

Editorial: Intersectional dress

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The study of dress and adornment practices is perforce the study of the materialisation of intersecting identities. Class, gender, sexuality, age, race, dis/ability and other identity markers are all writ large on an individual's clothed body and Crenshaw's (1991: 1296) suggestion in her influential *Stanford Law Review* article, 'Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color', 'that intersectionality might be [...] broadly useful as a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics' sits at the heart of this issue of *Clothing Cultures*. Both explicitly and implicitly, the papers herein respond to Crenshaw's behest that intersectionality 'be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age, and color' (1991: 1245). They reveal and explore the power of such socially constructed identity categories and in doing so corroborate her belief that categories do indeed 'have meaning and consequences' but that the 'most pressing problem, in many if not most cases, is not the existence of the categories, but rather the particular values attached to them, and the way those values foster and create social hierarchies' (1991: 1297).

To begin with, in 'QueerCrip fashion in the 21st century: Sky Cubacub and the queercrip dress reform movement', Reddy-Best and Goodin present a focussed study of one designer-activist's exploration of the body as a site of both rebellion and pleasure. The authors demonstrate that Cubacub's work for their label *Rebirth Garments*, unpacks 'the processes of subordination and the various ways those processes are experienced by people

who are subordinated and people who are privileged' (Crenshaw 1991: 1297), to produce clothing that endeavours to liberate all bodies, whatever their size, sexuality and dis/ability. Indeed, Cubacub's usage of the 'queer crip' identifier speaks to the 'agency that people can and do exert in the politics of naming' and 'that categorization is not a one-way street', rather it can function as a 'site of resistance for members of different subordinated groups' (Crenshaw 1991: 1297).

By contrast Morgan's article, rather than examining the clothed body as a space of resistance, explores the transformative power of conforming to specific dress practices for one whose intersecting identities function to both include – white, hypermuscular, male – and exclude – young, short, working-class – him from upper middle-class hegemonic masculinity and the power entailed to it. By tracking the character Gary 'Eggsy' Unwin's transformation from working-class 'chav' to upper middle-class 'gentleman' as given form in his dress, 'The suit maketh the man: masculinity and social class in *Kingsman: The Secret Service* (Vaughn, 2014)' demonstrates clearly the mutability of such identity categories and, hence, their arbitrariness, while simultaneously emphasising their 'social and material consequences' (Crenshaw 1991: 1297)

Franklin's art historic study, '*Untitled: Women's clothing and ageing femininity in the portraits of Chaim Soutine*', takes as its focus an overlooked subgroup within Chaim Soutine's portraiture oeuvre, that of studies of older women. In doing so, the author both engages in an analysis of 'representational intersectionality' (Crenshaw 1991: 1283) while at the same time challenging the dominant narrative of Soutine's life and practice, which positions the *École de Paris* 'painter's painter' as the archetypal tormented romantic genius who is supposed to have 'attacked his canvases like a madman' (Thrall Soby 1948: 98) and whose painting process was recently described as seemingly like 'something between a mud-wrestling match and a fight to the death' (Schjeldahl 2018). Rather, Franklin argues,

Soutine's eschewing as a subject for his portraits the more fashionable bright young things of the 1920's in favour of an atypical focus on distinctly mature and likely working-class women speaks to a considered and sustained interest in the lived reality of the intersection of gender, age and powerlessness, an image at odds with that of a tormented artist at the mercy of his creativity.

Finally, MacIndoe's, 'A sense of forgetting and remembering: memories of smell and clothing', places the bodiliness of the dressed body centre stage, taking as its focus the ubiquitous by-product of all dressed bodies: worn clothing and the deeply evocative smells that they capture. Through the exploration of personal clothing narratives from diverse respondents, the author demonstrates that, irrespective of the age or ethnicity of the owner, a garment's scent is a significant component of how it functions as both a material and psychic object. In the context an ever-more image-saturated and ocularcentric culture, a shift in focus to the role that the other bodily senses play in shaping lived experience offers an interesting counterpoint to the stress placed on visible differences.

REFERENCES

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