

EMOTIONAL FIT

DEVELOPING A NEW FASHION METHODOLOGY WITH MATURE WOMEN

WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL, 6 PM – 8 PM
ANTENNA, 9A BECK STREET
NOTTINGHAM, NG1 1EQ



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-creativity, 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 #whomademyclothes initiative.

RESERVE YOUR PLACE

Places are limited for the event and are by invitation only. To reserve your place please email katherine.west@ntu.ac.uk by Friday 14 April.



NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY 

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

JOYCE CARPATI, 80
Credit: Advanced Style, 2017





Context and rationale

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)

LFW: SIMONE ROCHA A/W 2017

Credit: Vogue.com, 2017



LANVIN
PARIS

**JACKIE
MURDOCH, 83**
Lanvin A/W 2012
campaign
Credit: Fashionsta.com,
2017

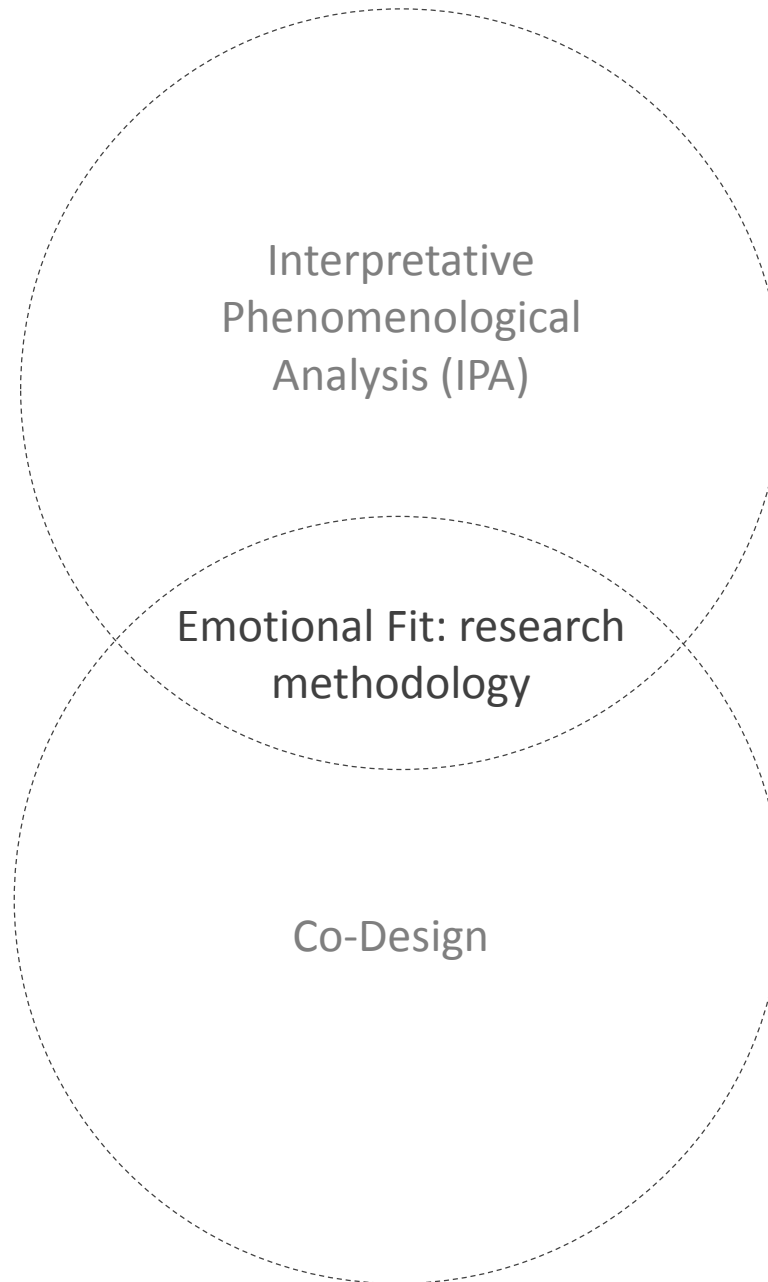
Research objectives

- 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



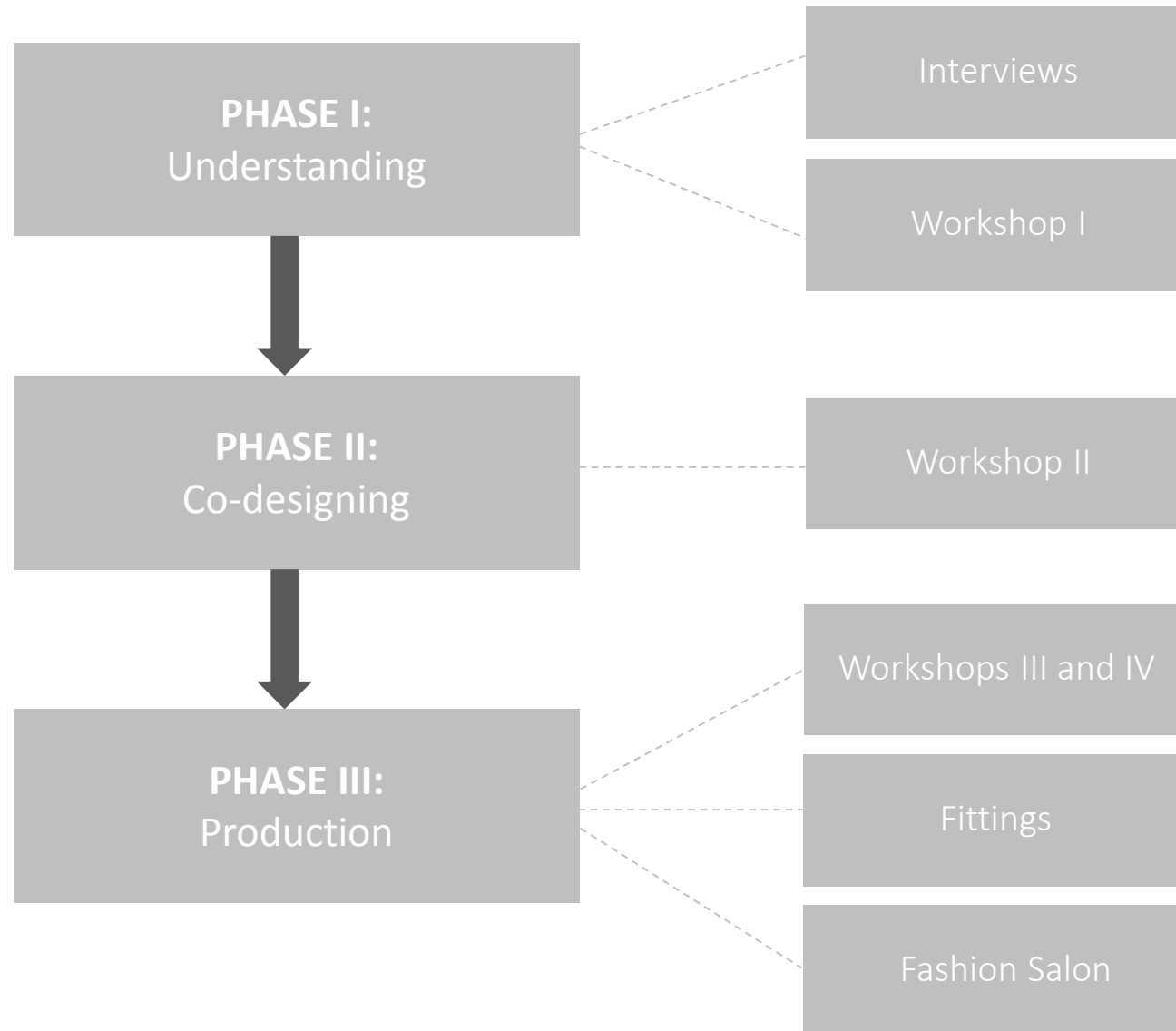
appreciation of **personal lived experience**, particularly the meaning of it and how individuals make sense of it

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



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

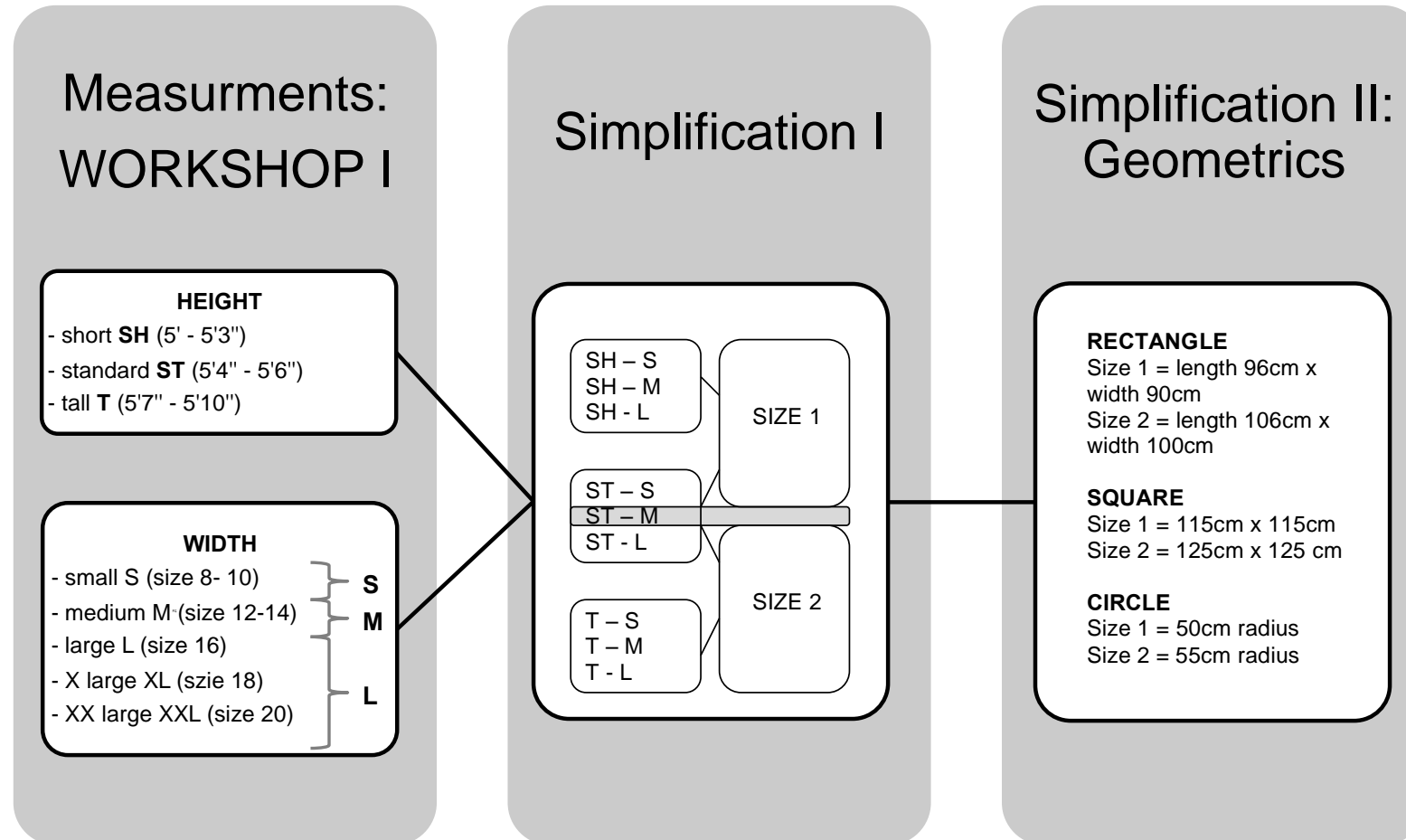


Initial cutting & draping

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



Workshops 1 and 2: findings



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

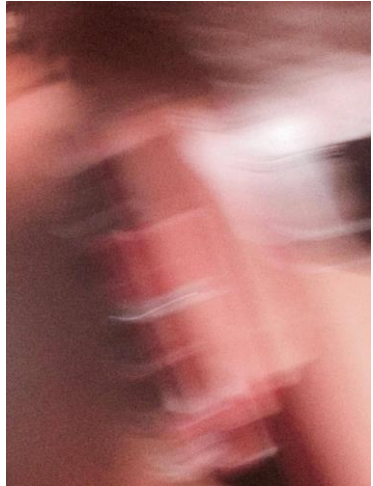
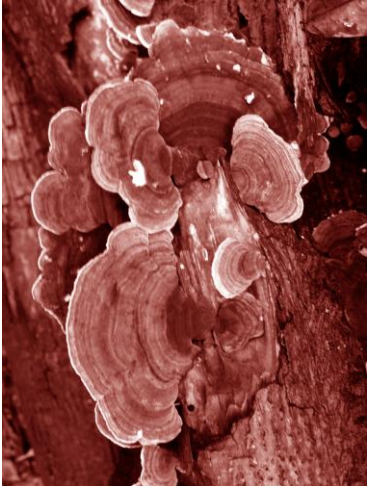
- Textile sourcing
- Aesthetics and quality
- Natural and renewable fibers
- Artisanal approaches
- Minimal waste
- Garment functionality
- Adaptability
- Comfort and style
- Aftercare

See Ted's Ten

<http://www.tedresearch.net/teds-ten/>

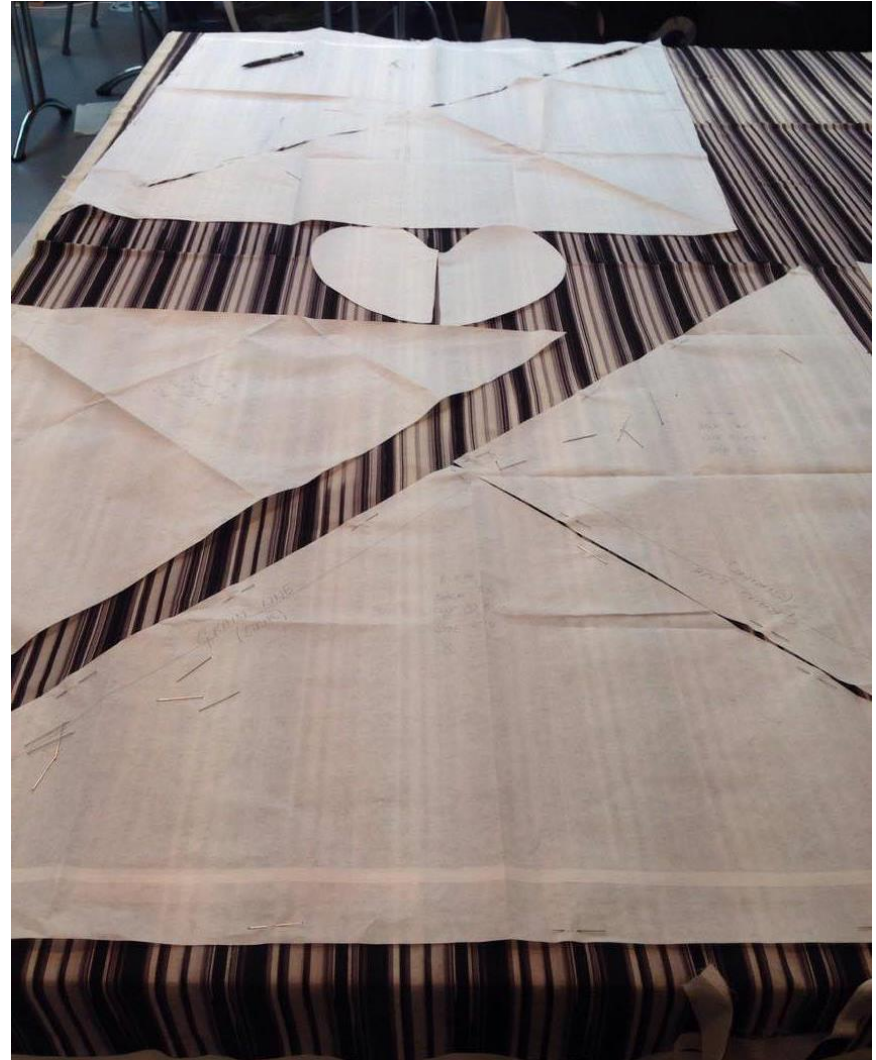


Print development



Fabrication

- Fabric selection
- Pattern modifications (minimal waste)
- Zero waste
- Flexible styling (longevity)
- Multiple size ranges
- Laundering



Trying things on....

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.
- Anna Piper (2013-2017) Material Relationships: the maker, the fabric and the wearer, VC Award.



ANIA SADKOWSKA
Dis-Comforting jacket (2016)

Publications and Impact

- TOWNSEND, K., SADKOWSKA, A., HARRIGAN, K., WEST, K., and SISSONS, J. (2017:forthcoming) Textiles as Catalytic Converter in the Co-Creative Design Process – paper accepted for the *INTERSECTIONS: Collaborations in Textile Design Research*. Conference and Exhibition, 13 September 2017, Loughborough University in London,
- TOWNSEND, K., SADKOWSKA, A., GOODE, J., SISSONS, J. & HARRIGAN, K. (2017:forthcoming) Design as a socio-material practice: reflections on the Emotional Fit collective fashion enquiry, Everything and Everybody as Material, 7 – 9 June, The Swedish School of Textiles, University of Boras, Sweden
- SADKOWSKA, A., TOWNSEND, K., and GOODE, J. (2017) Co-designing, co-experiencing, co-authoring: blurring the lines in participatory research. Missing persons symposium, January 2017, Nottingham Trent University
- TOWNSEND, K., and SADKOWSKA, A. (2016) Redesigning fashion with a new demographic. Paper accepted for presentation at The End of Fashion conference, December 2016, Wellington, New Zealand.
- TOWNSEND, K., SADKOWSKA, A., SISSONS (2016) Emotional Fit: Developing a new fashion design methodology for mature women. *Design Research Society (DRS) Future-Focused Thinking Conference*. 27-30 June 2016, Brighton, UK.
- SADKOWSKA, A., TOWNSEND, K. and SISSONS, J. (2016) Fashionable Clothing for Mature Women: An alternative design and small-scale business model. Paper presented at the *BAM Marketing and Retail SIG Event: Sustainability and Ethical Consumption*. 28 April, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK.
- SADKOWSKA, A., TOWNSEND, K. and SISSONS, J. (2015) Emotional Fit Project: Mapping the Ageing Female Form - paper presented at the *2nd Designing for Mature People Symposium*, 19 October 2015, Shanghai Institute of Visual Art, Shanghai, China. Published in: *Designing for Mature People*. Shanghai: Shanghai Institute of Visual Art, pp. 281-298.

References

- AAKKO, M. (2016) *Fashion In-between: Artisanal design and production of fashion*, PhD thesis, Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland
- GOODE, J. (2016). Fashioning the Sixties: fashioning narratives of older women. *Ageing and Society*, pp. 1–21
- MINTEL (2015). *Mature Beauty Report*. December 2015. London: Mintel International.
- MINTEL (2012). *Fashion for the Over 55s*. November 2012. London: Mintel International.
- POWELL, J., and GILBERT, T. (2009). Phenomenologies of Aging: Critical Reflections. In: POWELL, J., and GILBERT, T. (eds.) *Aging Identity: A Dialogue with Postmodernism*. New York: Nova Science, pp.5-16.
- SADKOWSKA, A. (2016). *Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Understanding older men's experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University, UK.
- SKJOLD, E. (2015) Making Sense of Dress: On sensory perspectives of wardrobe research, EKSIG 2015, Tangible Means, Design School Kolding, Denmark 25-26 November, EKSIG2015 Proceedings pdf, pp 298-310.
- TANGGAARD, L. (2015) Socio-materiality of Creativity, Keynote at EKSIG 2015, Tangible Means, Design School Kolding, Denmark 25-26 November, EKSIG2015 Proceedings pdf, p.10.
- THORNQUIST, C. (2015) Material Evidence: Definition by a series of artefacts in arts research, *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 14 (2).
- TOWNSEND, K., (2004) Transforming Shape: Hybrid practice as group activity, *The Design Journal*, 7 (2), pp. 18-31.
- TWIGG, J. (2013). *Fashion and Age: Dress, the Body and Later Life*. London: Bloomsbury.

Thank you



<https://vimeo.com/214993685>

<https://vimeo.com/214462308>