You are warmly invited to Emotional Fit: Fashion Salon, showcasing recent research into fashion and ageing, carried out by the School of Art & Design at Nottingham Trent University.

Focused on co-creating, this collaborative project considers the changing physical and emotional fashion needs of a group of mature Nottingham women, who will present a collection of garments co-designed on sustainable principles.

Visit www.ntu.ac.uk/emotionalfit to find out more about the research project.

This event is part of Fashion Revolution Week, 24 – 30 April 2017, an organisation aimed at raising awareness of the Ethical Fashion initiative.

Please note that tickets are limited for the event and are by invitation only. To reserve your place please contact katherine.west@ntu.ac.uk by Friday 14 April.
EMOTIONAL FIT:
Developing a new fashion methodology with older women
PART I:  
Introduction and methodology
Fashion and age sit uncomfortably together.

Julia Twigg, 2013:1
Context and rationale

• Ageing populations – global phenomenon; “contemporary age of aging” (Powell and Gilbert, 2009, vii)

• In the UK the population of over-55s continues to increase and is expected to rise by 10% from 2015 to 2020 (Mintel, Mature Beauty Report, December 2015)

• Half of British women aged 50 or over lack body confidence and 6 out of 10 feel that their generation is overlooked by the UK High Street (YouGov, 2016; cited in Daily Mail: online)

• Two polar opposite trends in approaching this growing sector of market (Mintel, Mature Beauty, December 2015)
  • offering a variety of anti-ageing and age-disguising products
  • persistent ignoring of mature consumers
More retailers, and designers have realised the potential of catering for overlooked mature consumers, yet this market segment remains largely untapped (Mintel, Fashion for the Over 55s, November 2012)
JACKIE
MURDOCH, 83
Lanvin A/W 2012 campaign
Credit: Fashionsta.com, 2017
Research objectives

• To explore how fashion and clothing is experienced and remembered by a sample of mature British women over the age of 55
• To understand their issues with sizing and fit
• To discover their aesthetic design preferences
• To co-create a series of womenswear prototypes that reflect their emotional and aesthetic design needs
Our participants and co-designers

• N=45
• Aged 55-75
• Nottinghamshire, UK
• Middle class
• Life-long interest in fashion and clothing
• Making skills
• Interested in sustainability and ethical fashion
Methodology

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Emotional Fit: research methodology

Co-Design

appreciation of personal lived experience, particularly the meaning of it and how individuals make sense of it

the life-course perspective i.e. developing in-depth understanding of individuals’ present experiences in relation to their past

methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews, personal inventories

processes based on collective creativity and mutual knowledge exchange between the stakeholders: participants (potential customers), researchers and designers

methods: creative workshops - geometric/ zero/ minimal waste pattern cutting, digital print
PHASE I: Understanding

PHASE II: Co-designing

PHASE III: Production

Interviews

Workshop I

Workshop II

Workshops III and IV

Fittings

Fashion Salon

Research model
Interviews

• **FASHION AWARENESS** - the importance to stay informed about changing fashion trends, yet filtering them through their individual needs and expectations

• **SENSE OF BELONGING** - the participants’ constant negotiating between their individual preferences, styles, and generational and socio-cultural connections

• **BODILY CHANGES** - how the participants’ changing physicality impacted their embodied experiences of clothing

• **PERSONAL TRAJECTORIES** - the significance of the participants’ individual life courses
PART II:
Measuring, toiling and geometric pattern cutting
Workshops 1 & 2

- Measuring participants
- Trying on newly constructed blocks
- Documenting size and fit issues
Initial cutting & draping

- Zero-waste - geometric pattern cutting
- Materials - natural (care properties)
- Adaptability – across size ranges
- Transformability - function and aesthetics
Workshops 1 and 2: findings

Measurements: WORKSHOP I

- **HEIGHT**
  - short SH (5' - 5'3'')
  - standard ST (5'4" - 5'6'')
  - tall T (5'7" - 5'10'')

- **WIDTH**
  - small S (size 8 - 10)
  - medium M (size 12-14)
  - large L (size 16)
  - X large XL (size 18)
  - XX large XXL (size 20)

Simplification I

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<th>Size</th>
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Simplification II: Geometrics

- **RECTANGLE**
  - Size 1 = length 96cm x width 90cm
  - Size 2 = length 106cm x width 100cm

- **SQUARE**
  - Size 1 = 115cm x 115cm
  - Size 2 = 125cm x 125 cm

- **CIRCLE**
  - Size 1 = 50cm radius
  - Size 2 = 55cm radius
Workshop 3

- Trying on experimental silhouettes
- Responding to fabric qualities
- Colour, image, pattern preferences
- Scale and placement
Workshop 4
PART III:
Reflections on the co-creative process
Sustainable design considerations

- Textile sourcing
- Aesthetics and quality
- Natural and renewable fibers
- Artisanal approaches
- Minimal waste
- Garment functionality
- Adaptability
- Comfort and style
- Aftercare

See Ted’s Ten
http://www.tedresearch.net/teds-ten/
Fabrication

• Fabric selection
• Pattern modifications (minimal waste)
• Zero waste
• Flexible styling (longevity)
• Multiple size ranges
• Laundering
POSITIVES
• Multiple options for manipulating volumes and ‘play’
• Possibilities for personalization
• Reversible options to extend longevity

CONSIDERATIONS
• Review of sizing approach to accommodate ‘fit’
• Creative expression demonstrated by wearers
• Embodied (fashioning) interactions with ‘material artefacts’ (Thornquist 2015)
Key findings

The body is central in the creation of the overall aesthetic whereby non-restrictive, geometric shapes facilitate ‘elegance, comfort and openness’ whereby ‘the body shapes the clothes more than the clothes shape the body’

(Van Essche in Aakko 2015)

The ‘unfinished’ nature of the prototypes allowed for sensory, tactile and intellectual interactions with the garments which were recontextualized as ‘dress objects’

(Skjold 2015)

[This] socio-material perspective underlines that creativity is much more social and everyday like than has hitherto been acknowledged: materiality and artefacts are to be seen as substantial components of creativity in themselves

(Tanggaard 2013)
Blurring the lines between researchers and participants

‘The clothes designed are material artefacts whose fabric, colours, textures, ways of draping the body (their attributes) we want to see, touch, play with, in person as part of the process of design/construction.

The ability to access them as material objects in this way at every stage of the process is also validating - of us as active co-creative older women - and thus goes against the grain of dominant discourses on ageing - which are about deterioration and decay - and where we increasingly become 'missing persons.’
Further work

- Continuing research into the psychological and socio-material aspects of co-creative fashion design and wearing practices (e.g. ‘Trying it On’ film)
- Further exploration of how ‘fashion in-between’ (Aakko 2016) craft, artisanal design and industry can support more sustainable, transparent methodologies

POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS

- With SME’s to develop ‘artisanal’ capsule collection
- Working with industry and costume archives into structured/tailored garment approaches in (with Electric Corset project)
- Integration of wearable technology into prototypes for wardrobe monitoring to address problems of sustainability and ethical production caused by over consumption
- Smart textile and garment development (based on patterns of wear) with Advanced Textile Research Group and Centre for Interactive Wearable Design, NTU
Related PhD research

• Allison Waite (2016-) Fashioning Fit and Identity for an Aging Demographic, VC Award.

• Lisa Shawgi (2016-) Supporting sufferers with a 'hidden disability' through textile development, Midlands 3 Cities Award.

• Ania Sadkowska (2016) Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Understanding older men’s experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing, AHRC Award.

• Jane Taylor (2016) Bridging the technical skills gap in computerised seamless flat-bed knitting, VC Award.

• Sarah Walker (2014 -2018) Think, Feel, Do: Meaning Making of Entangled Smart Textile Teams, VC Award.

Publications and Impact


References


Thank you