

BODY AND DESIGN: ALTERNATIVE ONTOLOGIES IN BODY-BASED DESIGN PROCESSES

FASEEH SALEEM

Doctoral seminar will be held at: The Swedish School of Textiles, (zoom)

Date and time: Wednesday, April the 10th, at 01:00 - 03:00.

Discussion leader: Ricarda Bigolin, Associate Dean of Fashion and Textiles Design,
at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia.

Abstract

The human body is a central aspect in design and is considered to be a fundamental starting point in body-based design processes. During the design process, both the existential and functional aspects of the body are explored in relation to the different activities that need to be considered with regard to the design of clothing, dress, and its association with objects in the world. Within these design processes, the models and alternatives to the human body that are used to develop designs are often confined by the body's spatial and structural characteristics. This thesis both explores conceptions of the body and challenges conventional design methods and design thinking in fashion design processes in order to open up for alternative bodies as a methodological foundation.

Alternative aesthetic approaches and understandings of the body were explored through experiments, reflections, dialogues, and discussions. Observations on the insights attained are presented, as are the results of a process of insight sorting and an analysis workshop with both fashion and textile design students. Mixed methods and speculative design were used within the qualitative research approach, providing a creative spark for the research process. The explorations and their outcomes bridge theory relating to artistic research and art and design research.

This thesis suggests a set of concepts that have emerged from workshops and experiments that questioned preconceived notions of the body and facilitated a process of re-learning fashion-design processes. The explorations resulted in tools and methods that augment knowledge of and provide alternatives to standard methods used in fashion-design processes. They are alternative ways of working, constituting knowledge of recursive design methods and facilitating the enhancement of artistic approaches to design practices. The body alternatives that emerged from the exploratory experiments provide artistic openness in design thinking and introduce conceptions of the body that can facilitate or improve design practice. The results also contribute knowledge regarding design methods in general and how to facilitate learning regarding alternative methodological foundations and what a body could be within fashion-design education programmes.

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