

CAMENZULI Lucienne & VAUGHAN Suzi (Aus)

Between you and me (is dress) - paper

Dress inhabits the space between the body, (human) interaction and the places within which everyday activities are performed.

Dress is a cultural product. Items of clothing are not objective artefacts - they are immersed in intent and imbued with meaning. The fashion designer initiates the meaning making process through inspiration when first conceptualising designs and 'looks.' This process is not devoid of social and cultural context. When worn, these items of clothing become subjectified. Douglas and Isherwood (1979) suggest that although "Goods are (perceived as) neutral, their uses are social." (in Barnard, M., 2002:40) Clothing and dress become even further embedded with meaning through the acts of dressing and undressing (which in our culture occurs daily). These daily activities may be viewed as common social private performances to prepare us for our public activities and interactions. The act of dressing uses clothing to construct identity and to negotiate public interfaces. Dress becomes the medium through which we reveal a sophisticated and socialised understanding of the rules and realities of society.

The textile, the cut of a garment, who designed and made it, all contribute to the construction of the dressed person. Fashion, provides layers of social meaning. Although the individual, through the act of dressing, initiates this process, it is fixed in a broader, well established social and cultural fashion practice.

This paper will argue that fashion is a significant cultural activity and that the fashion designer plays a pivotal role in this. Through the fashion designer, design process, dress, and the everyday acts of dressing, cultural capital is attributed to the fashioned item. The paper will provide a distillation of pertinent fashion and cultural theories, drawing on Wilson, Entwistle, Goffman and Bourdieu. It will draw on ethnographic research initiated through the *eCHO project* (QUT, 2003), focussing on the fashion designer to reveal and explore conceptions of fashion and design. The paper will refer to original filmed interviews of significant Australian designers, supported by a very visual power point presentation.

References: Barnard, M., 2002, *Fashion as Communication*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London.

the space between textile_art_design_fashion - Papers & Visual Presentations

Lucienne Camenzuli is a postgraduate student in the Creative Industries Faculty, QUT. She has worked in secondary and tertiary education sectors and in the fashion and interior design industries. More recently she has coordinated units and lectured in the Creative Industries Faculty, in particular the core unit *Creativity* and units in the Fashion Discipline.

Suzi Vaughan is an Associate Professor and Head of Fashion within the Creative Industries Faculty, QUT. Before migrating to Australia, Suzi spent ten years as a designer within the fashion industry in Europe, Hong Kong and the USA, followed by six years as Course Director at the London College of Fashion.
