for those originally involved in the civil union.

The second technique, participation in the marketplace, is supported by examples of divorced individuals who enter the marketplace with their emotionally valuable garments and accessories and re-assign (or nullify) value as a means of agency through profit. One instance, found in Rebecca Christian’s 2008 article “An Unsettling Trend: Brides Trash Wedding Dresses,” describes a man who models his ex-wife’s wedding dress through an ad posted on eBay. In a plea to trade the previous (emotional) value of the wedding dress for a new experience value which he would rather obtain, his seller’s narrative makes no secret that he would be using the profit for a pair of Mariners tickets and beer.

He writes of the dress...“Personally I think it looks like a \$1,200 shower curtain but what do I know about this?... I figured if she got her Texas cheerleader hair through there I could get my head in it.” In a similar fashion, websites such as *The Divorcée Sale* and *Never Liked It Anyway* come to the rescue of individuals who still hold garments and accessories from past relationships and wish to remove it from their lives. *Never Liked It Anyway* guides the user through a healing process which is practiced through the posting and selling of their unwanted garments and accessories, articulated by a format which involves an uploaded image of the item, a story to contextualize the item, a self-assigned appraisal of the “Break-up Price” versus the “Real World Price”, and the selection of a cartoon character which illustrates the seller’s “Break-up Phase” (where the status “still a little fragile” is one option).

The third technique, craft as a means to create value through DIY projects, features the use of websites such as *Burda Style*, an online DIY fashion and sewing community, to provide craft and project ideas, and place the practice of fashion design into the hands of its predominantly twenty-something readership.

One community member, recently divorced, shared her completed project, a garment labeled “The Divorce Empowerment Dress”. The crafted work, constructed from polyester jersey knit in red, white and blue, embodied her newfound independence, as she posted...“I bought this fabric at the Salvation Army because it was too wild to resist, but I was always a bit shy to use it. However, when I got divorced, I thought that it was high time I used it to shake up my wardrobe and so this dress was born! The problem is that the fabric is 100% retro polyester and it’s very very warm to wear. The upside is that it’s also impossible to wrinkle!”

Grounding the dress practices of the divorced woman with select foundations in psychology and philosophy, we find new ways for which the immaterial characteristic of resilience can be materialized through fashion. In a significant number of cases throughout my extensive research on women and divorce, the industrious “work” on the body through the use of dress, cosmetics and body shaping (i.e. weight loss programs and plastic surgery) ultimately results in a self-owned commodity worthy of value through meaning-making, which aspires to a sense of resilience.

Thus it follows that to co-opt a sense of resilience, one must appear resilient. Further, the social exercise of shopping, crafting and re-assigning value to existing commodities can lead to obtaining a sense of resilience, constructing micro-economies which center around the cultivation of a positive mental outlook. It is curious if consumptive and creative practices are necessary to access a sense of resilience, as industrious, market economies situated in the U.S. and many parts of Europe infuse the correlation of work and commodity into our notions of what resilience means, and how this affects the way women confront the experience of divorce.

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ORTHOPEDIC LUXURY

An interview with Annelie Gross

Annelie Gross is a German designer based in London. Her 2013 collection, 'Defects,' is a series of body objects that were developed during her master's studies in Fashion Artefact at the London College of Fashion. The collection explores the connection between fashion, orthopedics, and the healthy body. Her work will be featured in a SHOWstudio project for their Prosthetics series, which will include events, exhibitions, and video work on prosthetic design.

text.....Alessandro Esculapio
fashion.....Annelie Gross



ALESSANDRO Your 'Defects' collection consists of body objects that closely resemble prostheses. Would you qualify your creations as accessories or experimental jewellery? How do you place yourself in the fashion world?

ANNELIE They can be seen as experimental accessories or perhaps as orthopedic artifacts. They are a mix of orthopedic aids, fashion, and art. If I had to define my place in the fashion world, what comes closest would be an accessory designer, I think. Although you could not wear my pieces on a daily basis like you do with a handbag, as this specific collection would actually harm your body and health.

ALESSANDRO Prosthetics are highly personal objects. Why and how did you approach them?

ANNELIE I come from a family of orthopedic technicians and prostheses constructors. In 1856, my great-great-great-grandfather established a paramedical house in my hometown Ludwigsburg, Germany. For over 150 years now, my family has been making and developing prostheses and medical devices. The company has been handed down from father to son.

My brother and I both grew up in the company's workshop, just like my dad and granddad. We saw how prostheses and other orthopedic devices were made, how to work with different materials and how they affect the wearer. So I guess that my approach on this specific theme is very personal and natural.

As I got older I found myself wondering why those medical devices always had to look so unappealing and unpleasant. One explanation could be that prosthetic designers tend to come from a more clinical and engineering background. This means that the dominant culture in this field tends to focus on solving problems, instead of creating something that is also aesthetically appealing.

Prostheses often make the wearer feel uncomfortable, maybe ashamed, and sometimes even depressed. By exploring the use of orthopedic materials and techniques and combining them with more appealing and luxurious materials, I tried to challenge current ideas around prosthetics. I would also like the observer to see beyond the aesthetic unpleasantness.

ALESSANDRO Prostheses are generally meant to 'correct' and 'conform' the body to our society's ideals. How do you see your creations in relation to contemporary discourses around the body?

ANNELIE The objects in my 'Defects' collection actually distort the human body. So what I did was turning the discourse upside down. By wearing my pieces, a healthy person is suddenly in a different position. These artifacts give pain to the wearer as they force him or her into an uncomfortable position. In the context of fashion, you could see it as similar to high heels. Although it is unhealthy and harmful, you still do it. It is maybe a bit of an ironic view on the fashion world and on what fashion does to people, too. But in first place, I wanted to bring the topic of body deformities and medical devices to another platform, that of fashion, and ask myself, as well as other people, why it is considered so 'unfashionable'.

ALESSANDRO When I look at your objects, I cannot help but think of armours, which convey a sense of protection and empowerment at the same time. In that sense, your designs subvert traditional prosthetic discourses.

ANNELIE Yes, my pieces are different from traditional prosthetics. I used different materials and colours...they have a different kind of aesthetic. I wanted my pieces to look appealing to any kind of person. That's why I also used some jewellery elements that you usually wouldn't see in 'normal' prosthetics and orthotics, like silver rings and buckles. I wanted to arouse curiosity in a healthy person, to let them see what it feels like to feel insecure about your movements and what happens if you cannot use a body part properly. For the catwalk show, I collaborated with contemporary dancers from The Place and Trinity Laban in London. They were amazing and I loved working with them. Their body control and expression made my pieces become alive in a very exciting and beautiful way.

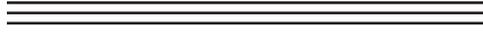
ALESSANDRO From designer's eyeglasses to leg prostheses designed by Alexander McQueen for Aimee Mullins, it seems that the worlds of fashion and prosthetics are surprisingly less distant than one would think. Do you think prosthetics will become fashionable and, viceversa, that fashion will become more open to traditionally "unfashionable" bodies?

ANNELIE I agree that the worlds of fashion and prosthetics are surprisingly close. And I really hope that fashion will become more open. Fashion is very fast, it follows trends, colours, patterns, style. Many clothes are created to be shown off and they are part of a very superficial way of thinking in the opposite way of what prosthetics are, I would say. But if you look at it closer, similarities between clothing and medical aids can be found. In both fields, the pieces are worn on a daily basis. They are very close to your skin, and, most importantly, they affect the way a person acts, feels and moves. They give you strength. As I said earlier, most orthopedic technicians are not coming from a creative background. Their job is to solve problems the best way they can, and they won't pay too much attention to the appeal of a piece. Personally, I think that is why the combination of a designer like Alexander McQueen, the amazing prosthesis engineers from Dorset Orthopaedic, and the courage of Aimee Mullins is so powerful. For the future, I definitely hope to see more outcomes like that.





Deteriorating Mask



To the Man in the bomber jacket with his empty luggage
Whom seeks to share his philosophical comprehension of
life expression

To the Woman wearing polished dancing shoes, worn out
soles hidden

That only her intimates can recognize.

This is for you

Discovering the inner being that wishes to project from the
windows of the human soul,

Glistening eyes, dazzled by the lively starry night that
haven the secret tenderness writings of the naked soul,

To be awaken

Lift the spirits of beings with tainted outlooks and hearts
covered in tar,

With specs of humanness still hidden under the decaying
layers of pessimism

Let down your rustic armor

This is for you

Sharing the enlightenments in hopes of reviving the
inner-desires that you once had as youth

Pretzeled and frazzled by the fragileness of one's mind

This is also for you.

-S.V.R

The Vulnerabilities of Being Human



Madeleine Provost





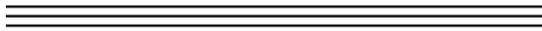




Fashion and healing became intertwined for me as I created this collection. The clothing was initially inspired by the experience I had watching my mother struggle with a physical illness. I became very interested in the vulnerabilities, both physical and psychological, of being human. I wanted to express the fragility of life through fashion.

I explored my interest in vulnerability, and the imperfection of mind and body, in my clothing by exposing the delicate construction of each garment, and emphasizing the imperfection of working by hand. The collection features the craft and couture techniques of hand smocking, block printing, painting, natural dyeing, and zero waste construction. The physical exertion and meditative repetition required in each of these processes proved to be emotionally healing and therapeutic for me.

White Donna



Amanda Elsbree

This is a portrait of my aunt Donna who passed away last year. Almost like a character from a story, Donna consistently favored the color white. She always wore white clothes and had white cars and white leather couches. They were all in perfect contrast to her jet black hair. Clean, flowing, comfortable white clothing is something that I have associated with her my entire life; since Donna lived in Florida, she would wear white year round. Donna died in white and was buried in white, and at her funeral, we, her family, all wore white.

Over this past year or so, I have been trying to heal this open wound where she was ripped from our lives and the process has been eased somewhat by the feeling that she is constantly with us. My imagination engenders this idea that her beautiful pale skin wrapped in her light white clothes have taken on an ethereal quality in the light that surrounds us. I am comforted by the thought that she never leaves, that she is present in the white and the light.



RESOLVE TO REFOLD

text.....Laura Peach
fashion.....Talia Shuvalov

We open the door to our wardrobe and find the multiples. The slim cut jean—three pairs, one with detailing on the cuff, another of a darker wash. The cardigan—a bit of embroidery at the hem, a slightly different shade of green, somehow there are five of them, and they are all nearly the same. The button-down shirt—it is here in it's dozen iterations, linked cuffs, band collar, patterns of stripes, checks, and dots. The same pieces of clothing, we buy them, again and again. In the shop, with the bit of embroidery, they seem so different, so new, so necessary. In our closet, next to all the other cardigans and all the other tee shirts, they are just another addition, just another option which may find favor on some spring morning or be disregarded some winter evening. They are our safety garments, they create a closet full of comfort. We know that the style will suit us, we know the form and function. This is the way that our closets expand—by selecting the same safety garments. This is the way the fashion industry maintains its power—by providing variations of theme.







Talia Shuvalov's collection 'reFold,' completed during her studies in the Masters of Fine Arts program in Fashion, Design & Society at Parsons, examines how repetitive accumulation and repetitive consumption stimulates a person's need to consume many different types of garments that have the same basic function. She reconsiders the wardrobe staples of tee shirt, sweater and jeans by deconstructing several of these garments, which were already in existence, and reconstructing them into new pieces by using couture-level knitting and weaving techniques. Shuvalov's collection opens up a new avenue of exploration with "refolding," a practice of assigning high value to these basic garments by investing care, time, craft and honor into the clothing.

The fashion industry seems doomed to repeat this cycle of constant consumption, of producing and reproducing similar styles of trousers and tops that are bought again and again each season. Perhaps a way out of this would be to invest a single garment that serves the purpose of coverage and comfort with a much higher value. Shuvalov's work offers an exciting viewpoint of how we, as social individuals with the capacity to consider and change our practices of, and attitudes towards, dress, might begin to resolve to refold.



BIAS
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CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda Elsbree is a student in the Costume Studies program at New York University.

Annelie Gross completed a Master of Arts degree from the Fashion Artefact program at London College of Fashion.

Bailey Nolan and Charley Parden are Brooklyn-based artists.

Madeline Provost is a student in the Fashion Design program at Parsons The New School for Design.

Matin Zad has an Master of Fine Arts in photography from the School of Visual Arts.

Mike Thompson is a Brooklyn-based designer.

Spencer Kohn is a student in the Photography program at Parsons The New School for Design.

Talia Shuvalov completed a Master in Fine Arts degree from the Fashion, Design & Society program at Parsons The New School for Design.

Alessandro Esculapio, Kim Jenkins, Laura Peach, Maureen Brewster, Nicole Rivas, Rachel Kinnard, and Sara Idacavage are students in the Master of Arts program in Fashion Studies at Parsons The New School for Design.

Additional Credits:

Artwork on pages 4 and 24 by Mike
Thompson.

Photo on page 28 by Jamison Hiner.

Photo on page 39 by Matt Jackson,
model Eleni Papaioannou.

Photo on page 45 by Matt Jackson.

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Photos on pages 49 to 52 by Spencer
Kohn, model Iggy at Q.

Photos on pages 59 to 63 by Cara
Stricker.



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Featuring:

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