The Fabricated Man
Masculinities and Fashion

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Peter Allan
To my mother,
all my brothers and sisters
and Rohan.
This document contains sexually explicit images of male nudity. These images may be distressing to some viewers. This document should not be viewed by minors.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been asserted that at the end of the 18th century, men surrendered their right to be considered beautiful, becoming austere and ascetic in sartorial expression (Flugel 1976, p.110). Has the male body in fashion been freed from those traditional confines in recent decades? Has it become a canvas for the reclamation of masculine beauty?

It was once said, “Clothes maketh the man”. It may now be said “The ideal body maketh the man” and that clothes accentuate, reveal or conceal the body. The body is fashion. Whilst recent and ongoing changes in masculinities may be interpreted as crisis (Connell 2005, p.85) they have conversely been viewed as indicators of transition and evolution (Malossi 2000, p.27-30) or tropes of marketing (Edwards, 1997 p.56). Polarities have begun to appear in the expression of masculinity in fashion.

Are we seeing an acceptance of diversity or the creation of limited stereotypes? As the rapid redefinition of the male body in fashion becomes global, it becomes imperative for the impact of new and changing male archetypes to be acknowledged and questioned within the loci of menswear design and scholarship.
1. Motives

The landscape of masculinities is a vast and still largely unmapped territory. This project cannot hope to address all issues within that terrain.

The same can be said for men’s fashion. The very idea of men’s fashion has until very recent years been viewed as oxymoronic, and therefore underestimated, overlooked and unexplored (Edwards 1997, p.2). The assumption is still widespread that men’s fashion has been dull and static; changing very little in the last 200 years. Men’s fashion has been classified in terms of utility and practicality: external and impervious to the fluidity and aesthetics of fashion. It could not compare with the frequently hyperbolic and quixotic kinesis of women’s fashion.

Consequently, men’s fashion has been conspicuous by its near invisibility in museum collections, exhibitions and displays. This neglect is being redressed with some alacrity. It is within this project’s primacy to address the lingering and vestigial lacuna, the gap in curatorial, academic and educational interest in men’s fashion.

It is testament to the energy and verve of new and experimental forms of masculinity that they have had such an impact on fashion and popular culture in recent decades - especially in the new millennia. The exponential growth of designer menswear labels, menswear fashion magazines and books of menswear history and theory testifies to the re-evaluation of menswear and the recognition of its long overdue place within fashion.

There is still space to engage with men’s fashion in a fresh and effective way as large swaths of the territory remains uncharted.

The Fabricated Man project and the body of work generated through its investigations occupy that space and contribute to the moulding of a fashion culture which increasingly includes the masculine.

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1. The National Gallery of Victoria will be making up for this shortfall when their MonStyle exhibition opens in March 2011. Their promotional message reads: “...the NGV will showcase the very first exhibition in Australia to focus on men’s fashion from the eighteenth century to the present day.”

2. The most telling development in the recognition of men’s fashion as the equal of women’s wear is the revival of tired iconic women’s haute couture labels and their reconfiguration as cutting edge menswear labels. Lanvin is the most obvious but many other prestigious labels that are redolent of the golden age of haute couture are now also the most cutting-edge, experimental and often iconoclastic menswear labels. Balenciaga, Givenchy and Dior have such status and cachet within the expanding pantheon of menswear labels.

3. As part of this research project, I bought almost every edition of four menswear magazines over a six year period. I purchased 10Men, VMen, Arena Homme+ and AnotherMan. I would also buy l-c-d if it was a mens or masculinity edition. I watched as new men’s fashion magazines appeared on the shelves beside the ones that I regularly purchased. Some came and went. Some I would buy because of a particularly relevant editorial, story or photo spread. It was impossible to maintain a complete surveillance of the growth of men’s fashion magazines.

4. The last five years has seen a relative richness of men’s fashion theory and history books appear as publishing houses obviously compete for their share of the market. This wave of publication is still far short of the cornucopia of the print presence of women’s fashion theory and history. When I attended and presented at a Cultural Studies conference in Istanbul in 2006, I was approached by a representative of a well known and respected publishing house specialising in academic texts to discuss the possibility of a future publication of my post graduate investigations. Only a handful of the 300 conference presentations had a masculinities and fashion focus.
2. Praxis

What is my practice and how is it positioned? It is with a degree of difficulty that I articulate and describe my practice and its context. They do not exist separately and independently. They exist and overlap within multiple and contemporaneous loci.

This body of work springs from the hand of the maker; through the nexus of hand, eye and brain and the creative synergies forged between them. It responds to a raft of issues and ideas that surround masculinities; both axiomatic and fallacious.

Ideas are tested within the designer’s laboratory of making in response to the historical, the theoretical and the cultural, as well as in response to the textual and the visual. This is however, design-based research which privileges production of the artefact, the men’s fashion garment, over the historical and the theoretical.

My practice is situated critically and creatively within the context of masculinities and fashion. The crises and evolution of masculinities are core sites of investigation and speculation within praxis.

I situate my practice within the scholastic and the academic. It is framed within a global community of enquiry; an environment populated by like investigators and practitioners; a community of design research and making in menswear. Parsons School of Design in New York, The Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Central Saint Martins and The Royal College of Art (both in London), have all produced high profile menswear designers who have reinvented and reinvigorated menswear design in recent decades. London’s Royal College of Art is unique in being the only course in the world to offer a specialised menswear Master of Arts (Davies 2009, p. 11).

Hywel Davies, who lectures at Saint Martin’s, has gathered the story of many of these graduates and practitioners together in his 2009 book, Modern Menswear. It is a timely rolecall of contemporary men’s wear practice and sits within an exponentially rising wave of menswear publications. These publications form an emergent, nascent library to which this project will contribute and expand upon.

I also include the oeuvres of practitioners from different creative disciplines outside of fashion; practitioners whose work, whilst in different fields, is resonant with my own practice.

This venture, its enquiries and journey have consolidated and expanded upon both my current position and history as a practitioner: as maker of both the artefact and the image.

It has set the stage for the establishment of a dedicated undergraduate menswear stream within the School of Architecture and Design’s Fashion program at RMIT University. As the menswear market and the field of menswear design grow exponentially, fashion education must match this expansion through the creation of exploratory and speculative studios. It remains imperative for those studios to be conducted with a critical and challenging awareness of evolving masculinities and their impact on fashion; and conversely fashion’s influence and role in changing masculine paradigms.

The Fabricated Man is a platform from which future and ongoing projects will be launched to continue the investigation of masculinities through fashion praxis. This project has fabricated a portal through which I will travel as a designer and maker of men’s fashion.

5. The journey into the largely uncharted terrain that is masculinities and fashion was entered through the wardrobe of The Fabricated Man.
3. Precedents

This project and practice is located within an expanding community of like practitioners who are also investigating the polarity of masculine paradigms. They too respond to their inquiries through the generation of creative works, both artefact and image, inscribed upon the male body. This community sits across a spectrum of praxis that ranges from fashion design through to photography and film. It includes the tradition of the male nude in nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century photography and the invention and representation of masculinities within film since its genesis at the end of the nineteenth century.

The exposure to and retention of both the still image and the moving image has played a prominent role in the formulation of my understandings of masculinities, of role models and paradigms. The importance of the visual cannot be underestimated. The explorations within this project are informed and fed by the visual. This is part of the language spoken by precedents and by the maker. My lifelong love of looking manifests as scopophilia. It has become a fertile forum of research and analysis within this project, an armature of my practice that is woven throughout. It is through the visual strength of the garments that much of the projects information is delivered.

I also include the genre of popular music within this sphere of influence. Many of my concepts of men and masculinities were formed through a lifetime love of popular music, its sound and lyrics6.

I am directed and influenced by my experience as a gay man and the influence of gay culture and its history within these spheres. Much of what is spoken of historically and theoretically within gay culture I have experienced at first hand. This includes gay liberation during the 1970s, the impact of AIDS and the underground culture of several metropolises.

This project is also situated within and informed by the tradition of men’s tailoring and its modalities of restraint and detail. The craft and techniques of tailoring are within their own right a laboratory within the parent laboratory of masculinities and making. It is the techniques, the aesthetics and the taxonomy of tailoring - equally, that guide and inform my own practice.

I locate my fashion practice beside those designers who have assisted in the formulation of my own design currency. This alignment is with the iconoclasts of menswear design and those who continue to reference and work within the vernacular of the classic. It enables contextualisation beside designers as diverse as creative rule breakers Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood, Walter Van Bierendonk, and Bernhard Wilhelm yet sits simultaneously beside the traditional refinement of Paul Smith and Tom Ford.

I weave acknowledgment of practitioners who have influenced and shaped me as a designer (before and during this project) into the fabric of the project. This is done when their relevance is most pertinent within the project’s narrative. The discovery of new practitioners with a like voice was also intrinsic to the project’s evolution.

I draw upon this accumulated and harvested knowledge of parallel and complimentary disciplines and practitioners. In doing so, my own cultural capital is brought to this project.

I have identified my location and currency within the context of these creative communities that examine and produce work around masculinity and the male body.
4. Design Strategies

For each round of testing ideas that emanate from masculinity, key aspects are extracted from the pool of research data. These aspects, whether physical, historical or theoretical (or a combination) are broken down, analysed and reflected upon with the object of establishing a potential problem solving design trajectory.

Design possibilities are the result of a direct, sometimes literal response to the gathered data of text and image. Not all of these design possibilities are tested within the laboratory of making. Selective ideas that indicate the most potential as impetus for further ongoing phases of design and making are refined as garments. Some possibilities, initially rejected, may be salvaged as they take on fresh meaning in response to continued research (of text and image) and reflection. Concurrent with the design/making phases, new data is gathered. The overall effect of contemporaneous 2D ideation, 3D testing and new rounds of data collection has led to the concept of weaving as the structural mechanism for the project. The history of menswear and masculinities, new developments within those spheres and my history and practice as maker of both the artefact and image are all woven into the project’s structural narrative. As a result of this trope, the making developed as a series of chronological, sequential and inter-dependent phases or suites of experiments.

Each phase of designing and making has its own hierarchy of issues. Other issues will be tested in later phases. Some issues will be revisited as research and ideation progresses, changes and evolves. One or two issues will be privileged within each phase of testing and making.

The project’s unifying mantra and mechanics of praxis are: What am I trying to do? What did I learn? What did I do after that?
5. Masculinities And Fashion

In his *Psychology of Clothes* (Flugel 1976, p.110) J.C. Flugel described what may be considered the birth of men’s fashion as we understand it today.

*Men may be said to have suffered a great defeat in the reduction of male sartorial decorativeness which took place at the end of the 18th Century….. Men gave up their right to all the brighter, gayer, more elaborate, and more varied forms of ornamentation, leaving these entirely to the use of women, and thereby making his own tailoring the most austere and ascetic of the arts…man abandoned his right to be considered beautiful.*

Within Flugel’s statement, there is an implied element of urgency and crisis. Anne Hollander states that interpretation of the renunciation has been limited. Rather than making a “cowardly retreat from the risks and the pleasures of fashion” and making their dress boring in the process, men made a sartorial leap into modernism committing themselves to a trajectory separate from women’s but equally variable and expressive (Hollander 1994, p.22). Women in this regard may be seen to have lagged behind by a hundred years in modernising their dress (Hollander 1994, p.52).

The French Revolution and the violent demise of the *ancien regime* in France may have been the final nail in the coffin for elaborate male decorativeness, but the move towards a less ostentatious, articulate, informal and modern style of dress for men had begun to emerge in England within the two preceding decades. This was generated by ideas of liberalism, romanticism and Neo-classicism.

Due partly to the first excavations of Pompeii in 1748, an intense interest in the male nude of classical antiquity was spawned and...
Apollo Belvedere
It was discovered in central Italy in the late 15th century, during the Renaissance. It was considered the greatest ancient sculpture by ardent Neo-classicists and for centuries epitomised the ideals of aesthetic perfection for Europeans and westernised parts of the world. It is this perfection that was emulated in the Nude Look which sought to create the illusion that the wearer was unclothed.

Portrait of Samuel Oldknow, c.1790-2 by Joseph Wright Of Derby. Oldknow is the epitome of the fashionable Neo-classical Nude Look.

was embraced as a standard for male beauty by the tailors of 18th Century England (Hollander 1994, p.86). The classical nude male body was remodelled out of cloth to create a 'nude' but not 'naked' hero. Very fitted, high waisted breeches in skin coloured tones and matching waistcoat created the illusion, especially from a distance, of the man being unclothed (De Marly 1985, p. 75). Fashion dictated that ladies not blush but instead admire the perfect sculpture of the male limbs. The fashionable male body was given a genital emphasis missing since the disappearance of the codpiece (Hollander 1994, p.88).

Intrinsic to the sartorial evolution of the idealised man was the expression of liberalism and democracy. This concept was pivotal in the development of both man and suit. Roland Barthes states “in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the idea of democracy produced a form of (men’s) clothing which was, in theory, uniform, no longer subject to the requirements of appearances but to those of work and equality” (Barthes 2006, p.65). He tells us that this theoretical uniformity of men’s clothing was undermined by the adoption of detail as a formal difference between classes, especially the aristocrat, the bourgeois man and the ascending middle classes (Barthes 2006, p.66).

Since it was no longer possible to change the basic type of clothing for men without affecting the democratic and work ethos, it was the detail, which started to play the distinguishing role in clothing (Barthes 2006, p. 65-66).

7. Barthes’ emphasis.
Barthes identifies this mechanism of differentiation as the tool of the Dandy (Gavenas 2008, p.110). He tells us that Dandyism is not only an ethos, but also a technique (Barthes 2006, p.67). It was the Dandy who employed the spirit of modernity within the detail of men's dress. The detail and quality (technical and aesthetic) lay in cut and construction, not decoration or elaboration. The Dandy is an important figure in the evolution of men's fashion. He represents change, subversion, deviation and male beauty. He is still referenced today. Today's Metrosexual has been called Dandy¹⁰ (Cicolini 2005, p13). The Dandy's chief tool as an agent of change was the suit, which emerged as an idealised repository of modern values in the late eighteenth century and continued to be so during the nineteenth century.

² The Fashion Encyclopedia of Menswear says dandy is:

“A term in use since the late 18th century to refer to an exaggeratedly stylish man.” Beau Brummell is most frequently credited with the status of the quintessential Dandy.

⁵ The descriptor Metrosexual is now part of common (if not tired) parlance and used to describe straight men with gay sensibilities, especially in their attention to grooming and appearance. These men also engage in fashion and consumption in a way that was once (and still is) considered to be typical of women and gay men and therefore unmanly, not masculine. Mark Simpson first used the term in an article in The Independent published on November 15, 1994. Simpson wrote:

“Metrosexual man, the single young man with a high disposable income, living or working in the city (because that’s where all the best shops are), is perhaps the most promising consumer market of the decade. In the Eighties he was only to be found inside fashion magazines such as GQ, in television advertisements for Levi’s jeans or in gay bars. In the Nineties, he’s everywhere and he’s going shopping.”

¹⁰ In his introduction to Alice Cicolini’s 2005 The New English Dandy, Christopher Breward identifies the Metrosexual as the most recent in a succession of Dandies that begin in the 1790s and include Oscar Wilde, the teenagers of the 1950s, the man of the women's and gay liberation 1970s and the New Man of the 1980s.

At the races, 1925. The suit as the instrument of equality and democracy in men's dress.

Illustration of George Bryan 'Beau' Brummell, the seminal Dandy, by Robert Dighton, 1825.
century. The transition from the bespoke suit to the ready made in the second half of the nineteenth century retained the ideals of classicism and the male body whilst enabling democratisation. This transition, as odd as it may seem from a contemporary perspective, was made possible by the introduction of the tape measure in the 1820s, which helped establish standardised systems of measuring and cutting.

These new systems of tailoring were cartographic tools by which the ideal fashionable male body could be navigated. They acted as rules and guides for an interaction “that in the context of a commodity culture was becoming subtly eroticised” (Breward p.166).

Warring tailors of the nineteenth century disputed over the methodologies of constructing the ideal, perfectly proportioned male figure in cloth based on anatomy and geometry. Dr. Henry Wampen, a German mathematician made the greatest impression. His conviction was that the tailor must be guided by knowledge of the ideal male form. This led him to take detailed measurements from Grecian statues of athletes and offer them as templates for the production of a rationalised modern men’s wardrobe (Breward 2001 p.169).

By the late nineteenth century, a rift had appeared amongst tailors. The debate revolved around methodologies and the body. Whilst some advocated a tailoring that emphasized and enhanced the natural, hygienic physique; others sought to construct an artificial musculature through padding and stiffening. In both camps, the ideal, healthy, beautiful male body was central to the debate. The schism is understandable given that physical culture emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.

Eugene Sandow may be seen as the first publicly celebrated male body of the modern era. Showman/muscleman/pin-up, Sandow exhibited himself as Hercules/Adonis, posing with
appropriate accoutrements as living Greco-Roman statuary. He was billed as the world’s most perfect man. In a world of suits, he was the Other, the exceptional. When Sandow competed in the World’s Strongest Man competition in 1883, he wore a tuxedo and bowtie whilst competing (Cooper 1995, p.169).

Sandow’s particular contribution lay in his use of his body as an agent in the moralising crusade for an improvement of national health and as a site for a more commercialised celebration of male beauty (Breward 2001, p.178). Sandow is one of the earliest markers in the marriage of men’s bodies, the beautiful male ideal and the camera; a relationship which will become elemental in masculinities with the emergence of the Adonis and the New Man in the 1980s.

It is doubtful that the majority of men saw the suit as the sartorial expression of beauty and idealism. For most men the suit encased and concealed the body in its symbolic representation of hegemonic patriarchy. Edmund White, in his novel My Lives, (2005 p.41) describes the homogeneity and conformity of men’s dress dominant in the Cincinnati of the 1950s.

*Men wore their plain lace up shoes and double breasted suits and heavy overcoats and these uniforms elevated and concealed them in ageless anonymity - from twenty to fifty, nothing more or less.*

The *Peacock Revolution* challenged this entrenched state of dress during the 1960s. This evocative appellation was given to the swinging 60s, particularly in London, which witnessed a renaissance in colour, richness and flamboyance in men’s clothing. Shaun Cole, in his Don We Now Our Gay Apparel: Gay Men’s Dress in the Twentieth Century of 2000, identifies the driving force as the gay subculture of Soho, which had been influenced by the embryonic Italian men’s designer fashion scene. London’s youth culture, particularly the Mods, embraced these
new vibrant and androgynous fashions (Cole 2000, p.74). In what may be seen as a ‘trickle-up’ effect, Mods appropriated elements of subordinated and marginalized culture, such as gay men’s style and black music. The result was a critique of and challenge to orthodoxy.

By 1966 Carnaby Street - the epicentre of the Peacock Revolution had displaced Saville Row in the landscape of male sartorial elegance. Whilst Saville Row was analogous with the traditional and masculine, Carnaby Street was analogous with the androgynous. The inclusion of the feminine into men’s style and dress by the men of the Peacock Revolution inverted all notions of masculinity. The ambiguity of male appearance that incorporated bright colours, ‘feminine’ fabrics and long hair was truly shocking. The question was on everyone’s lips, “Is it a boy or is it a girl?” What was so disturbing to the established mores was the casualness with which young people maintained this illusion of sexual non-differentiation (Chenoune 1993, p.258). Cecil Beaton, in describing Mick Jagger in 1967, speaks of him as the embodiment of opposites; masculine and feminine, beautiful and ugly, sexy and sexless (Chenoune 1993, p. 259).
In late 1960s, designer Rudi Gernreich, in attempting to privilege the androgynous body, foresaw a future in which no distinction would be made between male and female dress. In imagining the year 2000, he said that clothing would have no gender; both men and women would wear pants and skirts interchangeably (Bolton 2003, p.182). Whereas Gernreich’s brave and futuristic unisex experiments had little commercial impact, Yves Saint Laurent, in the same philosophical vein, was more successful in incorporating the androgynous into men’s fashion. In 1969 he told Elle magazine that his objective was “to free men from their shackles like women have just done. Today’s boys and girls are more than just equal – they are similar without being the same” (Chenoune 1993, p.278). This ideology is central to the 1971 nude portrait of Saint Laurent by photographer Jeanloup Sieff. Used as the publicity shot for Y pour homme fragrance, its intention is commercial, political and sexual. It is an image of vital, androgynous male beauty. Its origins lie in both the Greco-Roman and Christian traditions. Saint Laurent’s body has the quality of sexless antiquity whilst his bearded face and longish hair are highlighted by a ‘halo’. It is his glasses and the leather or PVC cushions on which he is posed that place the image in the 1970s. The intention is the same as images of Eugene Sandow. It is a commercialised celebration of male beauty, but of a very different kind of male beauty. It is also an image in which we may read the impact of feminism and gender equality, which were to continue through to the mid 1980s.
6. The Male Body + Archetypes

The 1980s witnessed the construction of new masculinities. The New Man\textsuperscript{11} and the Adonis\textsuperscript{12} were identified as manifestations of men's mixed reactions, both positive and negative (in that order but not necessarily exclusively) to feminism. Many commentators, among them R.W. Connell\textsuperscript{13}, have seen the manifestation of new masculinities in the 1980s as taking refuge in pre-feminist times. "Men who worked hard for sex role change in the 1970s could make no effective resistance in the 1980s to ideologues who rejected their 'modernity' as soft and instituted an imagined past." (Connell 1975 p.27) This is most evident in the hyper-masculine body and masculinity as muscle of the mid-1980s. The impact of HIV/AIDS at this time must be acknowledged as a contributing factor in the return to traditional body focused forms of masculinity. As one of the gay interviewees told the authors of *The Adonis Complex*\textsuperscript{14}, "Thinness is ugly because it speaks of sickness and death. Muscles equal health" (Pope, Phillips, and Olivardia 2000, p.218).

Arguably the creative force behind the Adonis in fashion media (particularly the Calvin Klein underwear and fragrance campaigns) was American photographer Bruce Weber. America's political shift towards the right was indisputable by the early 1980s. The

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11. The New Man was interpreted as a pro feminist manifestation of new masculinity. He was caring, sharing, sensitive and supportive, willing and able to take part in traditional “feminine” roles of child rearing and domestic maintenance.

12. The Adonis by contrast to the New Man appeared as a defensive response to the advances of feminism and the increasing parity of women.

13. Connell's 1975 text, *Masculinities*, is considered to be groundbreaking and seminal. It is one of the most cited texts within the evolving investigations of masculinities.

14. This the name given by Pope, Phillips and Olivardia to unrealistic expectations that men have developed centred on bodily practices. This condition is in response to challenges made to traditional hegemonic masculinities since the 1960s.
men in his alluring images were the embodiment of pre-second wave feminist masculinity, when gender barriers were fixed and prescribed (Ellenweig 1992, p.166). Weber developed visual commercial formulae, which perfectly matched the times and fed male anxiety and uncertainty whilst enabling exhibitionism and narcissism. This constructed male body was ‘fashion’ and analogous with ‘masculinity’. The reign of the gym-built hyper-male body in fashion media remained unchallenged throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium. Calvin Klein model Travis Fimmel photographed by Bruce Weber was its personification and a reminder of a previous fascination with the classical. One of the first challenges to this muscled hegemony in fashion media came from the YSLM7 fragrance print campaign of 2002. Under the creative direction of Tom Ford, it is homage to the 1971 portrait of Saint Laurent. The model, Olympic kick-boxing champion Samuel de Cubber, was the antithesis of the gym built hyper male. Whilst Calvin Klein model Travis Fimmel was Adonis-like in his musculature and smooth hairlessness, de Cubber was somewhat hirsute, ‘natural’ in physique and less defined despite being an elite athlete. Tom Ford may have been making a comment in his choice of model about Weber’s on-going use of elite American male athletes as models. Fimmel is not an athlete, but has all the appearance of an Olympian in both the antique and contemporary sense. De Cubber is an Olympian, but does not have the attributes of a god.

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15. Weber used Olympic pole-vaulter Tom Hintnaus as his model in the no
torious first Calvin Klein underwear campaign that he shot.

Calvin Klein Adonis, Travis Fimmel.
Fimmel may be seen as an Adonis (Graves 2002, p74). He has “the physical stance of a man conveying virility” (Berger 1972, p.138). He is upright, looking out through the spectator, sexually provocative but not necessarily available. He is a figure to be envied by other men. He looks out, out over the looks of envy that sustain him (Berger 1972, p. 133). His hand rests suggestively on his upper thigh in close proximity to the pronounced bulge of his Calvin Klein y-fronts.

De Cubber, on the other hand may be read as Endymion; (Graves 2002, p.199) prone, gaze downcast, passive and sexually neutral. Femmell is almost nude, his eroticism and mystery exaggerated by the underwear. De Cubber, controversially, is naked but not nude. De Cubber is being himself, without disguise (Berger 1972, p.54). “He is a man like any other” (Berger 1972, p.59). His genitals are fully exposed but not provocative.


16. Robert Graves in The Greek Myths tells of the possessive rivalry between Aphrodite and Persephone sparked by Adonis’ irresistible beauty. They agreed to each have him for three months of the year. Aphrodite persuaded Adonis to spend his allotted time to himself with her so that they spent half the year together.

17. Endymion, was a handsome son of Zeus. Selene, the moon, fell deeply in love with him and put him into a dreamless sleep from which he never awakened. Endymion’s name refers to his seduction by the moon. Despite this condition, he still managed to father fifty daughters to Selene.

18. He could however be said to be “wearing” the fragrance as a garment.
Femmel’s genitals are not exposed but his veiled crotch suggests the phallus, symbolising male potency, power and hegemony. De Cubber’s exposed genitals speak of the penis as biological, a male organ.

Although the YSL M7 image was not widely published, it eloquently highlights, through comparison to the Calvin Klein underwear imagery, a range of issues including ongoing phallocentrism19 (Davidson 2007, p.474) in fashion media. The gaze and its ownership also becomes an issue. Who are these images for? Who is looking at them? Berger tells us that women appear and men act (Berger 1972, p.47) and that the gaze is masculine. Women have traditionally been the subjects of the gaze. The assumption for much of the history of the male nude in photography has been that the gaze in this context is homoerotic but male nevertheless (Barnard 2002, p.70)20. Is there a possibility that the proposition may be reversed? That the gaze may also become female? Germaine Greer has said that part of the purpose for writing her book, The Boy, was to “advance women’s reclamation of their capacity for visual pleasure” (Greer 2003, p.11).

Market researchers know what they are doing; they know that the buyers of men’s underpants are women. Men’s fragrances too are sold to women, which is why the representative image is often a pouting boy, wearing nothing but lip-gloss (Greer 2003, p.11).

This was the state of masculinities within fashion in 2005 at the juncture where my speculative design testing and making of experimental menswear was commenced.

19. “Phallocentrism is the condition where the phallus, signifier of masculine power, is privileged as the dominant perspective.” (Davidson 2007, p.474)

20. Malcolm Barnard, in summation of the chapter ‘The functions of fashion and Clothing’, in his Fashion as Communication, states, “It was also argued that fashion and clothing could not be reduced to serving the interests of the heterosexual sex drive”. This claim can be extended to the gaze. Scopophilia need not be sexual, voyeuristic nor the exclusive right of heteronormative masculinities. Sometimes the joy of looking, scopophilia, is just the joy of looking.
7. Research Questions.

This project’s investigation responds to a suite of questions that frame explorations through making. They act as signposts and markers within the project’s topographies of inquiry. These questions have emerged from research into masculinities and menswear. This data, whether drawn from theory or history, acts as the trigger for design-based research and the catalyst for the manufacture of experimental and speculative menswear. It builds a laboratory for design, for my testing of ideas through the making of prototype garments. The role of the maker is privileged and fore-grounded throughout this process.

The following questions trigger and propel this project:

- How has fashion responded to the changing male archetype?
- How can I engage in the discussions that surround the male body within fashion?
- As a practitioner, how can I produce speculative prototype men’s garments that investigate and comment upon the evolving male paradigm?
- How can I respond to the representation of these men in popular media through this making?
- What is the relevance of tailoring in this context?
Chapter 1. Reference list


CHAPTER 2
2005

BODY + SUIT - The Military Jackets

1. Exemplar + Taxonomy

Calvin Klein model Travis Fimmel exemplified the dominant masculine ideal, the physical paradigm in 2005. He was at this time the ubiquitous body of a highly successful men’s underwear campaign, successor to a long line of ideal male bodies photographed for Calvin Klein underwear advertisements - not always to positive effect.

This gym built, sculpted ideal dominated throughout the 1980s, the 1990s and well into the new millennium appearing to be invincible to any challenge. It was the consequence of unprecedented, pandemic physical engineering, modification and fashioning of the male body. It manifested as one of a suite of responses employed by men to counter (not always consciously) the assault on traditional patriarchal, phallocratic masculinity by the combined forces of feminism, gay liberation and black civil rights. The ideal body was privileged in redefining masculinity.

1. Mark Wahlberg (then rapper “Marky Mark” and formerly of boy band New Kids on the Block) was photographed by Herb Ritts for Calvin Klein in 1992. Wahlberg then enraged Calvin Klein’s enormous global gay customer base when he made homophobic AIDS-related comments in 1993. Many of my activist friends and I, as part of a global gesture of protest, mailed our used Calvin Klein underwear back to the designer himself. I remember, vividly, the outrage within the gay community and the calculated and effective commercial gesture aimed at Calvin Klein, both the (gay and ‘married’) man and the label. Looking at the advertising image of Mark Wahlberg from this distance, it is possible to see the combination of the models gym-built, prison-yard torso and some headline-grabbing ill considered, ill advised comments as negative spin and publicity. Many clumsy comments were made about AIDS at this time when the gay community was under attack as the cause of the pandemic.

Mark Wahlberg photographed by Herb Ritts, 1992.
Rather than look to the ideal as collective and abstract, I chose to cite an exemplar that would be widely visible and recognised within the context of fashion. Fimmel was the body in the Calvin Klein underwear print ads and the body on the packaging of a product bought by both women and men, gay and straight, fashionistas and non-fashionistas, globally and in vast quantities.

He possessed all the physical attributes that go to make up what was then (and continues to be) referred to as the Adonis. The majority of male runway models (with a few notable exceptions⁴) used for European and North American fashion festivals that year had bodies interchangeable with Fimmel’s. They shared the characteristics of the ideal body with Fimmel. Innumerable men around the world held this physical incarnation up as the ideal and actively pursued it for themselves.

Fimmel may be read as the embodiment of the desired, prescribed parts brought together in one idealised form, the whole clearly being greater than the sum of the parts.

Fimmel is, and representative of, the
• Fortified man (Beynon 2002, p.52)
• Commodified man (Edwards 1997, p.34)
• Beautiful man (Greer 2003, p.11)

According to the pre-eminent researchers into masculinities in health sciences and sociology⁵, there are distinct criteria that are crucial for the Adonis to achieve in order to feel in control and masculine. They recognise that the highly desired ideal body had its own taxonomy. The Adonis could be seen as an assemblage of perfect parts.

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2. Sander and Raf Simons in particular had for some time preferred to use models with a ‘natural’ physique. They quite often sourced their models on the street.

3. Pope, Phillips and Olivardia, Connell, Pease, McInnes and Beynon all cite a nexus between masculinity, the body and control.
The body of the Adonis should have:
  • Low Body Mass Index (little body fat)
  • Very high definition (‘cut’)
  • Little body hair (smooth, not hirsute)

The parts that must be redesigned, modified and fashioned included:
  • The abdominals
  • The pectorals
  • The shoulders (and back)
  • The biceps (arms)
  • The ‘butt’ (and legs)

The unseen, unstated characteristic of the Adonis is the large penis or the phallus. Fimmel has all the parts and physical attributes, seen and unseen. He can also be said to be performative in the role of masculinity.

According to popular and widely available men’s lifestyle and fitness magazines, the ideal may be achieved through regimes of unflinching discipline, dedication and control. This is the psychological nature of the Adonis.

The parts and the whole may be legitimately obtained through:
  • Bodybuilding (weight training)
  • A strict dietary programme
  • A high cardio-vascular programme.

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4. Six years later in 2011, these magazines continue to have the same type of men on their covers and advocate the same body regimes.
Cosmetic surgery for men. 2003

Cosmetic surgery for men. 2003
The acquisition of the parts and the whole may be expedited (not always legally) through:

- Steroid use
- Cosmetic surgery (e.g. liposuction, pectoral implants, penis enlargement etc.)

What cannot be gained through the application of masculine will and determination may be gained through ever changing technologies. The pursuit of the ideal can involve endangering physical and mental wellbeing, resulting in conditions that have been until recently generally believed to afflict women only. Body dysmorphism, bulimia and anorexia are now recognised as men’s health issues. An increasing number of men perceive themselves as imperfect, falling short of a masculine standard, an ideal. As more men feel disempowered by an increasingly pro-feminist world, modification of their bodies becomes a way of maintaining control of themselves and fortifying themselves within a world of rapidly changing gender identities. It is their bodies that define their masculinity. This is The Adonis Complex. (Pope, Phillips and Olivardia, 2000, p.xiii)

The body of Travis Fimmel in the Calvin Klein advertisements is the manifestation of the twin crises of masculinity. He is the fortified body that defends itself against the threat to the traditional hegemony. This is the constructed masculine ideal of fitness and cosmetic surgery magazines. Simultaneously, it is the commodified body; the body that has become object to generate sales as women’s bodies have. It is the male body that, through media and marketing, will be seen as the paradigm. It is the source of many of the same problems that women have long faced. He is the Adonis.

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3. Cosmetic surgery procedures continue to increase in popularity for men. Less and less stigma is attached to procedures that were not so long ago considered ‘feminine’ and ‘unmanly’.
Several ideas from J.C.Flugel’s frequently cited *Great Male Renunciation* have resonated throughout this project and within my speculative design practice. These ideas will remain pivotal throughout the project. *The Great Male Renunciation* is a statement; the essence of which will be challenged and employed as a gauge.

The first is the notion that men abandoned the right to be considered beautiful. I am asserting that the Adonis (such as Travis Fimmel) represents the return of male beauty in the late twentieth century. The second is that men’s tailoring became austere and ascetic. Although the ‘austere’ suit became the uniform for male action, rationality, industry and equality, many (including myself) see the suit as one of fashions finest and earliest modernist achievements.

By the second half of the twentieth century the suit had come to be seen as the signifier of white patriarchal hegemony. Although its intrinsic elegance and beauty (when artfully realised) had not been lost, it was unmistakably the uniform of male privilege, dominance and conformity. It was the symbol of all that the subjugated and marginalised fought against. For women, black men and gay men the suit was an oppressive metonym. As a gay man, I include myself amongst the oppressed.

One image that speaks of the symbolic potency of the suit whilst simultaneously referencing the disempowered Other continues to resonate with me. This image is Robert Mapplethorpe’s 1980 *Man in the Polyester Suit*. It is an image that has become infamous as an image that many consider pornographic because of its unavoidable and insistent focus.
My reading of the image reverses this focus and privileges the suit over the black phallus. I say phallus rather than penis because of its disembodiment. The suit is farcical. Its power as signifier of dominance is obliterated by its quality. It is a polyester suit, not finely crafted having none of the beauty of the Dandy’s suit. It is cheap and, upon close inspection, creased, thereby rendering its materiality impotent.

The suit of quality, in fabrication and construction has for me, since childhood, been an object of great beauty. But I also recognise it for its power as a symbol of dominance and alien-ation.

It was in acknowledging (and embracing) the ambivalence I feel towards both the body and the suit that sets the tone for this first phase of designing and making. I used this design and making process to determine and refine my attitudes to these issues. The ambivalence felt about the cultivated and commodified beautiful male body was in three parts:

1. The media that promotes the ideal male body conveys the message that this physical ideal is attainable by all men, not only the genetically gifted, the young and the white.

2. The celebration is of one body type, not a diversity of types.

3. The objectification of the male body sells not only fashion but all manner of products, from toothpaste to whitegoods. This exploitation of the male body may, at times, be seen as the male equivalent of the blond bimbo in the bikini on the car bonnet.

My ambivalence was founded in the knowledge that men were falling into the same traps that have held women for so long; the traps of worth based on appearance, youth as currency and body fascism. The tone at this stage is best described as ambivalent.

Robert Mapplethorpe’s Man in the Polyester Suit. 1980
2. Body + Suit

The design process was driven by the ambivalence I felt towards both body and suit as a result of my historical survey and review of current men’s issues. I attempted to bring the two together and refine my position. The experiments entailed viewing the body and the suit simultaneously as beautiful and flawed whilst attempting to make them one.

I selected one image of the beautiful man to respond to in initiating the design process. The torso served as the foundation for the suit jacket.

I chose not to use Travis Fimmel’s body as the design template for the jackets. Although it was logical and tempting to do so, I felt there was a danger of cynicism directing the design trajectory. I referenced a full frontal male nude from Simblet’s Anatomy for the Artist. It is neutral, honest and transparent. It has no reading beyond the objective. This image will provide the template for the pose during photo-documentation of these prototypes because of its neutrality. It belongs to the photographic tradition of the nude and the neutral pose.

To bring together jacket and body, the torso in both images was abstracted into a simplified graphic that emphasised the register of essential parts, the pectoral and abdominal muscles, front and side. This graphic representation was then transposed onto the form of the jacket. It may be more correct to say that I added collar, lapel, centre front fastening, armpoles and curved centre front hem to the body. This reduction of the body to dismembered torso and its rendering into textile torso also references the excavation of the often headless, armless or legless male nude statue of antiquity - the beautiful ideal - and the role that it played in the genesis of the suit. The torso and jacket were synthesised to become the unitary expression of dual problematic beauties.
This graphic hybrid acted as the blueprint for the pattern making process, the first step in the 3D realisation of the body and the suit. It would have been insufficient to superficially transpose these descriptive lines that represented the ideal torso onto a flat jacket pattern. The 3D animated form - the body - was a prime consideration.

A basic sleeveless jacket form was toile in calico and fitted onto an average size fit model. The graphic schema was drawn onto the toile following the pectorals and abdominals of the fit model. The nipples, navel and pubic bone were also recorded as future pattern making/design reference points. The toile was fitted through the lines of pectorals and abdominals so that it took on the shape and proportions of the model. The jacket became sculptural. The silhouette that emerged brought together the ideal anatomical signifiers with the ideal sartorial signifier. This sculptural shape became the template for the jacket design trajectory. The proportional information from this fitting was used to generate a block, a foundation to support 3D design and testing. The potential 2D jacket designs employed a variety of devices that were derived from a pool of visual assets, images and graphic representations of the ideal (and not so ideal) torso.

6. Industry standard of 32” waist, 38” chest 5’10” height.
The reference images were quite diverse and included
- The photographic work of Steven Arnold, 1987 (Fig.1)
- 5th century B.C.E. red and black Greek vases, (Fig.2)
- Disney’s animated Tarzan, 1999 (Fig.3)
- Diagrams for liposuction procedures, 2003 (Fig.4)
- 4th century B.C.E. classical Greek statuary, (Fig.5)

Broadly speaking, the design possibilities that arose made use of tone and line to graphically represent the torso within the form of the jacket (see diagram opposite). Combinations of design elements from the source images were interpreted technically and aesthetically as seams, incisions, jets, binds, buttons and decorative stitching. The final jackets were composites of the data distilled from the source and inspiration images. Each jacket drew certain elements from the research data and the design diagrams. The jackets were not copies of the source imagery or the development drawings. (See Figures 6-10)

Three jacket design inspirations were selected for testing:
1. The Steven Arnold inspired Tonal Jacket. (Fig. 11)
2. The Tarzan / liposuction inspired Jet Incision Jacket. (Fig. 12)
3. The Greek vase / statuary inspired Bind Jacket. (Fig.13)

Testing and toiling of the jacket designs was carried out with minimum conscious pre-determination. The three jackets all hosted the register of components that say jacket. The roll collar and lapel, the centre front buttoning and centre front curved hem were included in each jacket. These consistent elements bound the three together as a set. The three designs were, however, chosen on the basis of difference. They were distinct enough technically and aesthetically to require a different approach in realisation, that is bind, jet and tone. Each of the three jackets had as its base a fairly neutral hue. Taupe, khaki and dark camel matte suiting was selected. Its neutrality and traditional masculine
association influenced this choice of colour palette. Direct reference was made to the Neo-classical colour sensibility and its essential role in the origins of the suit. These colours and surfaces were not perceived as dull or earnest but instead as pure and elegant.

....Neo-classical English tailors exploited the new prestige of muted colour and matte finish. In clothing, these no longer conveyed sober humility but suggested the same Classical virtues that antique nudity itself embodied, including superior beauty. The new graphic rhetoric for ideal male looks forced the masculine costume not only to classicise its outlines but to lose much of its colour and reflect no light – and to appear more beautiful as a result, not less so. (Hollander 1994, p.95)

The choice of colour and fabrication for testing the three jackets meant that, as with the Neo-classical suit, form was privileged over surface; and the body was privileged over decoration. The graphic legibility of the abstracted ideal torso was enhanced through colour contrast.

Through the inclusion of cream pectorals and abdominals in the Tonal Jacket, dark brown jets in the Jet/Incision Jacket and medium brown knit binds in the Bind Jacket, an unforeseen ‘military’ character emerged. This unplanned masculine materialisation was embraced as part the enquiry.

The appearance of the ‘military’ came as a surprise when pointed out to me. It not only referenced the military’s influence on the evolution of the suit but also highlighted associations with traditional bastions of hegemonic masculinity. The military iteration referenced hyper-masculinity and performance; masculinity defined by strength, aggression and dominance. It illustrated the centrality of these issues in the crisis of masculinity.

Sir Brooke Boothby, 6th Baronet. Joseph Wright of Derby’s portrait of 1781 in which the subject Sir Brooke reclines, posed within a shady wooded glade is a metaphor for the new and fashionable admiration of nature. The image denotes both his communion with nature and his avid admiration of the philosopher Rousseau whose book he has been studying. His dress is typical of the restraint that had appeared in the edited ‘countrified’ styling of much admired English tailoring at this time. The earthy hues of his suit is a fashionable response to the ardent interest in nature and the country, and is a forerunner of the style which will become The Great Male Renunciation by the turn of the century.
3. Crisis + Process

During the first iteration of making, a crisis within the process emerged in tandem with the crisis of the topic. In taking the design problem-solving strategy to the body and using a fit model, a new question arose. Would this strategy work only if the same body was used for every phase of making?

If the ‘ideal’ schema of the graphic signifiers on the jacket toiles were to perform as transformative mechanism, then the host body (the wearer) would have to possess approximately the same proportions as the toile to register as ‘ideal’. Given that the basic proportions of the three jackets were based on the body of the fit model, there was a strong likelihood that these jackets would not read as ‘ideal’ or ‘archetypal’ on another body of a different size and proportion. The fit on a different size body/model would be disproportionate.

The crisis within the process offered two contingencies. The jackets could be tested on models with different proportions to the fit model. The result would probably highlight the artifice within the process and the ‘ideal’ would seem ridiculous and at odds with the wearer. This dilemma confirmed that there can be no actual standard ideal and that no two men are identical. This development reconciled with the previously discussed ambivalence towards the concept that a unitary physical paradigm is realistic and attainable through the rigours of body modification.

The second option held more promise, both technically and conceptually. This would involve an ongoing relationship with the fit model and, as a consequence, the process would become bespoke or made to measure. My many years of bespoke experience working with diverse body types have meant the formulation of methodologies that generate trust and confidence. It may be that these experiments testing the ‘ideal’ are in some way a result of these years of practice enhancing the body; accentuating, concealing, revealing, in order to optimise the client’s appearance and their perception of that appearance. It is a role that I may have unwittingly gravitated towards and that I feel comfortable playing.

Through this investigation of body and suit my history and practice as tailor is fore-grounded. This first iteration confirmed the relevance and prominence of tailoring and the importance of its technical and aesthetic language to me as an exploratory designer and maker.

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7. A third possibility involves a different fit model for each phase of iteration.
4. The Reflective Bridge

My reflection following this first phase of making focused on the flesh, the cloth and the man. The jackets represented musculature as fashion; as a type of clothing with which to dress in masculinity. The flesh and muscle were transformed into cloth. The cloth was coaxed, engineered, manipulated, moulded and fashioned to create a ‘suit of masculinity’ as the flesh can also be coaxed, engineered, manipulated, moulded and fashioned into a suit. These were suits with which to create the man. A suite of possibilities appeared.

• The flesh, the musculature can be the suit of masculinity.
• The cloth can be the flesh, the musculature of the suit.
• The suit can be the ersatz muscularity of the man.
• Are then the flesh, the man and the suit unitary?

This suit of masculinity, the suit of cloth and the suit of musculature can be worn as armour, as carapace or as costume. It can be worn in a masquerade of masculinity. In the process it can externalise and diffuse the anxiety that surrounds perceptions of masculinity and muscularity - the new male beauty myth and the Adonis Complex. It may devalorise masculinity as the masculine paradigm and reveal it ultimately as artificial and superficial.

Paradoxically, the suit can also celebrate the enduring classical ideal of male beauty on which our western (and increasingly global) notions of male physical beauty are based. Most importantly, this muscularity, this beauty, this manifestation of masculinity may be donned and removed and donned again without compromising either the physical or the emotional wellbeing. The jackets could be worn in much the same way that the skins of animals have been worn, whereby the characteristics and the potency of the animal are transferred vicariously to the wearer.

It would depend on the wearer and the viewer to determine his own reading of the jackets.

The gaze also figured in reflection. I came to understand that a gaze had been employed that was neither voyeuristic nor prurient; it was not exploitative or linked to power. Scopophilia, a joy of looking was directed towards the male body in all its diversity as an object of beauty. This scopophilic gaze was likewise aimed at the suit and its parts as a thing of beauty. As a maker, a tailor, I have a love of the suit’s elements, its proportions, modernity and timelessness. The gaze was of the designer and the maker.

I also reflected upon my intentions towards The Fabricated Man and the tone I should adopt. From the inception of the project I had been wary of the danger of being overly abject, of cynicism and melancholia; all traps easily fallen into. I resolved to include empathy within the process and the tone, as well as include a sense of play wherever appropriate.

As part of the reflective bridge between first and second phases of iteration, I completed the three ‘military’ jackets. Sleeves were inserted into all three so that they transitioned from ‘torso’ to jacket. Some tweaking and finessing occurred during their completion as follows:

• The jet pockets were embedded in each of the pectorals. These jets were given button closure. This operation gave the buttons function and context. This functionality created permission to reference the buttons as nipples and to reinforce the presence of the idealised nude torso. Without this functionality, the nipples would have registered as facile and superficial, definitely gratuitous.

Peter Allan. The Jet Military Jacket. 2005

Peter Allan. The Tonal Military Jacket. 2005
• The ‘abdominal’ jets were inserted into the Jet Incision Jacket.

• The tonal shoulders, biceps and forearms were added to the Tonal Jacket.

In reviewing images of the three military jackets, with the benefit of reflection and hindsight, they are more successful as critiques than first imagined. Each clearly references the taxonomy of the ideal without simply imaging or replicating the ‘perfection’ and physicality superficially as surface. The critique of the ideal had become integral to the functionality. The platform for a dialogue about masculinity between the garment, the wearer and the viewer had been established.

The reflective bridge created the time and space for thoughts to emerge that might identify the military as part of a narrative within my own understanding and experience of masculinity. I remembered that my older brother had been a professional soldier. He is many years older and joined the army when I was four years old. I did not see him (for any length of time) for another eight years, after he had been injured and decorated for bravery in Vietnam. As a child I only saw him as a soldier in uniform. Without doubt, I saw him as the personification of this particular traditional masculine paradigm.

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8. He had always wanted to be a soldier, but soon after this he returned to active service briefly then left the armed forces disillusioned.
5 Where Am I Positioned?

Who may be exploring some of the same territory as me? What have they said and done in their practice that resonates with me? In seeking those past and present, whose work might shed some light (and understanding) on my own practice, I looked to fashion, menswear and beyond.

Jean Paul Gaultier, since the 1970s, has been one of the most iconoclastic of menswear designers - constantly blurring sartorial gender boundaries and foregrounding the androgynous. Colin McDowell describes Gaultier’s play with gender boundaries and redundant conventions thus:

*The sinuous line breaking free in a froth of diaphanous material at the hemline has been a cliché since the thirties. But in over sixty years, only Gaultier has seen fit to use the same semantics in dressing men. He expects us to be startled, amused and even briefly shocked but the question he is asking – why not - hovers awkwardly unanswerable, over the runways, exposing our preconceived attitudes to what is suitable for a woman and what a man may wear.*

(McDowell 2000, p.32)

He does not believe, as I do not, that shapes and colours have gender. If a fabrication, a shape or a colour has gender significance, it is the product of a cultural construct. Such constructs may be chronologically and geographically fluid. Pink for girls and blue for boys is not a universal or timeless fashion gender axiom. Gaultier is the champion of the male skirt; a non-bifurcated garment that resists inclusion in the man’s wardrobe. His œuvre may simply; superficially and erroneously be classified (even
dismissed) as post-modern camp. Although much of his work has shock value, this can be misleading. Gaultier should be lauded for his unflinching challenges to chauvinism and petrifaction. I am wary of the danger of replicating Gaultier’s work.

Equally iconoclastic and irreverent, Belgian designer Walter Van Beirendonk, indicated his philosophy as a designer who questions and shatters convention within the name of his breakthrough label W&LT (Wild and Lethal Trash) which he designed between 1993 and 1999. His two current labels are the eponymous Walter Van Beirendonk and the provocatively named ‘aesthetiterrorists’.

In expressing his approach to masculinity and design he says:

*Masculinity is part of the game, but that’s exactly why it’s so interesting. In the “Gender? Collection” Spring/Summer 00, I questioned this matter and tried to figure out why gender and gender-related fashion is mainly dictated by society, the way we are raised and conditioned by the culture we are living in. Masculinity is important depending on context and culture.*

(quoted in Davies 2008 p.187)

I monitored the direction of contemporary menswear, not for inspiration, but to remain informed of any new developments physically, aesthetically and culturally. The menswear market continues to grow exponentially and globally. Fashion is defined by its temporal fluidity and menswear is a site of this fluidity. Menswear design is a laboratory within which expressions of masculinity are tested and interrogated. I have specifically cited Calvin Klein as a label that valorised the Adonis, and masculinity as masculinity. Almost all menswear labels at this time (2005) presented the Adonis on the runway as paradigm. The Adonis was conspicuous within the collections of D Squared, D&G, McQueen and Galliano.
Scopophilia, the joyous gaze was also directed towards the photographic image of man. It is impossible to investigate men’s fashion and masculinities without considering and responding to the photographic image.

Tim Bret Day, in his images shot for 2003 Xelibri mobile phones, made direct reference to male beauty and the ideal. The product is specifically the mobile phone cover. Parallels were drawn between this cover and male physical beauty. Both were spoken of as suits; beautiful transformative suits. The male models in all shots appeared to wear very little. In fact they were wearing suits that totally enclosed the whole body; zip closure beauty suits over flabby less than ideal male bodies. The copy in 2003 Italian Vogue read, “Turn this brute into an Adonis”, alluding to both mobile phone and male body. The humour in these images parallels my own practice.

Perhaps the photographic practitioner whose work most resonated during the visual research was Joel-Peter Witkin. His black and white images confront and challenge what we may believe to be beautiful. His deployment of collaged, dismembered body parts, amputees and the disfigured, questions the duality of the beautiful and ideal. Beauty, in Witkin’s lexicon, can be defined by imperfection, incompleteness and transition. Body parts are sometimes missing, isolated or separate - recalling and countering the taxonomy of the ideal. The gaze does not diminish those that populate this realm. Witkin’s images are simultaneously grotesque and exquisite.

Witkin’s use of mise-en-scene and formatting was also intriguing and informative. His allusions to the classical and the mythological imbue his images with a transcendental, other-worldly quality and his use of the frame references the stage and theatre9. Technically and aesthetically, Witkin alludes to the genesis and

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9. Fashion must be viewed as performance and theatre on the runway and in magazines

Richard Sawdon
Smith, Simon I, 1997

Richard Sawdon
Smith, Simon II, 1997
Richard Sawdon Smith’s award winning image of his friend Simon, Simon 97, has a tragic strength and fragility; a duality that is central to my own investigations. Taken just before Simon’s death from HIV/AIDS, the image’s poignancy lies in the awareness, I believe, of the temporal, corporeal nature of contemporary masculinity.

There is something of a dark stillness that resides within the oeuvre of both Witkin and Sawdon Smith. This is an elusive quality that I strive to embed within my own making and its material record.

In collaborating with fashion photographer Monty Coles, at the projects conclusion, I sought to not merely document the wardrobe but further, to imbue its imaging with the same quality of stillness, quiet and melancholy, of the pause in time that may well be unbroken and infinite.

I had employed the trope of masking throughout the collection to maintain the integrity of The Fabricated Man’s identity. Even if the contingency arose, for technical or logistical reasons, that several individual models came to represent The Fabricated Man, the mask would level and render the Man as one; both collective and individual. The mask also awarded permission for the model to inhabit a reflective and internal space even under the inquisitive eye of the camera. I hoped that this reflection might also pervade the image.

I gave minimal direction to Coles. As much as possible, I let the garments speak for themselves. I showed him a handful of images in order to communicate the pose.

*Peter Allan. Roam, 2001*
These were pivotal images that had informed the design of the collection and included images of Travis Fimmel, Samuel de Cubber, Eugene Sandow and Samuel Oldknow. I specified a white background and let Coles interpret the garments as photographer; employing his own rhetoric, that of the genre.

There is a quality that Coles recognised and expressed through the lens in his response to the garments, to *The Fabricated Man*. There is a quiet and there is the immeasurable reflective hiatus.

I have employed photography as a medium of both documentation and creativity for many years. This predates and punctuates my practice as a fashion maker. I include here some photographic work of my own that predates this project. As a multi-media student in 2001, I photographed my own body and other male bodies. I used my own form as navigable map and canvas. I became interested in photographing the male body and as a result exploring masculinities. The images are early explorations of masculinities and testify to the ongoing place that scopophilia has within my practice. They are the genesis of this project. The image of Roam is an early incarnation of *The Fabricated Man*. The halo is a hubcap and the robe is a bed sheet. This project will develop into further explorations in which the male body, the male body in fashion, and imaging of the male body will remain central.

*Peter Allan. The Bind Military Jacket, 2005*
Peter Allan. The Tone Military Jacket, 2005
Chapter 2 - Reference List

Simblet, S 2001 *Anatomy for the Artist*, Dorling Kindersley Limited
David Beckham for Emporio Armani.
UNDERWEAR + THE PHALLUS - *The Phallic Glove*

1. The Importance of Imaging

As a result of the phenomenal commercial success of men’s designer underwear the Adonis has become highly visible. The image of Travis Fimmel as the ideal, the Adonis and the paradigm is a key visual reference to which my project’s exploration of underwear responds. Because the underwear clad Adonis is ubiquitous, all (men and women, gay and straight) may view him and his parts without any censor or inhibition. This includes viewing the phallus, that part which ultimately, in hegemonic terms defines the man. This is not the same as viewing the penis, which is (generally speaking) prohibited¹.

The marketing strategy in the case of men’s designer underwear is relatively straightforward. An image is constructed that is clearly erotic in its intentions. The image features the product (underpants) on a beautiful young man. Sometimes the beautiful young man is a celebrity². He is constructed within the image to be the envy of heterosexual men, the object of desire for heterosexual women and (unobtainably?) for gay men. He becomes objectified.

The product, we are told, usually by text or visual rhetoric, is the focus. The Adonis wears the product and this product emphasises

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¹. Samuel De Cubber in the 2002 YSL M7 fragrance print ad.
². For example, David Beckham, football superstar and front-page Metrosexual for Emporio Armani underwear.

Travis Fimmel, Calvin Klein Adonis.
the phallus. Within the image, the crotch is smoothed over so that the contour of the genitals is no longer visible. As a result the phallus is enhanced, either digitally or through the application of two pairs of underpants, or even both (The Gruen Transfer, 2008). The penis is rendered illegible and the phallus takes its place. This strategy has a twofold effect. The phallus is enlarged whilst it is also is masked. It becomes unseen, mythologised.

These strategies are aimed at an enormous customer base. Men who may not engage with fashion on all its levels will buy designer underwear. Women will also buy it for them. These men may buy designer underwear as a little piece of luxury in the same way that they may purchase the designer fragrance or the designer wallet. It may peep over the pant waistband to prove that ‘fashion’ is being worn but any conventional association of fashion with the feminine is tempered by the functionality of the garment and its proximity to the phallus. The designer underwear may also act as an identifier with the model - Adonis, sports star, celebrity - and consequently with his presence, his power, and his phallic potency. The underwear affords a little piece, a vicarious piece of idealised masculinity. The magnified yet imagined phallus becomes collective and democratic; the associated potency becomes shared.

I designed underwear to test these ideas and the images that transmit them. Underwear was also selected for testing so that a syntagmatic balance would be created with the torso. Having begun with a critique of the upper body, it followed that the lower half of the body should also be tested. (The pant will be investigated at a later date.)

Long Johns, the hygienic and healthy, less glamorous option.

Peter Allan. The Phallic Glove test. 2005
The approach may seem technically straightforward. A covering was constructed for the male genitals in cotton elastomeric blend material. This covering was not a pouch that veiled, obscured and mystified. It was more in the nature of a ‘glove’ that delineated and described. It was comprised of a tube for the penis and a sack for the scrotum. The glove’s pattern and making followed the same lines of shaping and construction as nature. The glove was incorporated into tights of the same fabric. The effect was of ‘long johns’ (ankle length male underwear) that made obvious and outlined the genitals without revealing them. The test brought together a male garment frequently cited as unsexy with a location on a man’s body widely held to be taboo. The banal was juxtaposed beside provocative.

The test garment references the taboo 2002 YSL M7 fragrance print advertisement. Samuel De Cubber, the model in the YSL image is naked, but not necessarily nude. He reclines passively, gaze averted. His legs are open and his genitals are fully exposed. There is a "loss of mystery" (Berger, 1972 p. 59). He is familiar and banal. De Cubber’s flaccid penis does not have an erotic focus. In contrast Femmel's crotch is eroticised by the proximity of hand resting suggestively and protectively on his inner thigh and, of course, the masking underwear. This veiled exhibitionism; this eroticism is "shame as a kind of display" (Berger 1972, p.49). The Calvin Klein underwear becomes fig-leaf.

The glove heightens this shame and display through the complete encasement and concealment of the genitals, yet this display is rendered banal by paradoxically revealing the genitals through graphic description, whilst not revealing them.

*Samuel De Cubber. YSL M7.2002.*
The glove underwear responded to topical issues in the area of men's health and genital modification, specifically surgical penis enlargement, male circumcision and foreskin restoration. The glove as an added layer of skin made the penis larger whilst it also, in some ways, looked and behaved like an ersatz foreskin.

The glove can be simultaneously pragmatic, banal and playful. Because of its elasticity the glove could accommodate discrete physical requirements without removal. Urination and the erect penis are accommodated without any inconvenience or discomfort to the wearer. The glove becomes one with the body. It offers choice in healthy dressing as men's underwear is periodically condemned (much like women's shoes) for being too brief and too tight. Fashionable briefness and tightness are said to be the enemy of potency. Boxer shorts, once a fashion pariah, are now universally stylish items of menswear (especially, in some quarters, if the waistband is exposed). Many men prefer boxer shorts so that they can healthily "freeball". Many men will not wear boxers and prefer briefs because they feel more secure and hygienic. The glove allows freeballing and provides support. It offers the best of both worlds.

This seriocomic interpretation attempted to diffuse the tension that surrounds the issue of phallic display and dress through desacralisation.

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3. Men's underwear was brief and tight in the 1970s. The Jockey was the preferred undergarment for men in 1970s Australia. It was ubiquitous, so much so that the brand name became the garment genre. They were and still are referred to by the diminutive "Jocks" remains within Australian slang, even though a good number of people using the expression may not be familiar with the garment itself. It is only a matter of time before this fashion in men's underwear is again adopted.

4. Freeballing, also referred to as "going commando" (a less gender specific term), is a mode of dress without underwear. It can be done by both males and females alike and offers a natural, unhampered area for genitals. [http://www.freeballing.com/](http://www.freeballing.com/)
2. Speculative Responses

The investigation of the image presented a raft of questions.

- Had I made a mask (a banal mask) that in the process of revealing yet not (unacceptably) revealing the penis, transformed the potentially visible penis into the phallus, the signifier of masculine power?
- In unmasking the phallus (Fimmel’s veiled crotch bulge) and making the penis visible had I undermined the power of the phallus and transformed it into the penis (De Cubbers procreative member)?
- Was one mask replaced by another so that the connotation remained phallic?
- Had I been able to, through isolating them, comment on the complex beauty of the male genitals (not the phallus) as as interesting and individual as the hand or the ear? Had I facilitated the scopophilic gaze?§
- Had I conventionalised the male genitals and made them anonymous? Would this grant permission for the wearer to say, “I am (indecently) exposing myself”?
- Was the garment a set of binary oppositions?
  - Phallus / penis
  - Nude / naked
  - Concealed / revealed
  - Banal / erotic
  - Practical / useless
- Had I exaggerated male inhibition / reluctance, the fear of being seen, compared and judged through the detail of the mask?
- Had I transmogrified the genitals through cloth and effected disembodiment?

§, Georgia O’Keefe, Joel-Peter Witkin and Robert Mapplethorpe are, to name a few, practitioners who focus the scopophilic gaze upon the beauty and intricacy of the human genitals.
These layered, complex ruminations and reflections are paradoxical yet they all, both on their own and collectively, offer new perspectives revealing the unexpected.

In the next phase of investigation the relationship between the textile and the body will be taken further. The genital glove will act as a catalyst for experiments that embrace the whole body in order to continue testing the mask and the nude.

When I juxtaposed the image of the glove underwear with the image of Mapplethorpe’s *Man in the Polyester Suit*, I found an uncanny similarity. The glove underwear was not a conscious premeditated, deliberate response to Mapplethorpe's image. Had this image been responded to without any conscious awareness? The association makes it possible to read the skin of the man in Mapplethorpe’s image as cloth, just as the genitals in the image of the glove are recognisable as both skin and cloth. His genitals may be viewed as textile, different from the polyester of his suit but cloth all the same. Mapplethorpe's image becomes non-confrontational and approachable, not phallic when viewed in the context of a dialogue between the two images.

I had decided at the end of the first phase of making that working with the same fit model and establishing an ongoing relationship with the model could best avoid problems of fit and sizing.

Most of the gloves’ dimensions were based on easily accessed statistics, measurements based on the average of the erect penis\(^6\). The glove’s girth and length were based on these measurements. The glove was cut so that it might easily accommodate an

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\(^6\) Finding consistent statistics for the average erect penis was not easy. There were considerable variances. Eventually I decided to go with the commonly held average. This was an average that is understood between men as the norm. I used a length of 15cm in response to this almost folkloric standard. I have heard the expression “a good six inches” innumerable times, most frequently in the company of other gay men. The girth of four inches (10 cm.) was used for the same reasons.
erection. The position of the pubic bone and the perineum was established on a new fit model, a different model to the one used in the first phase. This model found the experience from measurement through to fitting and photo-documentation difficult. I felt that the rapport between maker and model required for an ongoing relationship and the success of the project was missing.

It was becoming clearer that the garments should be made to measure. There was a danger that the process might become about size. The matter of size was inescapable but within the hierarchy of issues tested it was not paramount. If the issue of size had been tested within this second phase of making, then the glove would have been the vehicle to test male attitudes, insecurity and hubris towards penis size. It was not the penis itself that was being tested. It should be recognised that because the project originally had no ongoing fit model, that the glove - like the military jackets - would exaggerate the difference in the dimensions of a new model.

The relationship was like that between tailor and client. There has always been a high degree of intimacy between the tailor and the man. It is a finely balanced relationship that requires mutual trust and confidence. Such a ‘body’ and mind was needed to advance the project.

The project had progressed to a point to where more syntagmatic strategies could be tested. The upper and lower body would be unified and the whole body investigated and represented. Signification and fabrication would be tested together.
Chapter 3 References

*The Gruen Transfer*, 2008, ABC TV, series 1, episode 2, underwear episode
CHAPTER 4
MAY - OCTOBER 2006
AXES OF CLOTH - Underwear and Suit

In this phase the foci for some of the issues that have been addressed were reversed. The perspective was shifted. I had looked at the ideal male body and its taxonomy as the fortified architecture of hegemonic masculinity. Scopophilia had been acknowledged and incorporated. The gaze, my gaze had become critical.

This phase of exploration considered the internal man and the anxieties that are part of the crisis of masculinities.

The issues addressed were
• Male emotional opacity
• Male masking and veiling
• Fear of feminisation
• Scopophobia, the fear of being looked at by other men
• Fear of imperfection

These issues were not necessarily addressed separately. They were at all times tested within the same garment. Because the issues are symptomatic of the one multifaceted crisis, they are often inseparable. These traits, whilst profiling the interior of the man besieged by change, the man in crisis, also have their opposites which describe the New Man, the Metrosexual and the Pro-Feminist Man. These traits in opposition may be read as transparent, feminine and open.
1. The Importance of the Pose

The testing, the reification, and the photographic recording all necessitated ongoing reflection upon the pose. It was vital that the pose of the model continue to be unequivocal, neutral and objective. The pose of the model most commonly used in the context of science, anatomy and life drawing was made the standard for the duration of the project. This pose had been referenced in the first phase as one of the structures upon which the military jackets were designed. If the model were to adopt a pose that was not objective an erroneous narrative might emerge.

The reading of garment and image could be vastly altered, as could the intentions and outcomes of the tests. If the model, during the testing of the glove underwear adopted Fimmel’s pose or De Cubber’s pose then the test would have been skewed and to some degree invalidated. Testing the pose (of glamour or availability for example) was a tangent that was not considered during this phase. This would involve embarking on a tangent that has the potential to be a project in its own right. It is a trajectory of investigation that may be taken in the future.


*The neutral pose.*
Simblett’s 2001 Anatomy for the Artist.
2. Vertical Axis + Horizontal Axis

This design trajectory was initiated and guided by referencing photographers of the male nude who employed the trope of veiling, wrapping and draping to obscure, reconfigure or confine the body.

Jim Mooney in his 1996 *From the Shroud* series draped the nude male body in wet cloth large enough to cover the whole body. The totality of the body is obscured but detailed areas where the cloth has clung are enough for us to decipher the body. The work speaks of masking, concealment and revelation of the nude male body. The device of the sheet was appropriated and modified to test opacity, masking and scopophobia. A synergy was sought between planes of cloth and the naked male body in order to create the building blocks of experimental garments. This would involve several stages within which a dialogue between man and cloth was enabled. A photographic series was produced through the process of photo-documentation.

1. I stretched a large square of cotton elastomeric material vertically whilst a life model (a third and different one) pressed his naked body against the fabric. The model adopted the open and objective pose. Face, hands and genitals only could be faintly read. The impression formed that the model was imprisoned behind the cloth, obscured and veiled.

2. A pair of white cotton knit gloves was inserted into another sheet of the same fabric at the points where the model’s hands had been visible. We can imagine that it was the same sheet of cloth for the sake of the narrative. Genitals of cotton elastomeric material were inserted into this sheet. The pattern for the genitals...
was lifted from the glove underwear. The model, assuming the same pose, pressed his body against the cloth, this time inserting hands and genitals into the corresponding gloves. The impression of imprisonment was transformed into emergence and openness.

3.
Into a third sheet of white cotton elastomeric material, a pair of white cotton gloves was inserted in place of the genitals. The model inserted his hands into the gloves and covered the genital area with both hands. We can imagine that the genitals were still gloved as they were in the previous step and the gloved hands were cupping the gloved genitals. The pose was transformed from open to closed and deflective.

This vertical axis of cloth would have, with enough progressive steps, cut the model in half from head to foot. It was not necessary to make each step for the process to be understood. We can imagine them as frames of an animated film. The axis of the cloth was then changed to the horizontal.

4.
In tipping the axis from vertical to horizontal, the cloth would completely envelope the head, torso, arms and hands down to the waist. In both the vertical and horizontal operations of emergence and envelopment, it was necessary to imagine the cloth as fluid, as liquid that adhered to the body, defining the body and in some part, taking the place of the body. The steps, which were not made concrete, may be imagined all the same as the frames of an animated film. This operation enclosed the top half of the body that had not been covered by the glove underwear of the previous phase of iteration. The top half of the body was masked and veiled. The lower half of the body was left exposed, naked and vulnerable. As the experiment progressed questions and speculations emerged.

Robyn Shaw, Screen Test. 2002.
With his upper half masked but his lower half exposed, including genitals, would the man feel safe or threatened? Would he feel invisible or scopophobic (Malanga 1985, p.23)? When the horizontal plane of cloth that divided upper and lower body was allowed to drop, the body became fully enclosed and invisible.

5. The collapsed plane transformed the covering into that most feminine article of clothing, a dress. Does this feminise the man? Does the man feel physically safer but feel his gender obscured and masculinity questioned?

6. The experiment was repeated. This time, when the axis was tipped from vertical to horizontal, it was the lower half of the body that was covered and the top half left exposed. It is to be imagined that the horizontal plane of cloth was swapped at the point when the previous step’s skirt was in collapse. The new horizontal plane of cloth is introduced to the body in a state of collapse that reads as skirt, as a non-bifurcated lower body garment. The same question was posed. Does this feminise the man?

7. In the next step we are to imagine that the collapsed skirt is raised to become a flat horizontal plane revealing the genitals beneath. In fact, it is not the genitals that are revealed but the recreated genital glove from the previous phase of making. The possibility

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1. Gerard Malanga describes scopophobia as “the fear of looking” and also as “the fear of being looked at”.

of scopophobia was again considered. Does the man feel less visible with his lower half dressed but with his gloved genitals exposed? There can be no unequivocal absolute answers to these questions. They are speculations and the answers would differ from man to man; from spectator to spectator. Also, the context in which the wearer was placed would affect the response.

8.

The next step involved the union of the two horizontal planes so that the completely obscured body appeared to be cut in half by one horizontal axis of cloth. The process of emergence and liberation was reversed so the masking and obscurement was privileged. As the body had been progressively revealed through the manipulation, it was again concealed.

It was upon completion of these experiments, and this reflection, that I recognised a strengthened affiliation with the work of Joel-Peter Witkin and his sometimes shocking manipulation of the human body. A parallel was realised between these experiments and his 2000 *Corpus Medius*. This image has the dismembered and isolated lower half of a male body as its subject. Jonathan Webb’s 2002 portraits, *Gino (reclining)* and *Gino (on hands)* resonated for the same reason. These consciously confrontational images challenge suppositions of ideal physical male beauty and ask the viewer whether incompleteness and imperfection can be beautiful and masculine. It is certainly accepted and unquestioned in the case of headless, armless and legless Greco-Roman statuary, incomplete when excavated. The dismembered, ideal male torso is an established convention within western image making. The cropping of photographic images of the male nude bears witness to this². Robert Flynt’s complex image brings together the classical, the incomplete and the cropped. This concept of dismemberment and beauty emerged as a potential line of enquiry. It would be considered as part of future trajectories within the project.

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2. The packaging for most men’s designer underwear, certainly Calvin Klein, features the ideal male torso cut off at the thigh and the neck/chin area.

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*Joel Peter Witkin*, *Corpus Medius*. 2000.
The possibilities within the notion of completeness were considered at this point. It followed that the two outcomes of the horizontal plane test might be bought together as one. The horizontal plane could be made redundant if the upper and lower were to be reconciled as one garment and therefore, one body. This unification manifested as a full body glove or sheath - a body suit. This suit was made from the same cotton elastomeric material. Functionality was served by the insertion of an unobtrusive centre back zip. This 'body suit', or 'body glove' enclosed the whole body like a sheath or even like a condom.

The ambiguous body suit begged the same speculatory responses as its parent garments. Does it make the man more or less visible? Do we primarily see a cloth glove in the shape of a man? Do we see a nude man?

Is the man shielded from the scopophobic gaze? Does the complete veiling foster the phallic? Is the potential created for the erotic through the design and fabrication? Or is the opposite true? If comparison is drawn with Bruno’s nude suit, which appeared after these tests, it becomes obvious that these speculations are tempered by context and medium.

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The isolated, truncated, yet beautiful torso. Travis Fimmel. Calvin Klein packaging.

Bruno’s pink cashmere "nude suit". 2009

3. Sasha Baron Cohen’s character Bruno wore a pink cashmere "nude suit" to the premiere of his eponymous movie in Berlin on 21 June 2009.
3. The Fabric + Binary Oppositions

As opacity and masking had been tested, so then were their binary opposites of transparency and revelation. I made the same body suit in flesh coloured stretch net. Stretch net is a fabrication that is most frequently used in the making of women’s underwear, lingerie and eveningwear. Its properties of transparency and strength makes it ideal for these applications. Its connotation is feminine and, frequently, sexy. It is rarely used in menswear and, if it is, usually in a way that might be read as gay⁴.

The combination of strength and transparency in a gender context, from a hegemonic perspective, may seem oxymoronic. According to gender stereotyping, men are strong (physically) and women are open and transparent (emotionally). The pro-feminist view sees both men and women as strong and transparent (Pease 2000, p.1). Did the reworking of the body suit in a fabrication that signifies the feminine mean that the male body was simultaneously feminised and made open? Certainly the visual effect was more open and the detail of the body was made somewhat more legible. But the body was not necessarily feminised. Rather than feminising the model, “his masculinity was re-emphasised by being veiled” (Bruzzi 1997, p.148). Stella Bruzzi uses these words to describe the effect when Cary Grant dons “a precariously diaphanous woman’s dressing gown”⁵ in Howard Hawke’s screwball comedy from 1938, Bringing Up Baby. The transparent, feminine fabrication of the glove - the body suit, reinforced gender and masculinity through dramatic opposition.

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⁴ I made innumerable dance party T-shirts for myself, friends and clients from transparent stretch net to wear to Mardi Gras and Melbourne dance parties during the 1990s and into the 2000s.

⁵ When he has nothing else to wear he dons Katherine Hepburn’s negligee. Surprised by her rather formidable Aunt, he leaps into the air and proclaims that he “has suddenly turned gay”.

This result was confirmed when the torso of the *Bind Jacket* was tested in a neutral Neo-classically toned cream organza. Organza is also a feminine signifier. It is chiefly, but not exclusively, used in women’s eveningwear and connotes delicacy, lightness and, of course, femininity. It might be seem as a binary opposite to wool suiting. Organza has traditionally been made of silk which may be read as a feminine opposite to masculine wool. This binary opposite of textiles linked to gender and tailoring is central to Flugel’s *Great Male Renunciation* (Flugel 1976).

The exaggeration of the graphic male signifiers of pectorals and abdominals as lines, written boldly on the body beneath the organza torso, countered the femininity of the organza. The body was made *more* masculine through the application of feminine (Camille 2001, p.26). The shoulder pads, visible and highlighted through the organza, added to the masculinisation.

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6. Michael Camile says that, in the *Book of Hours* the Duc de Berry’s “jewels, silky surfaces and miniaturised objects were not emblematic of the feminine at all but signs of predominately male power—”

7. The emphatic effect of the medium can likewise be seen in Grace Lau’s 1996 image from the *Bound* series. The male nude is made more nude and masculine by being bound in cling wrap.
When I made the body suit in stretch net an important modification was made. The penis glove was extended and exaggerated. It became long enough to be worn as a tie, “connecting larynx to crotch” (Edwards 1997, p.42). The vertical trace of the net tie was unmistakably phallic, mimicking the erect penis. The phallic emphasis was complete when the tie was wound and fastened around a stand-alone stiff white collar (Flugel 1976, p.76). The penis, inside the glove/tie was made vertical.

This encasing and vertical positioning of the penis recalled the mechanisms of the codpiece and its unambiguously phallic intentions. The tension created by the phallic tie meant that the wearer would be highly conscious of the genitals and throat and the connection between them with every movement. Sitting, standing, walking, running, twisting would recalibrate the tension and, consequently, the look and the sensation. The dynamic, transformative play of the tie made the garment type unclear so that genres shifted and hybridised. It was underwear, tie and codpiece. The femininity of the fabrication was further countered.

This phallic play would become unseen and private, shielded from the gaze under a buttoned jacket and pants. However, if the jacket and pants were made of a transparent fabric then this play would draw the gaze.

The phallic had been tested in underwear. It was then tested in outerwear, in the pants. To make a consistent syntagmatic set, the pants were made in the same organza as the jacket - uniting the two garments as a suit. The pants/trousers fly is conspicuously phallic. Its location, its size and its shape all approximate and emphasise the male member. The dimensions of the fly welt

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8, Flugel identifies the stiff collar as phallic. Reference is also being made here to the hegemony of white middle class men who are still called “white collar”. It may also be speculated that the head of the wearer becomes the head of the penis and the collar becomes the corona and even the retracted foreskin.

Peter Allan. The Phallic Glove/Tie, 2006.
are close enough to the average erect penis. The fact that the fly points downwards does not make it any less phallic.

The layered opacity of the fly welts in the organza pants, contrast against the transparency of the organza front pants, and read as graphic and phallic. At the same time, the layered pockets were reconfigured into a divided scrotum. This phallic fly was extended further. The length of the fly was increased by four centimetres over three garments so that the fly in the final pants was twenty-seven centimetres and almost reached the knee; referencing a common male fantasy. Through this play with fly dimensions I made reference to men’s anxiety surrounding penis size (Clare 2001, p. 6). This anxiety has become widespread and made acute by the proliferation of pornography and the increasing presence of the male nude as a subject within photographic practice. This anxiety is symptomatic of the Adonis Complex.

The crotch of each pant was lowered by the same value that the phallic fly grew so that the crotch of the final pant in the series was just above the knee. This distortion alludes to the low waist/low crotch jeans and pants still favoured within some youth subcultures that valorise the phallus in dress and behaviours. The lower the crotch: the longer the phallus. The crotch was so low in the final pant that movement was impaired thereby making a wide legged ‘manly’ gait impossible. The phallus becomes a shackle. The technical solution would be to widen the pant leg at the crotch to create more movement. This probably would have resulted in a skirt-like form, possibly culottes, and the intervention of the oppositional feminine. The contrasting opaque seam on the back pant made reference to the display of buttocks by the aforementioned subcultures, which along with the phallic fly,

Bruce Weber, L’uomo Vogue. 1982
**Bronzino Agnolo.** Portrait of Guidobaldo della Rovere, 1531-1532. The power of the magnified and armoured phallus, the codpiece.

**Peter Allan.** The Organza Pant Phallic Fly Series. 2006
was appropriated by men in the mainstream during the 1990s and into the new millennium. This décolletage seemed to increase proportionally with the phallic display. The more the super-phallus became veiled; the more the focus shifted to the buttocks creating a confusing mixed message.

When the organza pant and jacket were brought together as a suit, the male signifiers in both garments merged to form a narrative of masculinity, of the ideal and the phallic - from shoulder pads, through pectorals and abdominals, to the phallus of the fly and the scrotum of the pant pockets. Underwear and outerwear formed a layered syntagmatic ensemble and the phallus was animated and elevated to the vertical through the mechanism of the phallic tie/glove/codpiece and the stiff collar.

The pant was actually a pair of shorts that finished just below the knee. The pant was once regarded as a garment so masculine that it was metonymic. A boy’s rite of passage would have included the advance from shorts to longs. Men of all ages can now be seen wearing shorts that vary in length from the knee to the calf. This has been a result of the influence of sport on casual menswear. When matched with the organza jacket and the net underwear, some of the shorts masculine signification seemed undermined by its proportions. Some of the masculine re-emphasis was dissipated by the association with boyhood and, perhaps, even eternal adolescence.

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11. Alexander McQueen introduced the ‘Bumster’ in 1996, which became de rigueur in men’s and women’s wear for some time. It is still resisting change even as the early adopters wear higher waists and crotches. Although the waist and crotch was lowered, they lacked the phallic swagger of the oversized pants worn by rappers and Hip Hop artists and Homies.

12. Domestic power may still be attributed to the pant wearer.
4. Changes in the Archetype - the Waif

2006 witnessed the toppling of the Adonis as the dominant male fashion archetype. The challenger had been hovering in the wings for some years. Now he was on every runway at fashion festivals and populating men’s fashion publications. He was the antithesis of the Adonis. He was thin (sometimes alarmingly) and often quite pale. His body rarely displayed much in the way of muscular definition. He was called either the ‘Kidult’ (because he often looked little older than a child) or the ‘Waif’ (as his female counterpart had long been called). The shift in paradigm was strategic and reactionary. Hedi Slimane, then designer for Dior Homme, who was most associated with the promotion of the Waif and who had spearheaded the takeover of the new archetype said in I-D magazine in February 2005,

*I work with boys who emphasise reality rather than clichés of strength, power and virility. I try to objectify and carefully look at a new generation of men who live out their masculinity without any of the retarded psychology of the archetypal male. (p.171)*

A full year later in February 2006, I-D magazine ran an article about the German modelling agency Nine Daughters and a Stereo, established by two young women in 2002.

*Working with the likes of Hedi Slimane and Raf Simons, the German based collective Nine Daughters and a Stereo are searching for the perfect boy. The Nine Daughters kids... are generation “Why?” Distinctly modern and culturally challenging, the girls have been integral in pioneering a new body image. Their ideology asks questions, alters perceptions of beauty and addresses*
the contradictory roles of masculinity and femininity – often blurring the two in a forward-thinking, modern way. The antithesis of an all American Abercrombie idealism, theirs is the future…(p.111)

The all American Abercrombie referred to is more correctly, fashion label Abercrombie & Fitch. Their popular, collectable and widely distributed quarterly mail order catalogues fore-grounded the increasingly sexualised and gratuitously undressed Adonis until, under pressure from the American League of Decency, they were discontinued. (Carr and Rozhon 2003) Frequently photographed and creatively directed by Bruce Weber, the catalogues unsubtly dispelled any doubts of the absolute apotheosis of muscular masculinity.

To me the Kidult/Waif was problematic on three counts. Firstly, one potentially unobtainable physical ideal was replaced by another, albeit at the opposite end of the scale. Instead of a celebration of diversity springing from change, a dichotomous polarity appeared. Both paradigms placed the man in positions whereby physical and mental health could be compromised through body modification. Karl Lagerfeld physically re-invented himself in response to the new archetype.

One fine morning I woke up and decided that I was no longer happy with my physique. Although I was overweight, I had gotten along fine and had no health problems. But I suddenly wanted to dress differently, to wear clothes designed by Hedi Slimane…But these fashions, modelled by very, very slim boys – and not men of my age – required me to lose at least eighty pounds…I did not think it was possible to lose so much weight in one year.

(Lagerfeld 2005)¹³

¹³, So read the Product Description of his weight loss diet book on Amazon.com.
The second problem lies in the disparity between the designer and media message and the male and female consumer response. Whilst the slim, boyish physique was justified by designers and media as pro-feminist - that is they saw it blurring gender, as androgynous - it was not necessarily seen as inclusive of the feminine on the street. It was embraced as a 'rock look'; a look idealised by a new wave of male rock stars like Pete Doherty (sometime muse of Hedi Slimane) whose outlook could not confidently be called pro-feminist and whose many drug convictions may have said something about his pencil thin profile.

The third issue involves age. The acclamation of the Kidult as the new paradigm indicates the emergence of a dangerous ageism within the context of masculinity and fashion. Women have long had to deal with youth as it's own currency. Men may now have to do the same. This is one of the branches of the crisis of men and masculinity. It is partly the price that men may have to pay in entering the traditionally feminine terrain of 'fashion'. The definition of masculinity through commodification is further compounded and conflicted by the marketing of youth as masculinity.

The Adonis had not completely lost his foothold. He was relegated to the preferred masculine ideal of a handful of designers who continued to project an image of sexy beefcake.¹⁴

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¹⁴ Dolce and Gabbana and D Squared in particular.
The ambivalence felt toward both the Adonis and the Waif gave me cause for reflection. The conflict between celebration of male beauty and the criticism of the archetypes (opposites but both promulgated by the fashion industry, the fashion media and beyond) added to the crisis within the process.

I can admit that I am critical of both paradigms when they appear to be offered as the only choices. I see the use of these bodies to commodify, objectify and exploit men as dangerous and reprehensible in both cases.

There is great beauty in both the Adonis and the Waif when they are not cynical, mostly commercial constructs. Within this project, I celebrate their beauty but not in the same way as they are appropriated by power structures - gendered and industrial. In these cases, the two opposing paradigms are taken too far and impact negatively on all types of men in an exponentially expanding market within a shrinking world.

This phase saw my testing of fabrications that have traditionally been viewed as feminine signifiers. The next phase will test the inverse. Fabrics that are still classified as masculine signifiers, even though they have long been applied to womenswear, will be tested in opposition, as difference. There is actually no fabrication, once only found in menswear, that is not now used in womenswear.

Wool suiting is invariably read as masculine even when used in the construction of womenswear and worn on the female body. This fabrication will be tested in the next phase.
Chapter 4 References

David Beckham. Emporio Armani underwear collection.
By early 2008, a moderated physical masculinity had appeared on runways and menswear magazine pages. It was not as extreme as either the Adonis or the Waif. This new manifestation was positioned between the two opposites and appeared to be a reaction against both, the androgynous Waif and the hyper-masculine Adonis. It mediated between the two paradigms and offered an alternative that could as read as more natural, certainly less acute.

At the beginning of that year Yohji Yamamoto declared that menswear had become too feminine (Blanks 2008) He was voicing a growing concern that was, in part, a response to the ubiquitous Waif. Yamamoto had, within his practice as one of the foremost exponents of exploratory and evolutionary menswear, consistently opposed and rejected the perpetuation of traditional hegemonic masculinities.

He was clearly responding to representations of men in fashion that seemed abject. The menswear label in Australia that took the Waif to its limits was Material Boy. The label’s print campaign of Spring/Summer 2008 Celebration of Your Inner Gay collection exhorted men to “celebrate their inner gay” (Farren 2008) Thin androgynous male models wore conspicuous accoutrements that usually signify the feminine, ambiguous ‘bowl cut’ bobbed hairdos and multiple sets of false eyelashes and nail polish. The exaggerated poses were reminiscent of the late sixties fashion model Peggy Moffatt, muse for unisex designer Rudi Gernreich.
The Material Boy garments had a lot of decorative detailing. The overall effect was disorientating. The only way the viewer of these images could know that this was menswear and that the model was male, was because it was called menswear, and therefore, the model might be male - certainly not by its signifiers. This alone was not problematic. It has long ceased to be provocative to use female models to present menswear. The text however did not ask men to get in touch with their inner girl or embrace their feminine side. The inner feminine or Anima (Connell 2005 p.12-13) was clumsily and superficially (perhaps even inadvertently) conjured through appropriation of signifiers. Men were urged to celebrate their gay. Yet it was the performative feminine that was offered and, in the process, gay was equated with feminine, which is still the enduring predominant hetero-normative assumption. In this instance, girl and gay appear to be same. The image also reads as drag. The wearing of feminine signifiers by a male as a performance of female is often, mistakenly, thought to be the same as gay. This gayness can be worn and therefore, taken off. It is surface. The image and the text revisit and reinforce the conventional prejudice, through the association of gay with feminine, that fashion is feminine and therefore not the business of men.

The issue of the feminine within the masculine is crucial to my investigations, and one of the foci of my ongoing tests. This duality is privileged in the testing of textiles that traditionally signify either the feminine or the masculine. I have, whenever possible rejected the trope of dressing men as women, in conventional stereotypical trappings, as a way of interpolating the feminine on two counts. Firstly, a handful of iconoclastic,

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1. Connell is speaking of the Anima saying “I am most prone to argue that the feminine interior of masculine men was shaped not only by the life-history of the particular man but also by inherited, ‘archetypal’ images of women”.

2. I am unclear as to the designer’s intentions. They were possibly ingenuous: if this was an attempt at iconoclast and irony I am not sure of its success. The strategy seems more to be a conceit that appears to me to have backfired.
irreverent menswear designers have already challenged fixed and narrow concepts of masculinity through the heightened, calculated interpolation of unmistakably feminine garment types. Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood, Rudi Gemreich, Walter Van Bierendonk and Moschino, amongst others, are in that company. Although their strategies often appeared literal, the intention for none of these designers was drag. They were not dressing men as women or trying to transform men into women to render them effeminate or genderless. By juxtaposing unmistakable feminine garments and accessories with unmistakable masculine bodies, the two are revealed as constructs that have been sites of contention since the 1960s. These constructs are made palpable through theatricality.

This approach can be quite literal. It has already been done, very successfully. Although my intentions have much in common, I believe that the course I have taken is more oblique and restrained. The strategies are more open ended, avoiding pre-determination and periphrasis as best as possible. I too am not attempting to turn men into women or quash gender difference.

There is a second reason for taking a different approach. Second wave feminists have rejected many of these stereotypical, conventional ‘feminine’ elements in dress as mechanisms that perpetuated the subordination and disempowerment of women by hegemonic, patriarchal power structures. Many women have abandoned them as manifestations and representations of the feminine. Therefore it seems unproductive to employ

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3. Stylist Ray Petri should also be cited for his trademark adoption of the skirt in menswear images produced for i-D and The Face during the 1980s as part of the Buffalo collective. The Buffalo collective has recently become a reference point in contemporary mens fashion styling targeted at a generation of men not old enough to have any direct memory of the period and its fashion. The silhouette of the period, compared to the now familiar ‘Vale’ looks fresh and innovative.
devices that many women (and men) have judged to be redundant.

The aforementioned moderation of the male body in fashion media and its emergence as a third ‘ideal’ indicated the possibility of diversity and a plurality of masculinities. Whilst the Waif ceased to be projected as the unitary masculine paradigm, the Adonis was reappearing and making up some lost ground. Bruce Weber, the photographer and creative champion of the Adonis was back from the outskirts and again in favour by mid 2008. The new Calvin Klein bodies appeared temperate compared to the previous generation of Calvin Klein models and the familiar bodies that featured in Webers 2008 photo-essays. Even the controversial Abercrombie & Fitch quarterly catalogue was relaunched in the UK in early 2008 (Mesure 2008). The relaunched catalogue showed some restraint but the old formula of barely clad gods and goddesses was revisited. Its pages were again populated by the (often scantily clad or nude) Adonis and, as before, featured photography by Bruce Weber.

There surfaced a possibility that the three co-existing masculine types could transmit a healthy, reassuring message to men within the context of fashion and beyond; that a diversity of physical types might be accommodated and celebrated as the paradigm(s) continued to evolve physically and mentally. The changes demonstrated that masculinity need not be viewed as unitary, fixed and immutable.

4 Of course, it needs to be said that many women have taken ownership of these trappings and transformed them into tools of empowerment, awarding themselves agency of their own femininity. The approach that Madonna has taken to feminism is typical of the third wave feminist.
2. The Articulation of Position + Tone

It became vital at this point in the project’s development to articulate my own position within the work. The question of position had been posed (from within and without) since the project’s inception. It had often been difficult to clarify this position because of my own gender identity and therefore, proximity to the crisis of masculinity. The creation of the Position and Project diagram helped focus this. My position is simultaneously singular and plural, in specific locations and, at the same time, multiple locations. I observe from within groups and without. My position may be catalogued according to the areas defined and described by the diagram.

• I am male and therefore have intimate and innate knowledge. I also have learned knowledge of what a man is supposed to be.
• I am a man who believes in a multiplicity of masculinities.
• I am a gay man and therefore Other and partially outside.
• I am a man who has and continues to be a witness and participant in gender politics but who is still, in some quarters, the Other and outsider.
• I am a fashion researcher and therefore study men in fashion contexts.
• I am a maker/tailor and therefore have some intimate knowledge of the male body.
• I am a teacher within the discipline of menswear design and therefore encourage enquiry, reflection and critical perspectives in my students.
• I am a man who uses fashion to construct and perform identity.
• I am a professional man with many years of experience working with the male body (as well as the female body) as the object to be clothed, for which clothing is engineered.
• I am a man who has been affected by, and who is a critic of an extreme masculinity that rejects unfixed and evolving definitions of masculinities; a masculinity that may regard the flux of fashion as a cause or symptom of pernicious change.
• I am a man with a shared empirical knowledge of many different types of masculinities.
• I am a pro-feminist man who believes in gender parity.

In summary, I am a man who as a researcher observes and critiques; is situated at multiple loci within many shared fields and who is aware of his position outside many other fields.

Recognition of and reflection upon my position within the project helped identify the project’s tone. Acknowledgment and ownership of multiple selves and loci within the diagram and therefore the project had an ameliorating effect. There was less confusion and disorientation regarding tone. There was now an understanding and acceptance that it was possible and appropriate for my tone to shift or co-exist with the contrary without incongruity. Depending on the research question, the issue investigated, the proposition challenged, the reflective response, and the design test - the tone could be unitary, plural or multi-axial. It was important that the tone not be prescriptive, predetermined or self-censored or, at least, to be aware of the danger of this.

Ownership of a full and frequently contradictory tonal register was gradual and evolved with the project. There was some cautionary advice in the early stages of the project regarding specific emotional responses, for example, melancholia. It was only later, as the project advanced, that I became aware of the danger of disallowing, or disowning some responses. As I became aware of, for example a melancholic strain, it was owned and tempered through inclusion in a fluid registry of tonal responses.

It became clearer, as the project progressed and was becoming increasingly layered and complex, that it was not possible or desirable to test the thematic issues singularly, in isolation and exclude the contiguous. It was inevitable that thematic areas would overlap and co-exist within and across garments.

I revisited garment outcomes for further testing. In doing so new garment genres were considered and unforeseen thematic connections emerged. Thematic, design and garment trajectories became concurrently planned and unplanned. As tone may overlap and exist simultaneously, so might design tests and trajectories of exploration. This diachronic, non-reductionist approach meant that space was created for a catalytic, open-ended reflective design process that was both serendipitous and restrained.

At the core of the project’s exploratory operations was the play of reflection and response to the outcomes of design tests. These reflective responses acted as catalysts to activate new phases of testing through design and make.

5. This was during twice-yearly presentations made within the School of Architecture and Design.
It became apparent after reading Victor Burgin’s 1975 essay entitled *Photographic Practice and Art Theory*, that there existed within my design process a methodology of which I had not been fully cognisant. At the core of Burgin’s essay is an analysis and explanation of rhetoric and the role it might play as a toolbox for creative process (Burgin 1975, pp.35-51). Consequently, I became aware that I had already been utilising many of the devices of rhetoric, albeit intuitively, within my design strategies.

Burgin presents rhetorical operations and rhetorical relations. He identifies five rhetorical operations:

1. Repetition
2. Addition
3. Suppression
4. Substitution
5. Inversion

The rhetorical relations are based on a fundamental dichotomy:

- Same – similitude – solidarity
- Other – difference – opposition

Simply speaking (because the schema offered by Burgin becomes dense and complex), the five rhetorical operations are applied to the two rhetorical relations: that which is the same and that which is different. They are also applied to the constituent elements of form and content.

These mechanisms give rise to a suite of rhetorical figures such as Rhyme, Accumulation, Exaggeration, Inversion, Antithesis, Homology and Repetition to name a few. They were deployed as useful mechanisms within my practice as a designer of experimental menswear. The organza jacket is an example of the antithetical inversion and exchange of fabrics. It was the result of replacing the masculine earth toned suiting of the Bind Military Jacket in the feminine of the cream organza. The extended phallic tie of the flesh body suit was the product of exaggeration.

I regard Burgin’s citation of Jacques Durand from his 1970 article as invaluable.

> The myth of ‘inspiration’, of the ‘idea’ reigns in the creation of advertising at the present time. In reality the most audacious advertisements, appear as transpositions of rhetorical figures which have been indexed over the course of numerous centuries. This is explained in that rhetoric is in sum a repertory of the various ways in which we can be ‘original’. It is probable then that the creative process could be enriched and made easier if the creators would take account consciously of a system which they use intuitively.
> (Durand cited in Burgin 1975, p.49)

The bold emphasis is Burgin’s own.

I employed these rhetorical operations and relations within my work as a designer and maker of fashion. I remained conscious of the potential of rhetoric as a tool, as a useful guide and reference, within the design process.
Semiology as a design tool

In *Photographic Practice and Art Theory*, Burgin (1975) prefaces and sets the scene for his analysis and explanation of rhetorical operations by first offering an introduction to Roland Barthes’ *Elements of Semiology*. Although Burgin’s intention is to inform photographic practice, he makes it clear that knowledge of these elements (combined with the operations of rhetoric) are tools to be used in any design enterprise.

Burgin sets out pairs of dichotomous concepts:
- The signifier and the signified.
- Denotation and connotation.
- The syntagm and the paradigm.

Malcolm Barnard (2007), in his *Fashion as Communication*, helpfully places these concepts specifically within the context of fashion, which assisted me in their application within the project.

I have already referred to fabrications, for example, as signifiers. I have identified organza as a signifier of femininity. The signifier (organza) is the concrete, the physical or the expression whilst the signified (femininity) is the concept or the meaning. Malcolm Barnard substantiates this use of the signifier within the realm of fashion. He says that fabrics, textiles, garments and parts of garments can be considered as signifiers (Barnard 2002, p.81). In this sense, I have already identified the suit (concrete) as a signifier of masculinity. It is masculinity (concept) that is signified.

Barnard says that denotation is called a first order of signification and is the literal meaning of a word or image - or in this case article of clothing. It is factual or a description. Connotation is called the second order of signification or meaning and “may be described as the things that the image or word makes a person think or feel” (Barnard 1996, p.85). Burgin offers the useful example of the bowler hat. He says,

> At the level of denotation the signifier ‘owler hat’ will take as it’s signified such a sense as ‘article of clothing to be worn on the head for protection against the elements’. At the level of connotation it may take such signifieds as… “city-ness”.

(Burgin 1975, p.44)

Whilst, broadly speaking, denotation may not vary greatly; the connotation may be quite different for each person.

Burgin (1975, p.43) speaks of the syntagm and the paradigm as axes or planes; the plane of the syntagm is that of addition and the plane of the paradigm is that of substitution. Addition and substitution are also the two fundamental operations of rhetoric. He identifies the axis or plane of the syntagm within fashion as basically vertical. We may speak of a syntagmatic whole or ensemble as hat and shirt and jacket and pants and shoes. These elements are added to each other to make a whole. He identifies the axis or plane of the paradigm as basically horizontal. We may speak of variations of a garment type or varying feature of a garment as paradigmatic. Burgin offers the choice of bowler hat or beret as paradigmatic substitution. Barnard cites the various styles of men’s shirt collars as paradigmatic difference (Barnard 2002, p.92). We may substitute one style of collar for another in the design process. He includes colours and textures...
as elements of syntagmatic and paradigmatic difference. Burgin further identifies the rules of syntagmatic association (the wearing of the shirt under the jacket), and the rules of syntagmatic exclusion (a tie is not worn with a roll-neck jersey). Barnard, writing 25 years after Burgin, points out that these rules can and have been deliberately broken as part of the innovative design process.
4. The Suit Revisited

In a response to these new readings, the suit genre was now tested through a rhetorical inversion of the stretch body suit.
• The soft of the body suit would be made hard.
• The transparency of the body suit would be made opaque.
• The inner (underwear) would be made outer.
• The private (intimate) would be made public.

The properties and characteristics of the fabric would be inverted and exchanged so that an exaggerated antithetical shift in traditional gender signifiers would occur. The ‘feminine’ stretch net would be replaced with the ‘masculine’ wool suiting. This substitution of fabrication facilitated the shift from inner to outer, from underwear to outerwear.

Through several imaginary⁶, evolutionary steps I transformed both the two-piece outerwear suit and the one-piece underwear suit. They were transmogrified; blending and segueing into one, producing a third garment genre - a one-piece outerwear garment, a suit.

This process of blending and evolution had driven the Axes of Cloth in chapter four. The stretch body suit (one of the targets within this test) had emerged through a progressive merging together of planes of cloth, one resembling a dress and one resembling a skirt. When these garments were bought together on the one body, and the two horizontal axes were removed, a fully enveloping stretch body suit emerged.

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⁶ The imaginary steps refer to a design process that happened in my imagination, that are not physically acted out, not reified.
This design test follows the same formula of blending and merging in pursuit of a third garment. In this case the steps are not made concrete. They are played out in my imagination.

The first imaginary step involved the merging of the organza jacket and pant ensemble (two-piece suit) and reduction from two pieces to one. In this imaginary unseen step, the now (unseen) one-piece organza suit developed a basic paradigmatic relationship with the stretch body suit; that is, they were now both one-piece garments. Although the paradigmatic laws were broken, (underwear and outerwear are not true alternatives to one another) the potential or imaginary exchange of one full body garment for another and the exchange of one suit for another was a valid rhetorical operation. The form of the stretch body suit was rationalised so that its distilled parts took on the required shape of a new outerwear suit. This bought the stretch suit closer to the point of complete paradigmatic exchange with the organza suit. The head, feet and hands were eliminated from the full body stretch suit. Then paradigmatic exchange of fabrication, from inner and ‘feminine’ to outer and ‘masculine’ was applied.

This product of these imaginary rhetorical and semiological operations was a third garment genre. The jumpsuit is a variation of the utilitarian overall, which has traditional connotations of manual labour, of tradesmen and of active masculinity. The jumpsuit, as its name suggests, was and still is, a garment worn when jumping from a plane. The last time the jumpsuit occupied a major place in fashion was, paradoxically, as women’s wear in the 1980s. Although the jumpsuit or overall pops up occasionally in experimental menswear, especially in association with the Utopian (Blackman 2009, p.74), it has failed to find an enduring place as a staple in men’s fashion.

The transition from underwear (bodysuit) to outerwear (jumpsuit) meant the exchange of signs beyond the fabrication. This meant the inclusion of a register of components that denote suit. These components have conventionally connoted the masculine, but with some paradigmatic tweaking may become quasi-feminine in signification. This operation was performed on two of the major features of the tailored jacket, the collar/lapel and the shoulder/sleeve.

The conventional notched collar of the man’s suit, made up of separate collar and lapel meeting at a gorge was substituted with a shawl collar in which collar and lapel are unified and continuous. The shawl collar has long fallen from favour in tailored menswear, certainly for daywear. But in men’s formal evening tailoring on the tuxedo jacket but even then is not as popular as the classic separate notch collar and contrast satin lapel. The shawl collar, as its name would suggest, has a firm and ongoing place in the lexicon of womenswear and, as such, within the paradigmatic variants of suit jacket collars would likely register as feminine. Certainly, in this case, the choice of the shawl collar as a variant

10. The overall was redesigned as hygienic, inexpensive Utopian wear by Futurist (magazine) in 1920. It was called the Tuta because it resembles a T. Tuta means “for all” in Italian. The jumpsuit has a special location as costume with the men in the future science fiction film and television series. I have fond memories of the futuristic jumpsuit in the 1960s TV series Lost in Space, the 1940s serial Buck Rogers and the 1956 film Forbidden Planet.

11. This register of the classic men’s jacket includes the roll collar and notched lapel (the gorge), centre front welt pockets (single or double), welt breast pocket, set in sleeves, shoulder pads, buttoned sleeve cuffs, a single centre back vent (or two side back vents).

12. This has been my experience for eight years teaching within undergraduate menswear and tailoring studios. There is usually strong resistance to including the shawl collar in men’s tailoring as there is with any other sleeve that is not ‘set in’.

7. Women worked in factories during WWII. Some women have also worn the overall since it became possible for women to train and work in previously all male technical trades.

8. Of course women jump from planes but this is still superficially seen as a masculine activity.

9. It hints occasionally of a return in womenswear as part of the 1980s revival.
made reference to the feminine rather than the masculine.

A paradigmatic exchange was likewise performed on the shoulder/sleeve. It is rare, at this moment in time, for contemporary men’s suit jackets, unless they are quite experimental to not have within its schema the conventional square shoulder, set in, two-piece sleeve combination. The set in tailored jacket sleeve was present at the birth of the modern suit at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Even though it has long been a feature of the woman’s jacket, the effect is still overtly and deliberately masculine; squared and angular.

The contemporary tuxedo is singular in its retention of the shawl collar. The shawl collar is rarely found in men’s tailored styling.

The raglan sleeve (Gavenas 2008, p.301)\textsuperscript{13}, which was used in the bodysuit, was carried over into the jumpsuit in place of the masculine set in sleeve. It unifies shoulder and sleeve head, allowing the sleeve to run continuously as part of the body through the shoulder to the neck. It is a cut of sleeve that is most seen today in knitwear and in garments which were once regarded as underwear or sportswear. This cut of sleeve is almost never used in contemporary men’s suit jackets and is conspicuous by its absence. It still has a place in traditional men’s overcoats and raincoats, but like the shawl collar does not have a prominent position in modern men’s tailoring. The line of the shoulder is much softer in the raglan sleeve. The result is natural and gentle when it fits to and echoes the wearer’s shoulder. It may be cut to accommodate a shoulder pad or not. The raglan sleeve, like the shawl collar was incorporated into the jumpsuit because their connotation leans toward the feminine\textsuperscript{14}.

\textit{Peter Allan. Bind Military Jacket, 2005. Although this jacket features the exploratory in its treatment of the torso, the collar/lapel, the set in sleeves and the padded shoulders are carried over from the conventional taxonomy of the man’s jacket.}

\textsuperscript{13} The raglan sleeve, according to Mary Lisa Gavenas, came about during the Crimean War when Lord Raglan’s troops were so cold that they cut a hole in their blankets and put them over their heads.

\textsuperscript{14} The raglan was last a popular cut of sleeve in women’s tailoring in the 1980s. The raglan shoulder was at times cut very generously if not aggressively to accommodate a very large shoulder pad or even multiple shoulder pads. The effect was described as powerful and masculine and is now seen as characteristic of the period. I have recently witnessed female early adopter fashion students wearing 1980s women’s jackets with exaggerated padded shoulders. Because there is so much distance between this revived (recycled) style within contemporary fashion and its time of origin, the 1980s power shoulder and tailored jacket cut looks daring and innovative again.
The remainder of the register of components that denote a man’s suit offset these choices of collar, lapel and sleeve; the left breast welt pocket, pairs of flapped jet pockets, sleeve vents with buttons and shoulder pads.

The jet pockets with flaps were incorporated in such a way that they made subtle reference to the ideal Greco-Roman nude that inspired the suit, and whose memory resides within the suit. The two pairs of jet pockets were positioned so that they overlaid the abdominals and creating a metonymic relationship. They became a subtle image of and a substitute for the abdominal muscles. This device also referenced and echoed the abdominal pattern of the *Bind Jacket*.

The raglan sleeve was cut to accommodate a shoulder pad - another suit component. A ‘gentle’ shoulder pad was inserted so that the shoulder profile remained rounded and subtle - not exaggerated or caricatured through magnification - neither too masculine nor too feminine.

The jumpsuit was a critical and cognisant design response to the Waif. Its cut was deliberately slim and the taxonomy of masculine signifiers through the torso was scaled down and juxtaposed against elements of the feminine to invoke the androgenous. The objective was for the garment to reference both the masculinity and the femininity of the Waif both simultaneously and contiguously.

The final and most patent component of the register was that of the fabrication, the wool suiting. This jumpsuit was constructed from black wool suiting with a clearly legible white pinstripe. Within the spectrum of men’s suiting, there are weaves that, even when worn by women, are distinct in signifying the masculine. Pin stripe wool suiting is unequivocal in such signification and,

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15. My local tailor (who is in his mid 80s) tells me that the correct name is chalk-stripe. It is called so as a reference to the chalk lines a tailor makes on the cloth during drafting, cutting and fitting.
paradoxically, is the material of opposing masculinities. Firstly it has been the favoured suit of the gangster who employs the pinstripe in narcissistic exhibitionism that is still principally associated with the feminine. However, the gangster deflects femininity through the trope of the fabric and its unmistakable masculine signification (Bruzzi 1997, p.85).

Secondly, at the other end of the scale, the pinstripe has traditionally connoted ‘city-ness’. It is the material of suit wearing professional men (doctors, lawyers, accountants etcetera). In this context, the pinstripe signifies respectability, conservatism, and tradition.

Although the pinstripe can, chameleon like, change signification according to the wearer, in both cases the effect is to proclaim the power of the hegemonic, the phallocratic and the über-masculine, whether transgressive or conformative.

The choice of the black and white pinstripe was important in not only illustrating the dichotomy of these powerful masculinities, but also in consolidating the colour palette of the project. The diffusion of colour made direct reference to the restrained monochromes of the Neo-classical and beyond, as beautiful nuanced and articulate, not reductive or ascetic.

Technical and design problems encountered during the realisation of the jumpsuit were addressed during reflective documentation. The major problem arose as a consequence of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic shifts that transformed the suit from two pieces to one. This one-piece garment had no waist seam to separate

Jimmy Cagney in a pinstripe suit. Cagney played the tough guy and gangster in The Public Enemy, 1931, directed by William A. Wellman. It was this film and Scarface of the next year, directed by Howard Hawkes, that help make the pinstripe suit analogous with flashily dressed underworld gangsters. Paul Muni, playing the central character in Scarface, is the butt of his potential girlfriend’s jokes about his loud and flashy style of dress which, mostly, he doesn’t get. Both films feature scenes at bespoke tailors, signifying their now elevated (criminal) status.

The pinstripe suit is not only the dress of the gangster. It also, incongruously, connotes businessman.

‘pant’ from ‘jacket’. Upper and lower were cut as one. The design imperative was to describe the unified androgynous male body through the graphic trope of the pinstripe. This visual and physical union determined the order of construction. ‘Jacket’ opening and ‘pant’ fly were cut and constructed as one. In the process of photo-documenting the assemblage and identifying the technical path forward, unexpected possibilities emerged.

The free and unconstructed ‘pant’ of the jumpsuit appeared as ‘fall’¹⁶. This accidental fall echoed previous experiments with the horizontal plane of stretch fabric that was the precursor of the glove underwear and the stretch bodysuit. Again, this offered the opportunity to manifest the feminine. Although the intention of pant was clear in its unconstructed parts, the possibility of ‘dress’ or ‘skirt’ was also evident. This privileging of skirt over pant could happen easily through changing the path and relationship of seams. Bifurcated pant could become non-bifurcated skirt. Masculine could become feminine. Jumpsuit could become dress. This dress could also register as ‘dressing gown’, a masculine garment of undress (deshabille), a genre of intimate apparel traditionally worn in private. The accidental fall proposed a list of potential fundamental dichotomies.

- Suit – Dress
- Dress – Undress
- Public – Private
- Control – Relax

These oppositions presented alternatives in trajectory. It was possible to change direction in construction and end up with very different signification that would either weigh more heavily toward the feminine or masculine whilst likely changing the garment

¹⁶ In this context the word is descriptive of how a fabric behaves when unsupported by the body or methods of construction. It is how it hangs or drapes when it is left to drop or fall.
Peter Allan. 2006. The Accidental Fall.
genre.

A suite of possible rhetorical, syntagmatic and paradigmatic exchanges was made apparent.

1. The legs could fall from the jacket, unseamed at outer and inner leg and therefore not forming the pant but exhibiting the memory or promise of the pant. This would present as a jacket with four long, animated and ambiguous tails.

2. The legs could be machined at the outside leg and the centre back seam so that a long coat (or dressing gown) happened with the memory of the pant in the skirt. Godets of self fabric, the pinstripe, would need to be inserted into the seams to create more fullness for drape and movement.

3. The legs could be machined at the side seams, centre back and centre front up to the fly (not the inner leg) so that the jacket would be extended down to become a non-bifurcated dress with the memory of the pant in the skirt. The crotch would present as a phallic protuberance or codpiece. Once again, godets of self fabric, the pinstripe, would need to be inserted into the seams to create more fullness for drape and movement.

4. The front legs would be allowed to fall separately whilst the back legs were drawn up and manipulated into a bustle or the reverse (front bustle) or both legs were drawn up and manipulated into two bustles, one front and one back. The latter would result in a jacket with a draped hip peplum.

5. A second pair of back legs could be inserted under the whole body back starting at the waist so the back legs of the whole body piece fall as accidental ‘tails’. Reversing this proposition so that they are inserted under the whole body front would create a slew of technical and functional problems.

6. The accidental tails are drawn up and manipulated into a bustle.
Options 5 and 6 were selected and combined as the choice for realisation of the jumpsuit. The back legs could be configured as tails (masculine) or as a bustle (feminine) through temporary fastening.

The addition of the second set of back legs and the tails emphasised the jumpsuit’s connection with the Neo-classical suit. The configuration of stepped, double breasted jacket, necessitated by the segue of pant zip into front torso, presented the illusion of a pinstripe jacket worn with pinstripe pants in similitude of the Neo-classical dress coat and high waisted breeches.

*Peter Allan. The Pinstripe Jumpsuit, 2006.*
5. Protection and Masking

The masculine pinstripe wool suiting was carried forward as the fabrication in which to re-test underwear. Driven by the ongoing dichotomous exchange between outer/inner, public/private and masculine/feminine, suiting would now transition from the fabric of the jumpsuit to become the material of underwear. However, the garment to be tested would not be, strictly speaking, underwear. This garment would not have a true paradigmatic relationship to the previously tested underwear. It would not present as an immediate alternative to or variant of the stretch body suit. Instead, this garment would have a syntagmatic relationship with the bodysuit and the jumpsuit.

The plastic athletic box, or in euphemistic contemporary parlance - the abdominal protector - is not (on its own) underwear. It cannot function as an item of intimate apparel because it has no way of remaining on the body without interaction with underwear. This technical impediment would be overcome as part of the test by converting the box into an independently functioning garment. The rationale for testing the athletic box resides in both its name and its function. Athletes wear it and it protects and masks that site by which many men define their masculine identity, the genitals.

Having cited two opposing yet parallel hegemonic masculinities, (the businessman and the gangster) a third was now referenced: the athlete. The athlete is the most valorised manifestation of the ‘active’ and the ‘doing’ (Berger 1972, p.47) that has defined the body as the site of masculinity since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Whilst dynamic masculinity was first played out in the sphere of work and industry, by the beginning of the twentieth century the increasingly sanctified, active masculine body would reside in the sphere of leisure, sport and nature (Boscagli 1996 p. 64-65) (Beynon 2002 p. 41). The imperial (Beynon p.26 – 52) or nationalised17 man was fit and healthy, physically and mentally. He was simultaneously physically and spiritually fit, in a state of muscular Christianity (Beynon 2002 p.33) (Boscagli 1996, p.65). In response to major health issues directly caused by rapid urbanisation (Beynon 2002, p.39) and industrialisation, institutions were established that fostered health (and country) as identity, ranging from the Boy Scouts (Beynon p. 46) to the Olympic Games (Boscagli 1996 p.3). The modern gymnasium and bodybuilding came into being (Beynon 2002, p.40). Today’s elite athletes and sportsmen are the descendants of this cultivated male body18. They are amongst the most venerated and ritualised of traditional normative (and assumed to be heterosexual) masculinities and masculine role models. They underpin the postulation of the body as the true site of masculinity especially when the body hosts the taxonomy of the ‘ideal’ and appears as Adonis.

This body is a platform for exhibition, glamour and envy (Berger 1972, p.132). The Athlete/Star/Adonis is often the metonymic body used to promote the luxury fashion and lifestyle product. David Beckham is currently the body/phallus of Emporio Armani men’s underwear. In the print advertisements it is Beckham’s crotch that is made the focus; the eye is drawn to that which cannot be seen - the site of paradoxical power and vulnerability. The underwear appears as soft amour, as fabric carapace.

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17. I have called this man that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century nationalised rather than imperial. Imperial has a much broader connotation than national.

18. The ‘how to’ bodies of men’s fitness magazines are descendants of the mail order manuals produced by and for physical culture stars of the first half of the twentieth century. Eugene Sandow, the first modern muscleman produced and disseminated a publication of this kind. These publications often double as pornography especially in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, up to the point where pornography was legalised. Names like Bruce of L.A. and Lon of New York populated a register of gay iconography that is now being referenced in a backlash against the polish of contemporary gay pornography. This mail order culture also nurtured the cannon of the male nude in photography, which has gradually gained legitimacy.
It is reasonable to suggest that he wears more than one layer of underwear or that there possibly resides an athletic box (and jockstrap) between the man and the cloth. This is closer to how the box is to be worn. It is slid into either specialised sports underwear or, more commonly, between the double pouches of the jockstrap or the athletic support. The box encases and protects, smooths, magnifies and renders phallic that most precious of assets whilst, simultaneously, transforming the individual and variable into the standard and democratic. Although athletic boxes vary in style, shape and size (boy’s and men’s) the effect is the same; the hard carapace.

Two brands of box were selected for testing, A and B, only slightly different in style but basically of the same capacity. The protective leather bind around the edges of the opaque plastic boxes was unpicked, the boxes were covered in the pin stripe wool suitings and the bind was then reattached. The principle role of the bind is comfort, but now it also played a more prominent role in design. The white bind of box A contrasted against the pinstripe whilst the black bind of box B blurred the boxes boundary.

Cut was deployed as the major design strategy in testing the pin stripe. The pinstripe for box A was cut on the true or straight grain so that the stripes ran vertically. It was cut in two pieces with a centre front seam for shaping. The two pieces for box B were cut on the bias or cross so that the stripes ran at a forty-five degree angle. When matched at the shaped centre front seam, the chevron or arrows pointed downwards in a V. The trope of the chevron seemed to visually amplify the volume and capacity of box B. The white bind of box A, the pinstripe of which was cut on the grain, seemed to have the effect of extending the edges, the boundary of the box and therefore, its scale and volume.

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19. As previously cited, this a trick of the advertising industry to smooth out the genitals whilst magnifying them. This can also be done digitally.
The Athletic Box, or more euphemistically, The Abdominal Protector.

The Pinstripe Box A.

The Pinstripe Box B
but in a different way from box B. The desired effect of magnifying the box physically and visually was achieved through basic rhetorical design mechanisms that utilised addition, substitution, difference, repetition and exaggeration. The object of psychologically amplifying the presence of the phallus was also achieved through these same visual devices.

Each box was then converted into underwear by attaching waistband and leg straps made from cotton elastomeric material binds that matched the leather bind. The boxes had changed genre and could now function autonomously in the same way as the athletic support or jockstrap, as protective underwear.

As part of the boxes’ transformation into underwear, the hard plastic carapace had become soft, in surface and appearance. One of the most evocative fabrications of masculinity had been applied to the most potent site of masculinity. The pinstripe had also made the box underwear’s syntagmatic location indefinite. The presence and connotative power of the pinstripe as the fabric of suiting on the transformed box, now underwear, had transformed the box even further so it made a transition from inner to outer. This plurality of the box as simultaneously internal and external, private and public would be examined further as the stretch bodysuit underwear was further tested.
Peter Allan. The Pinstripe Box A, 2008.
Peter Allan. The Pinstripe Box B, 2008.
6. The Jockstrap

After interrogating the hard carapace of the athletic box as a response to the armoured crotch that is the focus in men’s designer underwear advertising, it seemed essential and logical to explore the garment that would link the two - the jockstrap. It is the jockstrap that normally houses the protective athletic box whilst also functioning as support underwear. The pinstripe suiting would continue to be the material of the tests.

The jockstrap is not an unproblematic garment in the context of both men’s clothing and masculinities. It has already been identified as a signifier of active, normative hegemonic masculinity, of the athlete. At the same time, paradoxically, it is conspicuous, undeniably a fetishistic item of apparel within some gay subcultures. This is the case with a host of garment types that have been appropriated from institutions that continue to oppress, exclude, or marginalise gay men. Garments with strong signification of traditional authoritative masculinities are appropriated in order to diffuse and undermine its innate power as the symbolic agent of the oppressor. The garment may transform through sardonic irony, parody or costume20. It may also transfer power vicariously and transform the wearer into simulacra. These exchanges also erotically infuse the appropriated garment.

The fetishistic identity of the jockstrap within gay subcultures is articulated and made absolute through the designated fabric. The jockstrap is unequivocally fetishistic when constructed from leather. Its signification is profoundly primitive, hyper-masculine and subversive.

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20. The Village People are an example of this practice brought together as a one stop composite. Its members included the soldier, the policeman and the cowboy. What they didn’t represent in costume they presented in lyrics. It remains extraordinary that, not only were their songs number one hits in Australia and their video clips shown on Countdown, but that several generations later, party people shout the lyrics and spell out letters with their bodies without giving a passing thought to exactly what sporting activity was going on at the YMCA.
The intention to amend the material of the jockstrap and substitute the pinstripe suit raised several questions.

- Would the paradigmatic exchange from knit (or leather) to woven pinstripe evoke a different fetish, one linked to the power of ‘city-ness’ and the suit?  
- What would the garment signify? Would the reading of pinstripe be privileged over the garment genre?  
- Would the reverse be true?

In reviewing the constructed pinstripe jockstrap, it was apparent that through the rhetorical operation of substitution, the signification had become paradoxical and homologous. Was the garment still a jockstrap? It was still a pouch with a waistband, elasticised at the back, and two narrower pieces of elastic running from the crotch to the waistband at the back. Its taxonomy was intact as was its function. However, as with the pinstripe box, its syntagmatic location had become ambiguous. It could not be irrefutably said that this jockstrap was still underwear (defined by its parts and function), nor could it be said with equal certainty that it had become outerwear (defined by its material). Nor could the garment categorically be said to connote sport or business separately or as one without consideration of the oppositional fetish and homoeroticism. The pinstripe jockstrap proved to be a vehicle for dichotomous, paradoxical signification. It was simultaneously outerwear and innerwear, of sport and business, subversive and normative. The memory of double coded eroticism, of the jockstrap and the suit lingered on.

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21. It is very easy, perhaps even facile, and predictable to label certain garments as fetishistic. Anything can be fetish including the suit. A friend was asked recently to wear a suit for an Internet arranged meeting for casual sex. This request came from a tradesman. This working class tradesman wanted my friend to wear a suit so that he could have sex with a middle class professional. This is the reversal of rough trade and conceptualises the suit as a garment onto which has been transferred sexual valence and holds power in sexual gratification. Dita Von Teese, burlesque artist extraordinaire, says that at any given moment, somewhere, there is a man rewinding and playing in slow motion a DVD of a female film star smoking a cigarette.

**Peter Allan. The Pinstripe Jockstrap, 2008.**
The jockstrap was reversible, that is, the pinstripe was also used as lining. The same trope of cut employed in the athletic boxes was revisited in the jockstrap. One layer of the pouch was cut on the bias, the other on the straight grain so that two different visual effects were created in the one garment. This reversibility and self-lining meant that when functioning as underwear, the stuff of ‘city-ness’ would be worn directly against the skin or, more specifically, the genitals. The resultant somatic operation, the sensation of ‘city-ness’ applied directly to the site of the phallus eroticised and fetishised the ‘city-ness’. The phallus was masked in ‘city-ness’.

The uncertain identity of the pinstripe jockstrap as inner or outer was further explored through the re-introduction of some previously tested outerwear elements. An exposed zip was inserted into the centre front of another pinstripe suiting jockstrap. This device was not only borrowed directly from fetish-wear but also from the suit pant fly, which had been previously referenced and tested. In both instances, the veiled phallus is traced by the zip, that which also promises the revealment of the phallus. Simultaneously and paradoxically, the allusion was to both the conservative and the transgressive, to ‘city-ness’ and fetish.

The strategy of the zip, contiguous and parallel with the concealed phallus, is a response to the recurrent trope within photographic practice that presents the zip, blatantly, as both phallic substitute and phallic portal. Five images, most of them iconic, from this tradition served as reference points in imaging and realising the phallic zip jockstrap. Together they create a progressive narrative within which the phallus is valorised and the zip jockstrap is given context.

1. The Rolling Stones’ *Sticky Fingers* album cover (1971)
3. Deceased AC/DC singer Bon Scott (1975)
The zip on the original *Sticky Fingers* LP record cover was real and could be opened, unzipped. The fake, printed zip on later covers could also be opened. When unzipped, it offered the same promise as Fimmel’s and Scott’s open flies. Although Shenkenberg’s fly is buttons and not a zip, the intention and the effect is the same. It both veils the phallus and registers as ersatz phallus. It is the fly/zip that is privileged in each of these images, even though in the case of the *Sticky Fingers* cover and the portrait of Bon Scott, the genitals are clearly delineated and conspicuous. These two images recall the Neo-classical nude look and the genital display that consciously imitated Greco-Roman statuary and the beautiful, masculine ideal (Craik 2009, p.95). The presentation of the phallus is not deferred in the fifth image of the series, Robert Mapplethorpe’s *Man in the Polyester Suit*. This image has been referenced throughout the project. It is the narrative’s conclusion and its anticlimax. The suspense, the promise as Fimmel’s and Scott’s open flies. Although Shenkenberg’s fly is buttons and not a zip, the intention and the effect is the same. It both veils the phallus and registers as ersatz phallus. It is the fly/zip that is privileged in each of these images, even though in the case of the *Sticky Fingers* cover and the portrait of Bon Scott, the genitals are clearly delineated and conspicuous. These two images recall the Neo-classical nude look and the genital display that consciously imitated Greco-Roman statuary and the beautiful, masculine ideal (Craik 2009, p.95). The presentation of the phallus is not deferred in the fifth image of the series, Robert Mapplethorpe’s *Man in the Polyester Suit*. This image has been referenced throughout the project. It is the narrative’s conclusion and its anticlimax. The suspense, the promise as Fimmel’s and Scott’s open flies. Although Shenkenberg’s fly is buttons and not a zip, the intention and the effect is the same. It both veils the phallus and registers as ersatz phallus. It is the fly/zip that is privileged in each of these images, even though in the case of the *Sticky Fingers* cover and the portrait of Bon Scott, the genitals are clearly delineated and conspicuous. These two images recall the Neo-classical nude look and the genital display that consciously imitated Greco-Roman statuary and the beautiful, masculine ideal (Craik 2009, p.95).

The visible zip jockstrap could also be included within the above suite of images. It is redolent of the same promise of transgressive phallic display that figures within the images populating that narrative. As with the athletic box underwear and the reversible suiting jockstrap, the phallus was again city-fi ed through the rhetorical exchange of the fabric.

The tie, previously tested in Chapter Four, was the second outerwear element to be revisited. The phallic glove of the stretch net bodysuit had been exaggerated and extended so... arrows, created through the cut of the fabric, led the eye over and over from the head of this erection down to its base... known disparagingly and somewhat fearfully in Australia as ‘Budgie Smugglers’. The viewer may safely assume that it is not the Adonic phallus that is to be revealed by the opened zip.

6. A sixth image acts as a postscript to the narrative; one of Tim Brett Day’s images from his *Xelebri* mobile phone campaign. The *Beauty Suit* has renovated the less than ideal model inside the suit and transformed him into an Adonis. The zip of the *Beauty Suit* is open below the line of the swimsuit. The presence of models genitals is made clear by the swimsuit, making the display that is called The Charging Elephant.

22. In Fashion: The Key Concepts, Sharon Peoples in describing the Nude Look, says, “The white or cream pants showed every bump of the genitals, like the classical white marble statues being brought to England from Greece and Italy.”

23. This image is potentially both transgressive and ridiculous. Is this image about urination, hurried, possibly public sex or flashing? It brings to mind the drunken game/phallic display that is called The Charging Elephant.
along a phallic bridge. The paradox of the jockstrap as outer was consolidated by this fusion and hybridisation with the tie. As inner, as underwear, the tie would remain visible in its connection to the collar or the neck and lead the eye, beneath any concealing lower body garments, to the genitals and register as the emergent erect phallus.

One final jockstrap and tie variant tested the phallic. This test was quantitative. The tape measure jockstrap tie is seriocomic yet a vital response to the primal, paradoxical fear and fascination invoked in men by the display of the penis or imagined penis and its potency as phallus. It is a response to the unveiled magnitude that is the phallic crotch in underwear advertising, to exponential visibility of the naked and nude male body in photographic practice and pornography. The anxiety springs from comparison, mental measuring and the need to gauge calibre of masculinity through the dimension of the phallus. This endemic fear and confusion is at the core of the crisis of masculinity (Pope Phillips and Olivardia 2000, p.152). The intention of this garment is not sardonic and dismissive; rather it is supportive and anodyne. What man has not looked at the penis of another man, whether the other man is an image or corporeal, and compared it to his own to gauge his own and the other’s status? What boy has not taken a tape measure to his penis hoping for at least prescribed average dimensions? Few men have not been exposed to and affected by the incondite, fallacious slogan “size matters.”

I worked with Freud in Vienna. We broke over the concept of penis envy. Freud felt it should be limited to women. Dr Zelig, in Woody Allen’s film Zelig 1983.

As a result of the rhetorical and semiological tests performed on the jockstraps, they became outer whilst retaining their identity as inner. They became syntagmatically related to both suits (the two piece organza and one piece pinstripe) and the stretch body suits. It became possible for these garments to be worn as ensembles, in syntagmatic combinations. Paradigmatic relations were both established and broken. The jockstraps were, to some degree
alternatives to all the underwear and likewise, to the outerwear pieces. They could stand alone or be worn in concert with other pieces within the evolving wardrobe of The Fabricated Man.

The realisation of the pinstripe jumpsuit as the outer and the ambiguity of both the athletic boxes and the jockstraps (double coded as inner and outer) created the necessity for a reflective evaluation whereby attention was to be redirected back to the stretch body suits and underwear. The stretch body suit was targeted for further design tests. The opportunity was open in this garment genre to apply the operations of rhetoric to generate variations that might be worn with or in opposition to existing pieces.

Through the now familiar rhetorical operation of exchange and difference, the ‘flesh’ net of the bodysuit was substituted with its antithesis, a fine black stretch net. This net was discreetly and sparsely geometrically patterned. Its connotation was somewhat masculine and Neo-classical. Although the ‘masculine’ pattern was an instrument of the shift towards a different signification, it was the fabric’s black colour that was privileged in design decision-making. The very words that described the fabric’s hue were in dichotomous opposition. The obdurate postulation, the hegemony embedded in the word flesh and its connotations of normative and universal were underlined and laid open. The paucity of non-white men in fashion media, as exemplars and

Peter Allan. The Tape Measure Jockstrap. 2008.
archetypes was called to attention. When Black and Asian men are proffered as representations of masculinity in fashion, it remains the exception. The envelope of this new oppositional body suit would render the wearer’s skin black and, possibly. Other (or possibly, through hyperbole, the same). The now well-utilised taxonomy of the ideal parts, established and tested, in the jackets was now translated into a different medium and genre. The abstract pectoral and abdominal masculine schema was inserted into the black body suit through thin opaque lines against a transparent ground.

Unexpectedly two variants appeared in this bodysuit. Through a technical/mechanical anomaly (which often happens in design through making), the phallic glove - the genital covering- was omitted from this version; to the betterment of the piece. Without a crotch/glove to house and obscure the genitals, this suit could not claim a stand-alone identity as either outer or innerwear. It would have to be worn in concert with underwear. Possible relations were forged with the boxes and the jockstraps that contributed even further to their genre confusion.

The second unexpected development reconnected with the phenomena of the accidental fall and the serendipitous. The hands of the bodysuit were left until last in the order of making. It was observed during a reflective hiatus that when the unconstructed hands fell from the wrist they were transformed into a frill. This accidental manifestation of the feminine was incorporated into this suit and subsequent suits. A parallel between the omission of the genital glove and the hand glove emerged. The genitals would also be allowed to fall, exposed. Two sites of masculine identity, the genitals and the hands, would be unveiled with the one piece. The hands might act as surrogate gloves, as a garment to cover the genitals. We often see the hands used in this way as a type of censorship or as Berger would say, in a display of shame (Berger 1972, p49). The hands had become a variant of the boxes and jockstraps.
In wearing, permission to unveil the genitals was granted by the masking of the face. The wearer’s face would be obscured from the gaze of the observer (scopophilic or critical) or the wearer (exhibitionistic or scopophobic). The wearer would be rendered unknown and invisible.

The next variant mapped out body parts of the ideal, of the torso with a suite of white stretch material that connoted Neo-classical and Regency in combinations of stripes and discrete florals. The object in this variation was the creation of a metaphor, perhaps a pun. The choreography of the white would transform the wearer into sculpture; into the classical Greco-Roman statuary that had informed the Neo-classical ideal, the Adonis and the suit. The wearer would become articulated sculpture.

The third and final underwear variant, also determined by rhetorical operations, saw all elements of the body suit stripped away except for the pectorals, the abdominals and the genitals. The back, arms and legs were subtracted leaving a fusion of the abstract ideal torso schema and the phallic glove. This final variant - a combination of stretch mesh and knit binds - had set out to reference the y-front modelled by both Fimmel and Beckham. It was again due to technical problems that it had been abbreviated to the essential ideal. The fabric and the descriptive binds were direct references to the iconic underwear. The supportive network of bind straps was the same as the mechanism used in the athletic boxes through which they had been transformed into a type of hard pinstripe jockstrap.

The result was an unexpected and slightly unsettling mixture of the masculine and feminine significations and garment types, overtly exhibitionistic and phallic yet paradoxically feminine. It had a semblance of the iconic y-front that had informed the test, and yet seemed to be parody or pastiche. The design outcome had emerged from a reflective response to disaster and salvage. The problem had arisen from a combination of construction methods during which the garment grew becoming disproportionate and ill fitting. The problematic was jettisoned (arms, legs and back) and the promising (torso and genital glove) was reconfigured. This was a demonstration, albeit unplanned, of rhetorical subtraction, addition and substitution as the solution to a design problem.

The mask was also the product of salvage and the serendipitous in design through making. It was reconfigured, becoming a stand-alone, separate piece. As a result the y-front as reference also appears in the mask. The piece itself masks with the y-front - with underwear. It has been relocated from one site of identity to another. The face has become masked by the stuff of phallic display and protection.

This mask had emerged from the headpiece of the stretch body suit. It (and it’s companion body piece) demonstrates in concrete steps (although a different garment emerged) the process of exchange and substitution that transformed the stretch body suit and the organza suit into a new garment type.

Sir Samuel Oldknow. c.1790-2.
The Neo-classical Nude Look.

The development of these variations opened a dialogue with other pieces, garments with specific or ambiguous genre identity. The pinstripe jumpsuit could be worn with the stretch body suits. The organza suit could be worn with the black net body suit. The jockstraps could be worn under either or on their own.

The operations of rhetoric and semiology had been design road tested. I need not have gone about the design of these garments in this way. However, I found these operations to be useful tools of design, ones that augmented an existing toolbox of design and making strategies and that I would incorporate into my investigations and design testing in the laboratory of speculative and experimental menswear.

*Peter Allan. The Y-Front Suit, 2008.*
Chapter 5 References

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Giuliano Dè Medici in the Medici Chapel, Florence. Sculpted by *Michelangelo* between 1520 and 1534.
CHAPTER 6
OCTOBER 2008

DEFLECTIONS - New Bodies

1. The Mancession + The New Body

The shockwaves set off by the events in Wall Street in October 2008 were felt in every economy around the globe. As stock markets went into freefall, financial structures and economies around the world reeled and collapsed. The devastation that ensued quickly became known as the Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

Job losses were pandemic. They were most conspicuous within the economy that was at the epicentre of the collapse and from which the crisis had sprung. The socio-economic behemoth that is the United States of America experienced an unprecedented gender inequity in unemployment figures. The USA was by no means alone in experiencing this socio-economic gender imbalance. But it was there that within a few months its effects became so acute that the financial crisis became known as the ‘Mancession’. (Rampell 2009)

The Mancession was irrefutable proof of the advances made by women as a result of their demands for parity and economic equality with men made over five decades. By June 2009, four out of five jobs lost over the preceding two years had been those of men. The traditional definition of men as the breadwinner and provider was challenged as more and more women took on these responsibilities through economic necessity. This extraordinary shift was due in large parts to changes in education. As a
higher percentage of women earn university degrees and move into white-collar positions in the knowledge-based economy the more under educated blue collar men are left behind. These unemployed men were not necessarily engaging in this switch in traditional roles. Men have not rushed to fill the roles of home-maker and nurturer. Women still do most of the housework (Baxter 2009).

It is true that patriarchy has not been overthrown but its justification is in disarray. There is a sense, certainly in the outlying areas of the patriarchal empire that the time for male authority, dominance and control is up. (Clare 2000, p.4)

The effects of this economic and social upheaval on masculinities and fashion were acknowledged and responded to with some alacrity in men’s fashion print media. Fashion historian and commentator Colin McDowell (2008) expressed the hope that men would now stop dressing like children. In fact he went as far as implore men to stop allowing women to dress them like children. Instead, he hoped that men would dress like adults and in the process forever banish the scourge that is the ‘visual pollution.
of male scruffiness” (McDowell 2008). He attributed this childish, neglectful nadir in men's dress to a decade plus of cheap sports-inspired casual (often designer) fashion. He believes men have clung to this style of dress behind a facade of lazy vanity. The dramatic changes wrought by the shocks on first world economies exposed this mode of dress as a tired, now inappropriate anti-sartorial cliché. McDowell underscored the crucial role that good grooming and personal presentation would play in the security of men within the workplace.

...now, facing up to the possibility of the worst economic crisis in two generations, we are looking for clothes to help us survive because we believe that it is the well dressed guy who is the last to lose his job, while the slobs are being shown the door. So the fashion savvy are tidying up their act ready for the worst.

(McDowell 2008)

These are prescient words, written just as the crash was indeed taking place, in the light of the impact unemployment was to have on men. A resurgence in emphasising the importance of good grooming, tailoring and particularly the suit has occurred throughout men’s fashion media has since taken place. It was, and continues to be embodied in the oeuvre of Tom Ford and his impeccable tailoring and meticulous attention to detail and love of the suit. (Tom Ford wrote the forward for long overdue history of and homage to British tailoring, Sherwood’s 2010 Savile Row: the Master Tailors of British Bespoke. His deployment of detail is a reminder of Barthes’ identification of detail as the tool of distinction (Barthes 2006, p.66). Ford’s timely reworking of the suit reinvigorates this icon as the powerful tool that combines aesthetics, utility and the form of the male body.
As a response to the financial crisis, the Mancession, there emerged a new moderate ideal - which sat between the muscularity of the Adonis and the skinniness of the Waif – to be fully embraced as the ‘New Body’. He was not too muscular and not too skinny, not too boyish but more masculine, muscular but not too extreme. Kevin Arpino, creative director of Adel Rootstein, arguably the world’s premier fashion mannequin manufacturer, identified this New Body as pivotal within the development and production of new male mannequins.

We are currently going for a toned body that is not overtly muscular, more like a dancer or a swimmers body¹. The guys I’m seeing from modelling agencies are confirming this. There’s a wave of boys coming through who’ve got a really interesting look. It’s athletic and toned, not overly developed, yet not as skinny as the boys that were doing the Dior thing a few years ago².

(quoted in Hancock 2008)

1. The emergence, the prominence of the body type with these descriptors coincided with the Beijing Olympics and the four yearly reappearance of the nationalised athletic body as premier on the world stage.

2. On May 7th 2010 the Age reported a Guardian story reporting an outcry from eating disorder campaigners in response to Rootstein’s Young and Restless collection scheduled for a June 2010 unveiling. The male mannequins were reported to have “90 centimetre chests and 68 centimetre waists, 28 centimetres smaller than the average British man.” Rootstein claimed that these proportions were based on “teenage boys who were not anorexic” and that the mannequins were “perfect for modelling skinny jeans and slim tailoring.” Eating disorder charity Beat said “More men had anorexia and bulimia and the mannequins portrayed an unrealistic and unattainable image.”
Even the male models offered by 9 Daughters and a Stereo - the pioneers of the skinny boyish Waif - showcased the new physical paradigm. The Waif had not dropped off and disappeared from the agencies books, but - like most other major agencies, he sat within a diversity of body types beside the more muscular, the moderate and the athletic. This co-existence within the agency that is so closely linked to the genesis of the Waif was a categorical affirmation of difference and balance. The adoption of the New Body was closely linked to an already robust, if not ravenous, 1980s revival\(^3\). This was not the overtly camp, hyper theatrical 1980s of television’s iconic *Dallas and Dynasty*. It was British mid-80s that was being referenced, if not plundered - in particular the oeuvre of now iconic stylist, Ray Petri, and his Buffalo Collective and the groundbreaking representations of masculinity produced for *The Face* and *I-D magazines*\(^4\). It was both the larger, squarer silhouettes and the specific male body type of the Buffalo model that were being appropriated. This referencing was accompanied by an increasing sense of nostalgia, possibly for a man situated in the near distant past of the mid 1980s, and for the masculine paradigm whose promise appeared at that time to meet the

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\(^3\) The revived 1980s body and styling follows on from Hedi Slimane’s revival of a 1960s Mod slimness of body and styling. There is also evidence of an early 1970s revival in the tailoring of Tom Ford and the revival of facial hair. This is not the now stereotypical 1970s of Disco and Saturday Night Fever. This is a revival of a 1970s that ran parallel to the popular memory of the 1970s but existed within an alternative ‘Indie’ context. It can be said that youthful masculinities are winding their way back to when the gender experiment was cut short, stalled by AIDS. They are replaying, trying on, and moving the experiment forward again.

\(^4\) Often shot by Bruce Weber
demands of feminism, as well as moderate and diffuse traditional, hegemonic masculinity. This now historic New Man of the 1980s and 1990s was defined as caring and sensitive yet muscular and strong - a marriage of the feminine and the masculine. Paradoxically, he was also narcissistic, exhibitionistic and phallocentric. It has been speculated by feminists and their supporters that this seemingly pro-feminist yet profoundly masculine exemplar existed perhaps only within the mythology and rhetoric of advertising and commodification (such as CK Eternity fragrance advertisements). Rowena Chapman, for example, summed up much feminist opinion in asserting that developments in male narcissism and expanding interest in men's fashion represented a high jacking of femininity or a "have your cake and eat it" situation - where men could don the costumes of femininity literally – without living with the consequences (Chapman cited in Edwards 1997 p. 45).

This is not to say that such integrated and balanced, new and sensitive men did and do not exist - men whose masculine and feminine duality is legitimate and demonstrable. However there is sufficient evidence within this nostalgic longing for such a man to call into doubt his widespread and established existence within reality. In fact we might acknowledge the Adonis, whose figure is integral to this project, as an embodiment of the New Man and as
evidence of the imbalance that existed within his construct.

The Adonis continued to establish a new and revitalised position alongside the ongoing but diminished presence of the Waif and the moderate New Body. His renaissance and return from fashion banishment was unequivocal when the new Calvin Klein underwear advertisements appeared in double page spreads in the last quarter of 2008. The new Calvin Klein Adonis - as in the halcyon days - was shot by Bruce Weber, employing those same trademark visual/erotic devices. The body, the aesthetics, the rhetorical strategies were all pure vintage Calvin Klein/Bruce Weber. Along with his concomitant celebratory photo essays (Arena Homme +, issues 29, 30 and 31) and the relaunched Abercrombie & Fitch catalogues, these advertisements once more fore-fronted Bruce Weber as a determinant of men's style, bodies and masculinity. The new Calvin Klein underwear Adonis was twenty four year old all-American Garrett Neff\(^5\). His currency as Calvin Klein underwear Adonis was sealed by the audacity of the print campaign that launched him.

\(^5\) An interview with Garrett Neff in V Man magazine, issue 11, Fall 2008 revealed him to be a native of Wilmington, Delaware and that he was discovered at Miami International Airport when returning from a trip to Barbados.
This Adonis has all the now familiar physical attributes. His body hosts the taxonomy of the ideal essential to the identity and potency of the Adonis. He is the latest version of the beautiful, the classical and Neo-classical, and the phallocentric ideal.

The rhetoric of the image is so hyperbolic and provocative that it might be read as a knowing and tongue in cheek parody of the existing body of images of the Adonis by Weber. It could be interpreted as Weber’s way of flauntingly celebrating his prodigal return. Neff reclines under the unseen sun, on the wet sand of a beach beside the unseen surf. The connotation is based on select signifiers. John Berger (1972, p138.) identifies this rhetorical gesture or pose and the sea as an illustration of the offering of new life. Comparisons may be drawn here between Weber’s ‘baptismal’ image of Neff and Botticelli’s Birth of Venus. Neff too has been offered up by the sea as new life. The creation of this new life, like the birth of Venus is equally mythological. He is on his back and his head is raised but turned away from us; his beautiful profile is etched sharply against the sun bleached background. His eyes are shut. His legs are open and he clutches the wet underpants (which he is not actually wearing) to his crotch with both hands. All but his face is covered in a beaded veil of ambiguous moisture either from the sea spray, the heat of the sun, the spray gun of the photographer’s assistant (which we
New Calvin Klein Body,
Garrett Neff, 2008.
Peter Allan. 2005 / 2008
know to be a likely part of the images meta-narrative) or possibly, the exertions of narcissistic self love. Is it in fact melting semen (a conspicuous rivulet runs down one inner thigh) with which he has sprayed himself and now wipes away with the product— the Calvin Klein underwear? Is it actually the underwear that he has had sex with, the wet underwear that still covers and veils the phal-lus? He appears to have been caught in a frozen moment of post orgasmic reflection and reverie - of petite mort - eyes fast shut and unaware of our gaze but, at he same time, profoundly conscious of it. The phallocentricity, the narcissism, the exhibitionism and the unattainability are all incontrovertible.

They are simultaneously hilarious. Weber’s rhetoric is so large, so unapologetic, so ‘Weberesque’ that ultimately, it reads as ingenuous and beguiling. In the nascent mini-pantheon that includes the Waif, the New Body and the Adonis, promise of diversity grows stronger and there appears to be a place for him in this incarnation – as long as we do not take him too seriously. He is not the man who women, in the midst of the Mancession, will be able to turn to for strength and support. He is too busy having sex with himself, or his underwear, on a cordoned off stretch of beach or photographers studio to save the world and do his share of the housework.6

So will there be a new man to inhabit the New Body? The call had certainly gone out not only for a smartening up, but also for a

shaping up of men to cope with and survive a ride that promises, if not now then at some point in the future, to be very shaky and bumpy. The Mancession had amplified the decades-old call for a man who could combine and balance the masculine and the feminine; strength and sensitivity. The idea of masculinity defined by the primacy of appearance and cosmetics appears abrogative when, as McDowell points out, the hordes of scruffy manhood that need to take steps toward a smarter, maturer reinvention are the results of a trickle-down heterosexuality and its trappings. There is no doubt that these imperatives exert more pressure on men and exacerbate the crisis of masculinity. Ultimately we must all desist from looking to the imaginings of merchandisers and advertisers for answers. These constructs presented to us are linked to versions of commodified, and probably fictitious masculinities. The reality of men and masculinity is diverse and expansive with no singular verity.

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6. This image. like much of Weber’s oeuvre owes much to Bruce of Angeles in whose work there is revived interest.

Bruce of Los Angeles.
Portrait of Edgar Hayes. 1957.
2. A Deflective Carapace

The notion of the Mancession and the New Body provided me with the impetus to commence this phase of designing and making. It was evidence of an increasingly embattled and besieged man within a tumultuous socio-economic climate that lead to the expansion and recontextualisation of a previously tested carapace. The armoured athletic box would be magnified and recalibrated so that it not only encased the crotch and veiled the phallus - it would expand its coverage to the whole torso from shoulders through to mid thigh. These are the crucial parameters within which the ideal has primarily been located. It was not necessary to create and assemble the components of this torso carapace. The form already existed, but until this point its potential as a garment had not been recognised. One of the black polypropylene men’s swimwear mannequins that had been employed throughout the project for photo-documentation was cut in half along its ‘side seams’ and openings were made for the arms, legs and neck. Holes were drilled along the front and back side seams to accommodate lacing for fastening and closure7. As a consequence of these modifications, it was possible for the mannequin to be worn as a corset, and consequently viewed as armour or carapace. The besieged body was now fortified. It was clad in the same stuff which had veiled and protected the phallus, the content of the athletic box. The whole torso was now rendered phallic by this expansion. This carapace, in its original metonymic form and function - as mannequin and representation of the

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7. This operation involved non-fashion tools and techniques. The process itself demonstrates that fashion making need not be limited in any way by medium or method. I am not an expert in the use of any of these tools. This was possibly to my advantage.
ideal - had hosted this ideal taxonomy; the prescribed pectorals, abdominals, buttocks and the invisible but conspicuous phallus. It also had the moderate proportions and definition of the New Body. It had neither the extreme muscularity of the Adonis nor the skinny fragility of the Waif. This was literally the New Body. It could not only cover and protect the body, as the ultimate paradigmatic variant, it could take the place of the body. This was the New Bodies simulacrum.

Of course, this was essentially a rhetorical gesture. The body of the wearer (not necessarily male) may have been transformed into the physical ideal and paradigm by being clothed in an idealised representation of itself, but according to the corporeal demands of dress; it was of little use beyond the rhetorical. Its inflexibility as two hard pieces of polypropylene laced together at the sides rendered the wearer immobile, inactive, and in a state of static impotence. The wearer would be reduced to a condition of paresis, of incomplete paralysis, affecting muscular movement but not sensation. The potency of the New Body would be exposed as fictitious. The definition of the man through action was countered and undermined. This was the body of the Mancession.

The modification and application of the mannequin as corset and armour had sprung from an abandoned experiment with corsetry in the second phase of iteration. This garment had employed all the traditional mechanics and features of the corset. It was very tightly fitted, boned, laced at the centre back and fastened by a quite inflexible standard metal busk at the centre front. Unlike conventional corsets, it was extended to include pectorals and shoulders so that it became a hybrid corset/jacket. The intent was to use this structure, this garment as armature and to add to it the taxonomy of the ideal as units that would come together as a physicality of bone and padded cloth. The ‘corset’ had been a reversal of the flat, abstract schema which had been the focus of the *Bind Jacket* and then in turn, the organza jacket. The ideal parts of the torso had transitioned from the 3D of the body, through
the 2D of the jackets and now back to the 3D of the collated parts of the corset/jacket. This trajectory was abandoned in development for the same reasons that the polypropylene New Body was not taken further than a rhetorical gesture. It was not within the charter of this project to forcefully impose shape, nor to modify through aggressive means via sartorial mechanisms resulting in facile solutions. This project may have been brought to a conclusion quite early in it’s trajectory if all that was required was to use artificial means to reconfigure or sculpt the flesh forcefully into the form of a unitary and inflexible paradigm. It has not been my intent to create prosthetics that have often been the focus of alarm and disapproval by feminists in the traditional historic context of womenswear⁸. The project’s iterations strive to be ideas made concrete, the reification of the abstract, and gestures made real. They are not always immediate or obvious answers or solutions.

The polypropylene New Body became a carapace that demonstrates a new paradigm (that appears to exist in an expanding plurality) whilst, simultaneously references the inflexibility, the inertia and increasingly armoured response to advances in parity achieve by women. The opportunity existed to liberate and mobilise the form through the separation and mobilisation of the parts, the piece could have been cut into separate pieces and rendered more flexible, animated and wearable through the linking or hanging of the parts. The individual pieces might then have been covered in suiting (pinstripe) so that, as we have seen before, the hard would become the soft through the application of the previously employed signifier of hegemonic masculinity. The space between the body and the suit would become abstract, negligible. The suit would become the body. The magnitude of possibilities were recognised and acknowledged as ammunition for a new and future body of work that could continue to investigate the male body through such mythic and fictitious representations as the mannequin and the creation of synergies between them and the male body⁹.

⁸ This precludes and does not refer to the context of fetish which is a very different milieu.

⁹ Although this may sound like the investigatory territory of the current project, the trajectory of corset, sculpture, mannequin and carapace and the relationships between them and the body is a vast landscape, too big in scope for this project to adequately address.
3. The Glove Revisited

The glove had been tested in the first phase of iteration. This had been part of the manipulation of the vertical cloth axis that resulted in the phallic glove underwear and the stretch body suit. The glove had acted as a device to disrupt the vertical plane; it had initiated and led the body’s movement through the increasingly enveloping plane of the cloth. The glove - in that operation - was connected to and part of the plane of cloth.

The glove was now tested as two autonomous yet interdependent articles of clothing. The functionality would reprise the glove of the vertical plane and become a trope to protectively veil the phallus. The hand gloves were constructed from the pin stripe suiting, transforming them into a paradigmatic variation of the pin-stripe athletic boxes and jockstraps.

These operations made direct reference to photographer Robyn Shaw’s evocative, 2002 series, Screen Test. These are transparent non-partisan yet telling images (of masculine scopophobia and vulnerability) in which her male models cover their genitals with interlocking hands. In part, her raison d’être in the production of these images was to express the incredulity that these men felt as subjects of both the eye and the lens. Their locked hands, the shields of modesty and shame testify to their sense of unworthiness as focus of the appreciative gaze - the gaze from both genders (Cooper 1998, p. 122). In this clichéd
yet enduring display of corporeal abnegation, the hand acts not only as carapace of shame, it serves to emphasise that with it conceals. This may be seen as an overwhelming primal instinctual and preservative reflex or a conditioned and learnt response. The hand forms a protective carapace to become a scopophobic deflector of the gaze. This strategy has a history that prefigures photography and cinema. It is, as John Berger (1972, p.49) and Edward Lucie-Smith (1997, p.47) point out a manifestation of the display of shame that evolved from ascetic Christian responses to the exposure of the human body in painting and statuary. The pinstripe gloves in the role of carapace-like garment, like the protective hands, are inevitably and counterproductively caught in a tense and frozen spacio-temporality. The protective veiling can not last, and can not become fixed and permanent. The garment that is formed by the union and interlocking of the two gloves cannot endure - whether they act together as underwear or together as outerwear. The veiling, the armouring, the deflection will become tiring, tenuous and ultimately ineffectual and impotent. The gloves must inevitably separate and the hands function once again.
During the scopophobic wedding of gloves and genitals, the pose must become closed and insular. The limbs must be tightly drawn in. This clamping of the arms into the torso and clenching together of legs transforms the body so that its whole becomes phallic in its rigid, closed defensiveness.

The trope of interlocked hands acting as the masculine deflective shield of scopophobia can also be found within the context of cinema. I have particular memories of this occurring in the B grade comedy-sex romp of the early 1970s. At a time when film censorship was becoming more relaxed, bare breasts were not uncommon and full frontal female nudity, not a given but not out of the question. Full frontal male nudity, on the other hand was rare. I remember male nudity in the sex romp was dealt with and the sensibilities of audience protected by the hands as garments. The scenario in these films usually involved an enduring male fantasy and, at the same time, a male phobia. - a quickie and getting caught in the act. This is a manifestation of a simultaneous masculine exploitation of the sexual revolution and ongoing pre-second wave attitudes to women.

10. I can’t remember many exact titles of the films from this genre. I do recall, the hyperbolic titillating and (and increasingly leaden) titles of some films that may well have been a series or franchise. The Confessions of a Winda CLEANER is a title that has stayed with me. The later Carry On also sat within this genre.
The glove has within its function and form a masculine/feminine dichotomy. The glove in its feminine context signifies domesticity. The rubber glove is a soft dual carapace that is worn for protection whilst cleaning. The glove also manifests as the padded oven mitt in protection against the heat within the oven in the preparation of meals. These gloves are also frequently decorative and ‘pretty’.

The feminine domestic glove has the masculine glove of trade as its antithesis. These gloves are frequently made of fabrics that signify masculinity, including suede or leather. When worn in the performance of masculine trades such as welding, boiler making and construction, they protect against chemicals and hazardous materials.

The feminine glove, specifically that glove that through its fabrication connotes delicacy and elegance whilst lacking in any properties of protection was alluded to within the stretch lace body suits of Chapter 5. The hands, the ‘gloves’ of these body suits were not constructed thereby leaving the masculine hand of the wearer exposed. This allowed the intercession of the pinstripe glove between the male genitals and the frilly yet unconstructed feminine glove. Through the rhetorical operations of exchange, difference and substitution the phallus was not veiled by the feminine glove. It was protected and hidden by a garment of masculine pinstripes that acted as a paradigmatic variant of the pinstripe jockstraps and the pinstripe athletic box- as ambiguous protective underwear/outerwear.

This exploration of protection as a response to the Mancession will be extended in the next phase of design testing. The emphasis will shift from one form of protection with oppositional masculine and feminine signification - the glove, to another - the apron.
Chapter 6 References


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The 1950's, view of the apron-wearing woman of the domestic future.
CHAPTER. 7
May 2009

APRONS - Layers + Protection

1. The Apron

My intention within this phase of making and testing was to further explore the imperative of protection and armouring in response to the Mancession’s appearance as a new chapter within the crisis of masculinities.

Design testing was now applied to that garment which suggests protective covering whilst connoting gender divide and dichotomy - the apron. This garment connotes labour and industry but very differently for men and women, often as cliché or metaphor. For men it has been a signifier of trade, commerce, industry and labour. It is a protective garment worn within spheres of labour that were traditionally dominated by men and, in some instances, still are. It has been worn in industrial contexts within which the activity has been considered exclusively masculine and unsuitable for women. It has, for example, been worn by butchers and welders. It is still an essential item within the dress of waiters, as both signifier and protector. These professions have, of course, in varying degrees, become open to women. The antithetical apron - the apron associated with the feminine, remains a symbol of domesticity. At the apron’s zenith in the pre-second wave feminist post WWII 1950s, women’s roles as homemakers, wives and mothers were reconstructed through the mechanics of a new consumerism and the messages of a proselytising
advertising industry. Their station appeared immutable. The apron’s function was often purely decorative, its fabrications and form ultra-feminine in signification. It was a garment that feminists identified as a symbolic manifestation of subjugation perpetuated by male patriarchal breadwinners. Ironically, the domestic apron (in Australia, at least) has taken on chameleon properties. In a household where the wife or female partner still does the housework, it may be the husband or male partner who wears the apron as the person in charge of the barbeque. This contradictory but now established role-play safely juxtaposes and reconciles the domestic and servitude with the masculine. To counter any fears of the feminine, the apron may on its surface have comic caricature or hyperbolic graphics that deflect any fears of reduced masculine integrity. These may range from depictions of fetishistic women’s underwear, to representations of a hyper-masculine masculinity through to the colours of the host’s football team. Any suspicion of the feminine is diffused through the hyperbolic rhetorical devices of anthesis, difference and exaggeration.

It was the immediacy of an increased population of men who may not be part of the work force as a result of socio-economic upheaval and may be at home whilst their female partners take on the role of wage earner, and who resist the responsibility of domestic maintenance that was the principle driver for this design test. I reworked and reconfigured the apron through the extended vernacular of a garment I had already made. The organza jacket was edited and reconfigured into the form of the apron. The feminine fabrication and the counter-balancing, re-emphasising register of the masculine ideal, spelt out by the trope of the self-bind were carried over. The back, shoulders and sleeves were stripped away to leave only the front and its graphical signifiers of masculinity. The functional phallic fly was borrowed from the organza suit pant and inserted along with a pubic area in the

5. In Nicholas Ray’s 1955 classic of teen alienation, Rebel Without a Cause, the father’s compromised status as the henpecked ineffectual father (Jim Backus) is made clear through the wearing of a pretty yellow floral patterned apron.
form of a triangle, into the apron’s graphic schema. In this way the abstract representation of the nude Adonis became even more detailed and comprehensive. Through these additions, the phallic was further magnified. The collar and lapels were retained as signifiers of the jacket and the garment was extended to floor length. The fabrication and graphic signifiers emphasised masculinity\(^6\), but the effect of the new edited and lengthened garment, was ambiguous. The front aspect was somewhat connotative of a full length halter necked evening gown, yet the emphasis through the graphic signifiers remained masculine. The overall reading lent towards a complicated narrative, an orchestration of servitude, formality, masculinity, femininity, functionality, decoration, and uselessness - of dichotomous yet compatible oppositions. The apron was specifically designed to form a syntagmatic relationship with the pinstripe jumpsuit. Layered on top of the Waif inspired jumpsuit, it would highlight these inherent contradictions of masculine and feminine signifiers. The connotation of servitude and domesticity and the omission of a true functionality beyond the aesthetic would be imposed upon the stuff of ‘city-ness’ and the hegemonic. This was not a singular, unitary syntagmatic combination. The collection had progressed to the stage whereby any number of combinations and paradigmatic variations with diverse outcomes could be tested in the one wearing, one the one body.

\(^{6}\) The organza apron re-emphasised masculinity through the same dichotomous dynamics of gendered body and signifying stuff that was seen when Cary Grant donned a diaphanous woman’s dressing gown in *Bringing up Baby.*
Peter Allan. The Organza Apron, 2008.
2. The Laboratory Of Light

The exploration of the apron as a vehicle of dichotomous signification in form and fabrication was given added impetus through the utilisation of a new technology, specifically the laser. Utilisation of this technology created a technical and aesthetic portal through which to embark on new and innovative design trajectories. The project’s theme and questions would continue to be investigated within the frame of the laser’s capabilities.

This venture into the digital brought into focus the fundamental role that tailoring and its manual traditions play within the project’s operations. The hand, its inherent sensitivity, intelligence and knowing can easily be overlooked. Exposure to a super-intelligent technology in a seemingly polar opposite compartment of the creative toolbox had the effect of revaluing the knowing and skill of the hand. This new opposite yet complimentary duality of digital/analogue was incorporated into the project, to sit along side the other binary sets of feminine/masculine, soft/hard, inner/outer.

In this phase of experimentation I tested the capabilities of laser in the cutting and manipulation of textiles. The tests are documented chronologically. The outcomes for one experiment would inform the parameters and objectives of the next experiment. This phase of testing encapsulates the design process that I have found the most rewarding and gratifying. It is guided by design through making. I have called it The Laboratory of Light. Like tailoring, it is situated as a laboratory within the laboratory of the project. The Laboratory of Light plays host to a meeting of new technology, risk within the design process and the reservoir of prior knowledge. This branch of the project could not be envisaged at the project’s inception. It demonstrates how the discipline of fashion continues to expand through the adoption of new technologies. It furnished me with exhilarating passport into new and unexplored design territories and greatly expanding my technical toolbox of design and making.
The Articulated Leather Apron: 1

The first apron produced in the Laboratory of Light re-instat-ed the masculine. The polarity of binary oppositions within the organza apron was reversed so that the emphasis shifted from the feminine back to the masculine. Through the rhetorical ex-change of fabrication - from the delicate feminine organza to the thick and hardy masculine leather - the connotation shifted from the domestic and the decorative to the oppositional pole of utility and protection.

The abstract schema of the idealised torso was digitally scanned and traced in Adobe Illustrator to become a pattern that was used to laser cut leather. This was the same pattern that had been developed to cut the earlier jackets, parts of the stretch body suits, the organza jacket and the organza apron. The garments had emerged as variations on a theme, going further than paradigmatic variations. This pattern had become the DNA of The Fabricated Man’s wardrobe. Its essential data had sprung from a parent garment at the beginning of the project and was passed on from garment genre to garment genre in an evolutionary chain until a family of design generations came to life.

The existing data embedded within the hand-made pattern was transcribed into the digital and re-purposed for an experiment that not only moves from feminine to masculine but also from manual to digital. This shift in both connotation and technique may inherently articulate something of the fallacious gender preconceptions that may be detected within the girl’s world of fashion and the hand and the boy’s world of digital technologies and super intelligent machines. This re-purposed pattern was the set of instructions employed in cutting the parts of the apron with the laser.

The taxonomy of the ideal was laser cut out of flesh coloured thick and tough ‘masculine’ leather using the digital pattern derived from the manual pattern of the organza apron. The abstract schema of pectorals, abdominals, pubic triangle and phallic fly were cut out. The suit-signifying roll collar and lapel were omitted. The front neck was cut square and the sides were scooped around the sides. This shape was borrowed from a chef’s apron. This masculine leather apron was cut with a front ‘skirt’ as had the ‘feminine’ organza apron. The ideal torso was cut into the apron of trade. This configuration would no longer connote suit in any way. It saw the emergence of a new binary opposition. Trade was balanced against professional in the wardrobe’s juxtaposition of pinstripe suiting and thick protective leather.

The pieces of the apron were cut so that there was quarter of a centimetre trimmed from the original. This meant that there would be a small gap of half a centimetre between pieces. This was deliberate so that the apron would articulate like armour and would have moving parts. The method of assemblage was laser cut into the pieces at the same time that the parts were cut; around every piece where it would join another piece, small holes were laser cut. These would be suture points. This apron not only makes reference to armour as a representation of the ideal spanning from its classical origins through to the renaissance into the Neo-classical and beyond; it also carries within it one of the more startling manifestation of the Adonis Complex. Liposuc-tion and plastic surgery was one of the options considered but
Peter Allan. Articulated Apron Digital Laser File, 2009
not realised for the jackets. More specifically it was the device of suturing that emerged from the notion of plastic surgery that was employed here. This device was embedded within the articulated leather apron as both visual language and mechanics of articulation.

The parts of the apron were first glued onto black tricot cut into the shape of the completed apron. This was to create stability between the leather pieces so that they might be hand sutured together with strong black leather thread. Manual and digital, hand and machine continued their alternating play. The black tricot became an invisible backing against the flesh of the ideal parts. The aprons twin references of armour and plastic surgery were so self-evident that almost everyone upon seeing the completed apron understood its points of reference.

The apron had moved through several degrees of change. It had moved from domestic and feminine to trade and masculine and then on to ideal and surgical. This apron reversed the trajectory of experimentation back to the project’s starting point, as far back as the body itself - the flesh of the apron’s leather representing the flesh of the Adonis. This apron was completed with the rivet attachment of laser-cut straps (with laser cut belt holes) and metal buckles that augmented its industrial connotation.

The Articulated Leather Apron: 2

There was an opportunist apron to be drawn from the process of cutting the articulated leather apron. Another binary opposition was activated. Positive and negative were inherent in this materialisation. The spaces between the parts of the apron that facilitate articulation and movement formed a negative version of the articulated apron. This leather piece looked like a skeleton of the ‘body’ of the articulated apron. Two aprons were derived from the one operation; one positive and the other negative. This second apron was glued to the shape of the apron cut in the feminine of black crystal organza. Crystal organza, as its name might suggest is very shiny. It is used for women’s eveningwear.

The Illustrated Etched Apron: 1

This apron test presented an opportunity to experiment with the laser’s second function. The laser could be calibrated to cut the leather into separate pieces destined to be joined together to make a garment, or it could be set to burn superficially into the surface. It was possible to burn an image - an illustration onto the leather’s surface. It may be seen as digital drawing. This is one of the laser’s functions that I find most exciting.

The anatomical datum for this test was taken from the body that had constantly provided the ideal physical co-ordinates throughout the project, beginning with the military jackets. The photographic image of the life models nude torso was manipulated in Illustrator and scaled up to life size, to the same scale as the Articulated Aprons. This photographic image of the ideal torso was etched onto the surface of the leather.

The shape and function of the apron meant that only the torso was etched onto the single skin of flesh coloured leather. The torso was truncated. It had no head, arms or legs below the thighs. The incomplete but ideal nude torso of antiquity was replicated on the leather surface. Although the nude body appeared vulnerable and exposed on the surface, the wearer’s body was in fact guarded and protected physically and visually.

The photographic image of the nude torso had been burnt onto the skin, onto the flesh of the leather. In the wearing, skin would replace skin, body would replace body and nudity would replace nudity. This apron too rewrote the body as idealised. The wearing of the apron blurs the boundaries between etched image and the body beneath. The corporeal and the etched image merge to become one. The tromp l’oeil superimposed image of the torso becomes the wearer’s torso.

Peter Allan. The Illustrated Etched Apron 1, 2009.
Peter Allan. The ActionMan Apron (with penis patch), 2009.
The Illustrated Etched Apron 2: Action Doll

An image of a differently idealised torso was burnt onto the second leather apron.

A few years ago, I found an amphibious action doll in a charity shop. Its musculature (and consequently its masculinity) was so exaggerated and disproportionate that he was both comic and alarming. The authors of *The Adonis Complex* (Pope, Phillips and Olivardia 2000) cite the evolution of the action figure, from waifish Ken through to ridiculously muscle encrusted and physiologically impossible contemporary action figures as both cause and indicator of the Adonis Complex.

The Action Man brandishes a behemoth weapon. His goggles and flippers cannot be removed but his shorts can to reveal his lack of genitals. He is one of many action dolls that have been given to me over the course of this project. They now form a stacked pyramid of male dolls. This doll is the most muscled. His dimensions are not humanly possible. As a model of masculinity, he presents a danger to small boys who, in the course of play may misread his dysfunctional proportions and hyper-muscularity as desirable and achievable.

I photographed this doll’s torso including the strange articulated hip/crotch styled to look like y-fronts, thus coyly explaining the absence of genitals. The image of this torso was digitally enlarged to life size, synchronising it with the proportions and scale of the torso on the *Illustrated Etched Apron 1*. It was then etched

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*a I did so in the charity shop before I bought him. I always feel perverse when I do this to action dolls but I cannot resist.

*b This coy configuration and melding of anatomy and undergarments draws the focus back to Travis Femmel and the role of designer underwear in the representation of the nude and the ideal.*
onto a leather apron. Leather straps and metal buckles were attached. In place of the genital void, a leather patch was attached with press-studs. Onto the patch I had etched the image of the genitals from the *Illustrated Etched Apron*. I did not change their scale. Through the addition of the patch, the grotesque and impossible torso of the action figure became more like living flesh; less counterfeit and approximately human. The genital patch could be replaced or substituted with other genital patches according to the wearer’s wishes, ego or sense of play.

This apron serves as a reminder of the issues that were being examined at the project’s beginning. This is a direct revisiting of the physicalities within *The Adonis Crisis* that continues to impact negatively on men. The appearance of the Waif and the New Body does not mean that the distorted perceptions that are intrinsic to the Adonis Complex have evaporated. This apron is a manifestation of Bigorexia Nervosa - a type of muscle dysmorphia that plagues men (and women) who believe themselves to be underdeveloped or puny when they are in fact quite muscled. (Pope, Phillips and Olivardia 2000 p.11). It is the reverse of Anorexia Nervosa. These men may compare themselves to fictitious anatomies the like of which we see in action dolls. The genital patch covers the site on the action doll that reveals its identity as doll, a fictitious and unrealistic manifestation. This is not man; it is gross caricature and distortion.
The Leather Lace Apron

The same image of genitals was used for the Leather Lace Apron. They were traced in Illustrator and reduced to line - to a simplified graphic module. The scale of this genital module was reduced down to its minimum so that it's integrity when laser cut would not be compromised, and repeated to become a 'lace' pattern. The lace was laser cut from cream patent leather. It looked delicate and decorative - even bridal. It also reminded me of lace kitchen curtains; it's feminine domestic signification in hyperbolic opposition to the leather's connotation of masculine robustness.

This is no protective carapace. The site of phallus is impotently masked by a constellation of small, even infantile flaccid penises. It is overlayed by pretty and ineffectual versions of itself.

This iteration reverses the leather aprons ability to mask and deflect. It is literally a field of lacy holes and made of micro penises. There is no escape from the penetrating gaze, scopophobic or scopophilic, whilst wearing this apron at the barbeque. In fact it is all cock and ball.
Peter Allan. The Leather Lace Apron. 2009.
The Printed Organza Apron

The final apron in this phase reverses fabric polarities back to the feminine organza of the first apron. The life-sized image of the nude torso was re-purposed and digitally printed onto cream organza. Like the leather penis lace, the printed motif may not be immediately discernable. The digital print on the diaphanous organza was so subtle and the apron so light and mobile (by contrast to the stability and weight of the leather) that it was difficult to comprehend the tromp l’oeil and the inherent contradiction of masculine image and feminine garment.

The series of organza aprons could be extended to include a print version of the penis lace.

Jean Paul Gaultier’s print of the ideal male torso onto a shirt in spring/summer 1996 as part his *Cyberbaba* collection employs the same trope of printed trompe l’oeil. A further layer of illusion was created when the image of Gaultier’s shirt was shown on a female body in Colin McDowell’s book (*Jean Paul Gaultier* 2000), and the same garment was used as the pivotal image for the National Gallery of Victoria 2011 *ManStyle* exhibition. The question of gender allocation becomes rhetorical; does it really matter whether it is a man’s shirt or a woman’s shirt? This notion is at the heart of Gaultier’s practice. A further illusion can be furnished through the deceptive manipulation of the photographic image. The image needs only to be flipped to change the side on which a garment appears to button. The side on which a garment is buttoned has traditionally denoted its gender, right for men and left for women. The image of the garment through its reversal from the original during print will change this denotation. The image may change the gender of the garment whilst the gender of the wearer, of course remains the same.

The aprons proved to be the ideal garments through which to explore traditional notions of gender divide: through the dichotomy of fabrication. It played host to the very tough and the very fragile, conveying gender signification in the process. This signification was rhetorically emphasised or contradicted through the image (or graphical schema), which was applied to its surface. The practical and the metaphorical were tested through make. The synergies generated through this combination of traditional fabrications and new technologies have created new (and unexpected) and future avenues within praxis.

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Peter Allan. The Printed Organza Apron, 2009.
Chapter 7 References

*Bringing up Baby*, 1938, Howard Hawks (dir)
*Rebel Without a Cause* 1955 Nicholas Ray (dir)
Zoot Suiher, Jerome Mendelson, 1942.
CHAPTER 8
October 2009

DISTILLATION + UNION - The Hybrid Suit

The *Hybrid Suit* is a distillation and union of garments. It hosts the synthesis of garment genres within a singular syntagmatic set. It is a union and apotheosis of dichotomous opposites and rhetorical differences that have been previously tested, now brought together as the suit. It is also a culmination and consolidation of the projects design testing through tailoring. The binary oppositions of masculine and feminine, inner and outer, armour and vulnerability have been tested and are now juxtaposed and wedded through fabrication and form, in one garment. The suit has been a central and pivotal motif throughout the projects evolution, as metonym and synecdoche, as both representation and manifestation of the masculine. The suit was the catalyst for testing ideas surrounding masculinity at the project’s inception and it is this tailored assemblage that will conclude the project - as marker of the journey’s end.

My design and technical approach is analogical with the perception of the cultivated, idealised male body as meat. Moschino’s late 90s *Uomo? Parfum* advertisement interprets the body builder’s anatomy as a chart of the animal’s parts, as cuts of meat that are found in a butchers shop. In the process Moschino articulates a popularly held belief. This analogy has been frequently used as a lens through which to view and rationalise the cultivation of the male body through weight training. This is how the regimes and ambitions of the Adonis Complex are often interpreted from the outside. This is man as collage. The Hybrid Suit will take us full circle back to the projects first phase of testing through making.
The dark and mesmeric poetry of Joel-Peter Witkin’s images are also summoned up here. It is central to his practice to build the beautiful, the transcendental and mythological from body parts. This is in part the technical and aesthetic reference drawn upon in the concluding garment test. It too is a collaging of parts, a creation of a new taxonomy that constructs and fuses the suit and body as metonym.

The suit draws not only upon the expressions of dismemberment and beauty seen within Witkin’s body of work, but also takes direction from the tradition of cropping and incompleteness that is within the language of contemporary visual literacy. The cropping of Fimmel’s body, specifically his torso in print advertising and the packaging that carries the product (underwear) is testament to our visual literacy and our ability to be able to read the truncated, dismembered and incomplete corpus.
The Pant

The suit’s pant emerged from the editing of the Pinstripe Jump Suit. It was cropped above the waist and below the pectorals. The resultant exaggerated high waisted pant re-established a link with and paid homage to the genesis of the suit - one of the most important drivers within the project - and it’s associated nude look. The Neo-classical suits mimicry and duplication of the idealised, classical male nude within statuary depended on this very high waisted pant to convey the illusion of nudity. This style of elevated waist requires a degree of internal engineering in order to defy gravity and collapse and maintain a structural erectness. The technical solution was borrowed from women's evening wear. Boning would keep the pant up without the aid of a belt or braces, both of which would have altered the elongated line and proportion of the pant and the reference to the Neo-classical. These masculine solutions to holding up the pant were still possible but tipped the connotation firmly towards the masculine. The connotation of the pant can be manipulated according to the mechanics employed in holding the pant up. The type of evening wear boning used is softer and more flexible than that which is employed in corsetry. To me it has a distinctly feminine connotation. It was frequently used during my years of experience in high-end women’s made-to-measure eveningwear, in the construction of strapless bodices. This style of women’s eveningwear, because of its association with the New Look of the 1950s continues to have the ongoing cache of feminine glamour and sophistication. This is very same paradigm of femininity that fetishises 'femininity' through the accoutrements of the domestic, like the pretty, decorative yet symbolically laden apron at the beginning the previous test.

There is the presence of the feminine within the pants abdominal boning, a memory of a constriction and immobilisation in the mechanics of the boned evening gown that situates the woman within an abdominal cage of bones. Of course this is not literal. A woman in a boned evening dress may still breathe and move but it is a vestige of a constructed and imposed writing of femininity that once deliberately disempowered. This pant does not lead to stasis. It is principally symbolic. This is a reification of masculine insecurity and the need to control and protect the physical self through the utilisation of a feminine carapace. It also moulds, reconfigures and sculpts the abdominal region into the trim and ideal.

This high waisted homage to the Neo-classical is a dichotomy of masculine fabrication (the pin stripe suiting) and the internal architecture of the feminine. Its connotation is mixed and contradictory; it is simultaneously masculine and feminine.

The exaggerated height of the pant waist is in other ways antithetical of the masculine. By contemporary menswear standards this elevation of waist is an extreme and inconceivable correlation between masculinity and fashion. It deviates too acutely away from the norm, the safe median which remains well below the natural waist. This height of waist may be interpreted as uncool or ‘daggy’. A man who hikes his pants up to this degree is frequently called “Harry High Pants”; an appellation that denotes the old fashioned and un-masculine. The tag is double-barrelled in its aspersions; old fashioned name (rapidly changing but here we are talking about a much older generation of Harrys) and old fashioned location. It carries with it the unspoken connotation of the outlined genitals which is generally held to be a contemporary (and temporary) fashion anathema but which was focal in the Neo-classical nude look pant, and a matter of masculine pride and celebration1.

1. The shape and fit of the Neo-classical pant has lived on in the wardrobe of the Matador and the Toreador. These pants are part of a hyper-masculine display of courage and bravado.
The waist of the man's pant will in time return to the true, much higher waists, to a height that for most men at this moment in time is inconceivable. It will eventually return to where it sat in the 1980s but at this point in its evolution, it is only the courageous early adopter who is prepared to raise the pant waist in a hyperbolic response to the tired and clichéd low-riding, buttock-exposing pant which we have seen for over a decade². This has trickled down so far that it teeters on the brink of fashion annihilation. It will be continued to be worn by those men whose self-defining moment within fashion coincided with the bumster³. These men will undoubtedly regard the elevation of the waistband and those who wear it as girly and feminine.

This high waisted pant also makes reference to marginalised masculinities. During World War II the American Zoot Suiter⁴ and his French counterpart, the Zazou, flagrantly (and courageously) ignored and disobeyed the rationing of textiles, especially suiting. Their suits were cut to cartoonish proportions using (illegally) a vast amount of fabric. They wore suit pants cut so high that the waist would often be elevated as high as the chest.

The subversive Zoot Suiter and the Zazou employed the suit as a weapon against the hegemony of the suited white middle class (and military). Zazous employed the suit as a weapon of defiance in Nazi occupied France often wearing a yellow star with Zazou written across it in support of the Jewish population (Blackman 2009 p.144).

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² In the last six months, I have observed of boys in high waisted pants. These are early adopters and their determination to stay ahead of the fashion pack means that they must endure and overcome the scopophobic gaze in the street, from those men who are not ready to embrace the new. These early adopters must also brave the fact that the shape of their genitals have become visible as they were in the Neo-classical and the 1970s and 1980s.

³ Every generation does this. My first insight into the petrified moment of an individual's sartorial self-definition came when I saw a barmaid with a bee hive in the early 1970s long after it had been relegated to the unkind peripheries of fashion. I remember feeling touched by this.

⁴ The American Zoot Suiter was generally Afro-American or Hispanic.
Peter Allan. The Hybrid Pants Suit, 2009.
The Pinstripe Codpiece

The emerging Hybrid Suit had the pants crotch strategically cut away thereby exposing and making vulnerable the genitals, reprising the operation performed on the crotch of the black net bodysuit. The test of excavation once performed on feminine fabric was now carried out on its masculine opposite. The exposed genitals were then rendered secure and safe by the relocation and application of the pinstripe and plastic athletic box underwear. The devise of bias cut and magnifying chevrons was also applied here.

The Pinstripe Codpiece now appeared to fill the void left by the strategic excavation of the pant crotch. This codpiece is a phallic and deflective shield, made from pinstripe suiting. It is a codpiece of ‘city-ness’. This phallic armour of the suiting codpiece was now incorporated into the suit. Gradually, by degrees in the process of design testing, this cup of plastic had worked its way to the exterior and now merged with the pant replacing the phallic fly. It had become fused to the pant and was now absorbed into the pant’s taxonomy and architecture. It unapologetically proclaims, advertises and magnifies the site of phallic power, safely behind its shield of plastic and pinstripe. It is both hard and soft and truly a piece to house the cuds. Its fusion with the pant was complete.

This Pinstripe Codpiece was designed to be detachable. This detachability also references the ‘fall’ or front trouser flap seen in the Neo-classical pant before the advent of the fly. The pinstripe codpiece was fastened to the pant crotch by sewn on press clips; the type usually found in women’s garments. The phallic verticality of the pant fly had been replaced by an arrangement of sensitive and discrete fasteners. This method of fastening afforded the alternatives of exposing the genitals, the stretch glove genitals or one of the pinstripe jockstraps when the codpiece was detached. The Hybrid Suit may in fact be worn without the codpiece and still not offend sensibilities. This excavation and exposure of the genitals re-enacts the genital display seen in The Man in the Polyester Suit. By incremental steps, the transgressive display has been, at last, design tested and embedded into the suit’s taxonomy.

This manufacture of masculine armour, the Pinstripe Codpiece was juxtaposed in hyperbolic difference and opposition to the feminine armour of the boned bodice of the high waisted pant - married within the one garment. Unyielding masculine armour was employed beside flexible feminine constraint.

The Zip

The zip of the pant, made redundant by the excavated pant crotch was re-allocated higher to the feminine boned bodice. Like the zip of the Jump Suit, it lay invisibly under the double-breasted torso; it’s function rendering conventional buttoning redundant. This too-long zip ran up to the throat echoing the tie in tracing the phallic trajectory from crotch to larynx. It also divided and bifurcated the pectoral muscles. This zip, in concert with the ‘nipple hugging’ high waist delineated and accentuated the pectorals through a simple abstracted rectilinear geometry.
The Hybrid Suit with codpiece attached.

The Hybrid Suit with jockstrap revealed.

The Hybrid Pants codpiece removed.

The Sleeves

The tools of dissection, excavation and fusion were also applied to the suits sleeves. The raglan sleeves were in a rhetorical operation disconnected from the pinstripe Jump Suit and applied (although not physically connected) to the Hybrid suit. In concert with the high waist of the Codpiece Pant, the sleeve emphasised the pectoral area through isolation and framing. A new pinstripe suit (albeit unconventional) now comprised of the Codpiece Pant and sleeves appeared. The sleeves completed an inverted triangular frame, connecting codpiece to shoulder. This inverted triangle is integral to the rhetorical geometry of the suit and has been since its Neo-classical inception. The illusion broadens the shoulders and narrows the hips thereby, with the help of shoulder pads, re-emphasising the idealised masculine proportions.

The Caranet

The now separate and independent sleeves were joined at the neck by a stand collar closing the idealised inverted triangle whilst also stabilising the sleeves. This style of suit collar is usually associated with the East particularly the subcontinent (the Nehru collar) or China (the Mandarin collar). It is not usually included within the lexicon of the traditional western suit. Whilst it experienced a degree of popularity during the Peacock Revolution of the 1960s, when the east influenced much of western fashion, its presence today has a tinge of the foreign and exotic, of the Other. This collar may alternatively be interpreted as a caranet - an iron collar used for punishment – or incongruously, a jewelled necklet or collar. This idea would inform the choice of fastening. The idea of the collar acting as a caranet, a jewelled collar, presented the opportunity to revisit the technology of laser cutting and the adaptation of the motive created for the leather apron. The mini penis motif was reassigned as the design for a decorative ‘sequin’ with which to garland the collar of the Hybrid Suit. The trajectory of tie and zip linking phallus to larynx was literally replaced by a scaled down replica of the phallus. Alternatively the penis sequin spoke as a grammatical full stop to the vertical sentence of the zip.

Although the caranet unified the two independent sleeves at the neck they were still not completely stabilised. There was nothing to stop them ineffectually falling off the shoulders, collapsing the triangular masculine frame. The garment that this configuration most closely resembled was the feminine shrug. The technical solution to the shrug’s instability lay in its fusion with another garment, a flesh stretch underwear/bodysuit. Through the rhetorical operation of subtraction and addition, the pants and the phallic glove were eliminated from the bodysuit. The remaining torso and sleeves (actually a new garment genre within The Fabricated Man’s wardrobe - a long sleeved T-shirt) were fused with the pinstripe shrug using a herringbone stitch. This hand stitch is part of the technical arsenal of tailoring. It made possible the union of the stretch mesh and the woven pinstripe as one hybrid garment. Technically these fabrications are incompatible. The woven suit’s inelasticity can easily compromise the elasticity of the mesh. Herringbone stitch can sometimes be the technical solution. In this case, not only did it act to reconcile the structurally incompatible fabrication but it also reconciled the masculine signifying pinstripe suiting with the feminine signifying stretch mesh. The stitches, although invisible on the finished suit, still attested to the suits ‘tailoring’.
All the elements of the Hybrid Suit were now fused. The high waisted pant's zip was connected to the caranet of the shrug/T-shirt completing the zip's trajectory from codpiece to caranet. The pectorals were now completely framed by the high waisted pant, the shrug sleeves and divided by the phallic zip. When this zip was connected to the centre front of the caranet it became vertical and erect. When it was disconnected it fell flaccid and soft.
The Mask

A matching flesh stretch head-piece/mask accessorised the T-shirt/shrug. The separate mask was in response to the masking that had been constructed within the garment genres of the wardrobe to deal with the scpophobic gaze and the imperative of masculine masking. This masking had predominately been incorporated into the stretch body suits. A precedent had been set with the separate Y Front mask that accompanied the Y Front Suit. The flesh stretch mask could have been attached to the shrug but making it a separate piece enhanced its performance. In fact this versatility was extended. It could be worn in many different syntagmatic combinations within the wardrobe.

*Peter Allan. The Pinstripe ScarfCollar and Mask. 2009.*
**Scarf or Vest**

In the absence of the suit’s traditional roll collar and lapel the emerging Hybrid Suit lacked a defining ‘suit-ness’. Although crucial to the ensembles wearability, the caranet lacked the denotation and rhetoric of the suit, which is vital to the point of synecdoche. This lack of ‘suit-ness’ was redressed through the distillation and fusion of suit collar, lapels and centre front into a new and separate garment. Made in the pinstripe, it lent the Hybrid Suit its ‘suit-ness’. It could be worn over the top of the caranet, its front falling vertically to the codpiece - following yet hiding the phallic zip’s trajectory. Alternatively it could be worn unbuttoned, with one of its fronts tossed nonchalantly over one shoulder, transforming it into a scarf made of pinstripe ‘suit-ness’. In another transformative paradigmatic variation, it could be calibrated as vest or gilet by wrapping the centre front facings under the arms and fastening them together at the centre back.

The Hybrid Suit played host to sets of oppositions and differences. It made possible their fusion into one garment, cataloguing and consolidating many of the issues that this project set out to investigate. This suit acts as both a funnel through which to concentrate the distillation of the tests of design and making and as segue way into the project’s conclusion. It is the appropriate tailored gesture with which to close the doors of the laboratory of making and to reflect upon the generation of the fashion artefact as response to the project’s initial agenda and questions.

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6. I use the invented word in the way Barthes invented and used the word ‘city-ness’ as referenced in Chapter Five.
Chapter 8 References

Blackman, C 2009, 100 Years of Menswear, Laurence King, London.
The Hybrid Suit is the project's apotheosis. I describe the Hybrid Suit as apotheosis because it represents not only the project’s conclusion and highest point, but also a transition through identities. The Fabricated Man has undergone a sequence of transformations. He has oscillated between fluid states of tailored, engineered cloth and man.

His apotheosis is not only the marker of the project's end; it is the elevation of the suit and the man as a single, yet multifaceted identity. He has segued from the abstract, through the investigation and testing of the traditional and critical notions surrounding masculinities. I have conducted the tests within the contemporaneous laboratories of design, menswear and tailoring. The Fabricated Man has been reified; become real, palpable and concrete. I have made him actual and - incongruously, through the mechanisms of binary oppositions - metaphysical. His identity is simultaneously singular and universal - specific yet ubiquitous.

It was one of my ambitions within design testing, to bring The Fabricated Man to life, to give him form and substance and to make him real. The wardrobe of The Fabricated Man is the expression of an authorship and authority that I conferred upon myself in my role as investigator, driver, inquisitor and, foremost, designer. I am the agent of his reification and apotheosis.
1. Man Made of Suits: Suits Made of Man

The Exhibition

How have these multi-axial identities of The Fabricated Man been made manifest? The first identity manifested within the exhibition Into the Closet; part of the 2008 L’Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival’s cultural program. The invitation publicity described the content of the exhibition as Objects, Garments and Creative Assessments of Male Identity. I exhibited two ensembles.

The first ensemble comprised of the organza suit (jacket and shorts), black net body suit with stiff white collar, and pinstripe tie/jockstrap.

The second ensemble comprised of the pinstripe jumpsuit, white stretch bodysuit and stiff white collar.

These outfits had not been tested outside of the studio environment and not yet in these syntagmatic configurations. Two of the lightweight polypropylene mannequins, tested as deflective armour in Chapter Six, were dressed in these outfits. The mannequins’ lightness made it possible to suspend them from the ceiling by fishing line. The figures appeared to hover. The head of the body suit was given shape by wire profiles which disappeared when viewed from the front. This lent the figures scale and humanity, while the ensemble’s arms and legs were left to dangle, unfilled. Slight changes in the air caused the ensembles to revolve, almost imperceptibly, and somewhat eerily.

A sense of identity emerged through this exhibition of outfits. Although it was obvious that there was no “body” and nobody, inside the garments, they had been invested with an essence through their silent hovering and delicate rotation - as if life had been miraculously breathed into their materiality. This conferred upon them corporeality. A masculine ghost had entered the fabric machine. Through the mediation and chemistry of mannequin and exhibition, The Fabricated Man had undergone a metamorphosis. The abstract of the project’s title had been reified and made tangible. Two men made of nothing more that engineered cloth had become, and shared the identity and nomenclature of The Fabricated Man. He was singular and multiple. He was a man made of suits. The suits were the man and, interchangeably, the man was the suit.

The ambiguous plurality of the project’s title became apparent. The Fabricated Man had been fabricated from an assemblage of cut cloth and, at the same time, fabricated from a suite of societal issues that surround masculinity. He was both invented (as persona) and made (as fashion). He was manifestation and metaphor; physical and conceptual. The fabricated man had physically materialised through the testing of ideas in the laboratory of making and menswear. He was made of theory and history, of the hand of the researcher, of my skill set and history and praxis¹. He was made of myths, assumptions and postulations that through challenges and testing have been exposed as mere constructs and/or fallacies.

The Fabricated Man is recognised as a creation, a composite collection of issues and crises identified within contemporary masculinities His hegemonic status as construction, as invention and fabrication is revealed.

An air of melancholia was also palpable within the exhibition space. Several people described the figures as ghostly. The exhibition space had seen better days as a private hotel, and had then been rooms by the hour (or so I was told) for sexual

¹. it is very difficult to resist the temptation to draw comparison with Dr. Frankenstein and the assemblage of his perfect man.
Peter Allan. Into the Closet. 2008 L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival.
encounters, then a backpacker’s hotel. The ensembles were suspended from the ceiling in one of the threadbare rooms whose sad theatricality imbued the figures with melancholia and poetry. The garments did not have this quality when photographed on mannequins within the studio.

The images that were generated as project photo-documentation are a permanent testament to this air of pause and quietude. This atmosphere of dark stillness is ground that I aimed to share with photographic practitioner Joel-Peter Witkin. This was a quality that I strove to imbue in the project’s outcomes - both garments and images. I endeavoured to instil this quality into the garments themselves.

The hotel's ghostly ambience, its fading and passing, its fall into a shadow of its former self acted as a fit and touching metaphor for The Fabricated Man himself.
**Avatar: Further reification**

This is the second incarnation of *The Fabricated Man*.

**AVATAR:** the decent of a deity to the earth, the incarnation of a deity

- An incarnation of a Hindu deity in human or animal form, especially one of the incarnations of Vishnu such as Rama and Krishna
- Somebody who embodies, personifies, or is the manifestation of an idea or concept
- A movable three-dimensional image that can be used to represent somebody in cyberspace, for example, an Internet user

(Encarta World English Dictionary)

In 2008 Walter Van Bierendonk released his hilarious *Sex Clown* collection. (Walter Van Bierendonk 2011). This collection juxtaposed exaggerated clownish and playful phallic elements. The collection worked on two very different levels, and in two very different but mutually supportive media. Whist the garments and headpieces were produced for the runway they were also produced in second life as Avatars. Avatar is a word and construct we are being exposed to more and more through gaming and film. What was inspiring about Van Bierendonk’s collection was how his Avatars existed not only in the virtual world but also in reality (as garments) and in

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2. Stephen Jones made the fantastic phallic headpieces.

3. I first heard this word used in the digital virtual context in 2000 when studying multimedia.
real time (the fashion runway). More than being the invention and construction of a character, it was the idea of a collection being designed around and made for an invented character that resonated. Like Walter Van Bierendonk, I had invented my character, designing a collection around him. My role as designer and maker had created an intimacy and proximity to The Fabricated Man. The singularity (and paradoxical multiplicity) of The Fabricated Man (and possibly because of my own inclusion within his identity) helped to make him an actual man, somehow real - even though (again paradoxically) he is also fictional.

This degree of intimacy made the descriptor collection too neutral and dispassionate. The project's body of making was, as a result, renamed Wardrobe. It was made specifically for the ownership of, and wearing by, The Fabricated Man - who incongruously, like the Avatar, transcends the fictitious. Wardrobe was appropriated from the personal. The clothing that an individual owns is called a Wardrobe. I had already considered this name and then forgotten. In 2006 I had written that the project's making was “the curation of a Wardrobe for The Fabricated Man”. This then is also a way of describing the prototypes that emerged from the laboratory of testing and making. The garments had transitioned from laboratory to Wardrobe, from experimental to personal.

The Fabricated Man's identity as Avatar is seemingly a binary and contrary opposite to his identity assumed through apotheosis. Whilst the Avatar is the embodiment of a concept, it is also the incarnation of a descended deity, made by man. He becomes singular and unitary. The Fabricated Man's apotheosis sees him transcend and transition in the opposite direction. He becomes multiple and universal.

Bespoke and the Muse

The Third Incarnation.

The difficulty locating and employing an ongoing and reliable (perhaps even given the nature of the project, an uninhibited) fit model led to the third manifestation of The Fabricated Man.

Early in the project's formation, during the manufacture of The Military Jackets (Chapter Two), I had, during the reflective bridge, considered the necessity of a single and ongoing body on which to fit the test garments. This would involve an ongoing relationship with the fit model and, as a consequence, the process would become bespoke or made-to-measure.

The first two identities of The Fabricated Man had emerged as a result of the absence of such a body/model/man. The difficulty in sourcing and employing a fit model who was –

- not put off by the nature and content of the project,
- within a certain “average range” in terms of physical statistics
- willing to make an ongoing and indefinite professional commitment

had meant that The Fabricated Man's identity had to be abstract. The afore-mentioned plurality and the multilayered fabrication of the man may not have formed had such a model been available from the project's beginning.

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4. I was surprised when models responded with degrees of scopophobia. The nudity was not the problem. It was more to do with what Berger calls “shame as a display” (1972, p.49)
The exhibition had breathed life into The Fabricated Man. He had become public and outing. He was out of the closet and into the Wardrobe. He was now ready to move from mannequin to man. It was vital that the project’s next phase mobilise the Wardrobe from the static and ersatz to the animated and living body. As the project neared its conclusion, the photo-documentation of the Wardrobe became imperative.

An experienced life-drawing model who had modelled menswear for undergraduate panel assessments was recommended. I approached this model hoping that he would feel comfortable, and not embarrassed dressing in the Wardrobe of The Fabricated Man. He was also approached because of his maturity and worldliness. I was confident that the garments would fit based on his modelling of undergraduate collections. I was relieved that all the underwear pieces were a good fit. The stretch body suits, the pin-stripe jockstraps and the athletic boxes not only fitted well but also looked right. According to the model they also felt comfortable, albeit quite unorthodox.

All of the outerwear pieces - the woven suits, the jackets, the organza suit and the pin-stripe jumpsuit were too small for the model. This presented a dilemma. Half the garments made to date were a good fit. At this stage some of the pivotal pieces of the Wardrobe had not been made. I was faced with the decision to either:

• Find another model who would fit all the pieces (although not perfectly) who had the same breadth of experience, maturity and sophistication. This was unlikely. Or

• Make the outstanding pieces of the Wardrobe to fit this model and find the solution to the pieces that didn't fit later.

I proceeded with the latter. I was influenced by an unforeseen development. The model was intrigued and delighted by the garments. More than comfortable with potentially difficult garments (physically and emotionally), he was openly interactive and engaged. None of the garments were problematic. The transparency, the rhetorical, the hyperbolic nudity, and the penis sheaths - the focus on the genitals - rather than inhibiting and embarrassing, resulted in a sense of play.

It became apparent within the space of an hour-long fitting that the project would be enriched and enhanced, and given new depth and perspectives by the inclusion of the bespoke. This meant that all future garments (including any necessary remakes) would be produced to fit this model; made to his proportions, according to his measurements and as a consequent made to fit only him. To quote James Sherwood,

> Although much abused of late, the word “bespoke” refers to only a suit tailored for an individual on an exclusive basis: a process in which the customer is measured by hand, his pattern is cut by hand and the garment made by many hands, with an average of three intervening fittings. (Sherwood 2010, p.18)

This represented a substantial shift in the project’s operations. It also conferred the identity as third Fabricated Man on the model. Contingent with the revelation of the model as of The Fabricated Man was the realisation that this project presented the opportunity to map, chronicle and enact the bespoke. This would come about through the engagement with the model and

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6. The Hybrid Suit was the culmination of this strategy.
7. Other models who have tried on the suits have reacted to them with a sense of guarded suspicion, caution and reserve. Even those who had worked as life models, who were used to nude work, upon donning pieces from the Wardrobe, and undergoing the metamorphosis became self-conscious and inhibited.
8. This also piqued the model's interest and offered him a sense of ownership that eclipsed his role as fit model.
the manufacture of a Wardrobe made exclusively for him (and because of the nature of bespoke), no other.

This course of action would forefront and draw upon my own cultural capital. I have many years of experience in the field of made to measure, from high end through to corporate. I have fitted and made for men and women, for the very large and the very small, for the ideally proportioned and the disfigured and the disabled. It is one of the cornerstones of my practice.

The mechanics of made to measure - the proximity of maker and client - involves the risk that the project would take through the bespoke, that of intimacy, which in itself has two aspects, the physical and the psychological.

Bespoke and Intimacy

The Physical

Bespoke necessitates within its procedures and actions an intimacy between maker and client so physical and immediate that few professions outside of medicine parallel. Christopher Breward describes the potential dangers inherent within the interactions of man and tailor in his essay Manliness, Modernity and Male Clothing.

The key ritual of fitting up may also have slipped from view due to its intensely personal, almost erotic characterisation. Undoubtedly it was at this point that the tailor came into closest contact with the body of his client. Here was a problematic proximity whose social implications did not escape the attentions of trade journals music hall lyricists and popular novelists. The transaction of the tailor moved towards the transgression of a fragile cultural terrain in which the potential breaching of corporeal, sexual and class taboos became dangerously real.

(Breward 2001, p.169)

His analysis of the measuring and fitting procedures places emphasis on a regulated physical proximity and intimacy that although integral to the methodologies of made-to-measure, also holds within itself a cross-tension of power and control - balanced against vulnerability and exposure.

It is assumed that the tailor holds the balance of power as, impelled by the necessities of accurate measurements and fit through the hands, the tape measure, the chalk, pins, needles

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5. As our relationship as tailor and client progressed and became formalised, he would take pleasure in the knowledge that these garments would fit him alone. It occurred to me upon the project’s conclusion and within the reflective recording of the process, that this was his first bespoke experience. It was his first experience of a process that entails accuracy, intimacy, and the proximity that is inherent within the bespoke experience.
and thread - the corporeal terrain of the client is negotiated by the tailor. There is no escaping this intimacy and, as Breward states, the persistent attention paid by the tailor to the client’s anatomy, if not negotiated with professional dexterity would result in physical and sexual transgression (Breward 2001, p.169).

I, as the tailor of the bespoke Fabricated Man enacted this precariously balanced paradox of intimacy and distance within the measuring and fitting of the model. What - without method, technique and experience - could seem like invasion, transgression and violation must in the hands of the tailor be actualized through deference, respect and objectivity. Breward quotes T.H. Holding, a correspondent for The Tailor and Cutter magazine in the 1880s, cautioning the tailor didactically:

> Remember always that your hands are going about a sensible intelligent man, and not a horseblock.
> (Holding cited in Breward 2001, p.171)
The Psychological

At this point a nexus of the physical and the psychological was forged through the tools of voice and touch. The Fabricated Man (now as a further three men: bespoke subject, client and model) was - through a combination of the verbal and tactile, voice and hand - made less conscious of physical and psychological vulnerability, and guided to a state of trust and acceptance.

The model on several occasions confirmed the balance of voice and touch, saying that he felt relaxed, trusting and engaged. I believe that if handled correctly that the client can even become unaware of the maker’s hand; the client may be transported and become so distracted from the intimate procedures of the maker as to transcend the work of the hand and its intimate and potentially violating proximity. The axiomatic phrase “between a man and his tailor” is no longer part of common parlance. It is no longer used in the same way that once indicated an inviolate unbreachable confidentiality\(^\text{10}\). The living and contemporary counterpart is the bond between a woman and her hairdresser, at least in popular culture\(^\text{11}\). The model’s role within the bespoke; his engagement and alacrity transformed him not only into the incarnation of The Fabricated Man but further into what can only be described as “Muse”.

In 2008 Bernhard Willhelm designed a collection that looked like a synthesis of pornography and sportswear (specifically wrestling). Stars and stripes were also prominent in the collection. He is well known for sourcing models outside of agencies and for this collection he used as photographic model, Francois Sagat, the gay French porn star. Sagat has a hyper-muscular physique. He looks like a body builder. The Waif was still dominating at this time and by comparison Sagat’s unfashionable bulk was mountainous. Sagat has since gone on to international gay stardom. He is actually a fashion graduate and stylist - not an everyday synthesis. The power of Sagat’s presence lies in this superficially incompatible self-invention, which has little to do with the dictates of the fashionable; both sartorial and corporeal. The scale of his build eclipses even the Adonis. He has a shaved head tattooed to look like a marine cut, facial hair and hirsute torso. (Francois Sagat blog 2011)

Judging by the images of the collection (EthanSays.com) and the

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10. In the HBO series *The Sopranos*, his Cosa Nostra captain surround family boss, Uncle Junior, during a fitting at his tailor. He issues orders involving highly nefarious activities. He assumes that all that is said is confidential.

11. Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard’s de-facto spouse is her hairdresser. This relationship received a good deal of press attention leading up to her election and during the move to the lodge. The issue of confidentiality was implied in the coverage.
perfect fit of the garments on Sagat’s gym built frame, it is safe to assume that these garments were specifically made for Sagat. He appears to be playing a role especially written for him by Bernhard Wilhelm. Sagat has been transformed into Muse through the dynamics of the bespoke, and the apparent scripting of a character.

My model, through the same dynamic, had been transformed into and assumed the role of the Muse. This had eventuated through confidential and transparent dialogue, and the mutual and respectful intimacy that exist between a man and his tailor.

Parallels may be drawn with *The Fabricated Man’s Wardrobe*. Some of the garments (previously discussed throughout the projects evolution) are transparent or have sheaths for the genitals. Some garments expose the genitals. These garments may have an erotic charge and erogenous potential but they are not meant to be pornographic. This was not my intention. This was confirmed in conversation with the model. It was through his type of open dialogue and feedback that the model also assumed the identity of Muse. A sense of mutual ownership came with this transaction.

2. The Relevance of Tailoring

The bespoke relationship affirmed the centrality of tailoring to the project. Tailoring as both process and craft, physical and psychological, became a laboratory in its own right; a laboratory within a laboratory. The suit, its taxonomy and its spatio-temporal relationship to the male body proved to be a crucial armature in the research and making. It provided the lens through which to critique masculinities within and through fashion.

In its intimate incarnation the suit provided the architecture on which to build *The Fabricated Man*, literally and metaphorically. The suits longevity as the quintessence of the idealised male body and its power to transmute according to the shifts in masculine identity attests to its potency and beauty. The exponential growth of menswear and the pivotal role the suit has played in that expansion verifies its timelessness and its ability to constantly reinvent itself.

Gianino Malossi articulated the primacy of the suit by stating:

*Men’s suits, which once lasted a lifetime, corresponded to an idea of the body that remained unchanged. Suits and clothing that must change continually take for granted that the body is flexible and undetermined, along with the body’s mental image. The fashion industry has learnt to control the signs that generate this metamorphosis of the body.*

(Malossi 2000, p.30)

The suit’s longevity - its adaptability and its chameleon reconstructions - is a pervasive rebuttal and denial of Flugel’s statement:

*Men may be said to have suffered a great defeat in the reduction of male sartorial decorativeness which took place at the end of the eighteenth century...Men gave up their right to all the brighter, gayer, more elaborate, and more varied forms of ornamentation, leaving these entirely to the use of women, and thereby making his own tailoring the most austere and ascetic of the arts... man abandoned his right to be considered beautiful.*

(Flugel 1976, p.110)

His *Great Male Renunciation* asserts that men’s fashion became dull and colourless by comparison to women’s. This idea provided one of the first platforms for this project’s trajectory. It is a claim has prefaced many discussions of menswear, both historical and theoretical. His assertion that men’s clothing suffered a great defeat and negation of beauty as a result of *The Great Male Renunciation* now sounds overly dramatic and histrionic. The reverse has proven to be true. The suit is becoming universally accepted as the dual apogee of masculine elegance and utility. The suit survives as the ultimate sartorial masculine paradigm. It has and will continue to embody physical masculine ideals throughout changes within the sphere of fashion. It has proven itself to be the enduring medium between man and fashion.

The production of the artefact - the suit - within my practice has proved to be much more eloquent and immediate in its capacity to express that which words fail to, in capturing the quintessence of masculine beauty.
3. The Somatic.

Clothing was produced in response to ideas and concepts that surround masculinity and its perceived emanation from the male body. Inherent to this strategy was the attempt to engender heightened awareness of the body’s maleness and its taxonomy through the somatic, bodily experience of wearing. Issues intrinsic to contemporary masculinity were tested through making with this objective in mind. These garments aimed to facilitate a consciousness that might transcend the purely corporeal in favor of feeling and the sensate. This is an experiential awareness long taken for granted by women that has conventionally been denied to men. The emphases within menswear since The Great Male Renunciation (including the centrality of the suit) has privileged utility, labor, functionality and practically. The traditional focus has been on performance not on sensation. This has been the masculine lens through which to view men’s clothing. It is the antithesis of the sensuality of wearing, the sensation that comes from contact with the textile and its touch - the pleasure of the awareness that is inherent to the experience. This is a facet of the curated experience The Fabricated Man’s Wardrobe.

Diana Klein has conducted her research in the area of fashion sensates. As research for her thesis The Intimate Habitat, (2010) Klein conducted tests that measured the physical and psychological responses to wearing a variety of fibres, both manmade and natural. Klein precluded men from her sample group because her readings of research data led her to believe that women were not only more sensitive but that they were more able to articulate their responses. In Klein’s words,

_It is evidenced as a result of my readings that men have been inexplicably excluded from such tests._
(Klein 2010)
My attentions were drawn to the sensuality of dressing by the Muse. In the course of candid, open dialogue and reflection between man and maker – after his duties as paid model and muse had been concluded - he privileged the haptic, the sensate and the bodily pleasure of wearing in his experience\(^\text{12}\). He was at pains to draw clear distinction between his sensual, even erotogenic response and a sexual, fetishistic response. He said the response was facilitated through masking - by the head and face coverings of the stretch body suits. He felt that masking granted him permission to respond honestly without fear of opprobrium, censure, shame or the scopophobic gaze. The practice of masking to reduce inhibition, self consciousness and self censure was used by George Platt Lynes when photographing the male nude. He also suggested that models close their eyes or turn their heads away from the eye of the camera. This trope is also evidenced in the current fad of Morphsuits. These suits involve total enclosure of the wearer, including the head, by a stretch body suit (as I have made), and the wearer can behave in an unrestrained and adventurous way in public. ‘Morphs’ (as they sometimes call themselves) claim that masking facilitates this lack of inhibition and a sense of freedom.

...proponents of the Morphsuit - the colourful Lycra bodysuits that cover the entire body, including the head and face - claim they do have peculiar, transformative powers. "They definitely make you feel less inhibited," says 15-year-old Tom Burton, "because you’re wearing this bright Spandex suit yet no one can see your face. So you feel like you can do pretty much whatever you want."

(Wells 2010)

\(^{12}\text{It is important to note that the Muse’s responses were unsolicited. They came as complete surprise.}\)
The Muse’s response to wearing is the one of most surprising and unexpected outcomes of garment testing. It was completely unplanned. It added new value and significance to the Wardrobe. It was anticipated that its wearing may make men uncomfortable but not that it would be transcendent and liberating. This was yet another reification of The Fabricated Man and an addition to the catalogue of identities.

Amidst the garment experiments, authorized and permitted within the context of research, some fundamental and core masculine energy was released. It was perhaps a synergy of the psyche, the corporeal and the indefinable; an alchemy which is a state of maleness rarely shared with other men outside of the homoerotic. This is an energy that generally frightens men making them fear for their own masculinity. Consequently it remains hidden, covert and taboo. This is an aspect of the Adonis Complex, of male masking and scopohobia.

Part of the rationale and motivation in accepting and curating this experience of the Wardrobe was to highlight the somatic and the sensate, not to design and facilitate the sexual and the fetishistic. The garments are not objects for displaced sexual gratification. They were not made to promote orgasm. The garments are worn environment that grants permission to the wearer to engage with (and embrace if they so chose) the awareness, the sensuality and the pleasure of wearing. This engagement may then blur the boundaries between the sensual and the erotogenic through the somatic experience.

A garment that squeezes the testicles makes a man think differently.

(Eco 2007, p.316)

In searching for references that spoke of the masculine sartorial/somatic experience, one of the few I found described a Berber custom, a rite of passage:
Rural Berber women weave men’s hooded gowns first worn by young men during an important moment of the life cycle: the arrival of puberty. In the past, women commonly wove and presented their sons with their first hand woven gown when they were around thirteen or fourteen years old, publicly marking their transition in status from boyhood to manhood and the assumption of male responsibilities. The act of wearing this heavy wool garment activates the sense of touch and demonstrates how dress involves the embodiment of gender roles. Boys had to be literally and metaphorically strong enough to wear the heavy wool gown. … The weight of the heavy wool reminds a boy of his age and status as a young man of increased responsibilities. (Becker 2007, p. 76)

I have a Montague Burton\textsuperscript{13} double-breasted suit (not quite the full Monty\textsuperscript{14}, it has lost its matching vest) probably from the late 1940s. I suspect that it is a post WWII demob suit. (Raymond Burton Obituary 2011)

When I tried it on for the first time I was impressed by its weight. I wondered whether this is a forgotten somatic experience of the suit? Is the weight of the suit metaphorical? It may be that the suit and its weight was inherent to a rite of passage, an initiation into the gravitas and responsibility of adulthood and specifically, manhood.

\textsuperscript{13} Established in 1903, Burton & Burton offered a very affordable made-to-measure suit service that the workingman could afford. “Good clothes develop a man’s self-respect” was Montague Burton’s philosophy. At its peak in the 1950s tailors in a workshop in Leeds produced 30,000 suits a week. Burton and Burton made one third of all WWII demob suits, suits that servicemen were issued after the end of WWII.

\textsuperscript{14} This is apocryphally said to be where the expression The Full Monty comes from. The Full Monty meant not just jacket and pants, but a three piece suit of jacket, pants and vest, but since the 1997 eponymously named movie, conversely refers to a completely naked man, and therefore, the male genitalia.
4. The Crisis of Dressing

Upon the completion of *The Fabricated Man’s Wardrobe*, the project’s initial premises were revisited and reconsidered. The act of dressing in itself becomes a reflection upon the ongoing sense of crisis that is, to varying degrees, inherent in being a man at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The wearing of *The Fabricated Man’s Wardrobe* is yet another laboratory nestled within the complex and multiple layers of the project.

The outcomes of the project’s design tests through making - the garments - could not have been predicted. I did not know at the beginning of the project what garment genres I would test, how I would test them and what form they would take. Nor was there any fore-knowledge of what these garments would look like in the wearing - how they may look to the wearer or to the spectator - how the garments would respond to the gaze. I do not remember the sensation of wearing being used as a design trigger or driver. It was not consciously given primacy within the project’s initial criteria. This outcome could only be achieved and recognised through an experimental design process in which the issues faced by contemporary men were investigated and responded to through speculative fashion making.

Because of the design strategies employed within the project’s research trajectories; I would not always be fully cognisant of the provocative or confrontational nature of the garments. On some levels, the successful outcomes of design tests through making depended on my objectivity. On another parallel and contemporaneous level, the strategy, the objective was deliberately provocative yet necessary. If I were to design in response to the issues surrounding the crisis of masculinity through fashion reification, the area of exploration would inevitably involve discomfort, scopophobia and scrutiny.

The garments of the Wardrobe may, through the wearing, make some men acutely uncomfortable. The wearing might enact and confirm their sense of crisis through the sartorial, the somatic and the corporeal - confirming the body as the ultimate site of the crisis of masculinities. This unease was confirmed when the search for an ongoing fit model during the project’s development proved fruitless.

Conversely, for some men, the experience may be reflective of the evolution of masculinities. It may be a liberating, celebratory encounter - physically and psychologically. The Muse manifested this response. There was considerable positive interest in the garments when they were displayed through exhibition, presentation and within the working studio. The garments were viewed through the lens of fashion. Interest was expressed in them as experimental menswear.

It is reflective of the crisis of masculinities itself that the reactions and responses of wearing will be as varied as the men who might don the Wardrobe and assume the identity of *The Fabricated Man*.

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15. Images of these garments were seen within the twice yearly, in-house postgraduate conference presentations of the School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University.
It is assumed that each man's response would be individual and unique. The project's making provides an environment for the man who is wearer of these design iterations to reflect upon and react to the experience. The effect of the garments upon the individual is not presupposed or known in advance. The outcomes are not fixed. A new set of binary oppositions and tensions may be imagined as the register of experiential wearing. The effect may be quixotic or anxious, transcendental or traumatic, liberating or critical.

The ambiguity of the project's title brings into focus the act of males dressing themselves - possibly in their own masculinity - either in representations (abstract or literal) of their own physical form (torso, penis, etcetera) or in the various signifiers that represent - or alternatively undermine - the traditional concepts of masculinity (suiting, pin striping, the tie, the apron).

This activity could be viewed as a magnification of the everyday act of dressing. We men dress ourselves in either our own masculinity or in layers of masculine masks behind which we can hide from the gaze of others, or even our own.

These processes may generate and magnify a sense of anxious dislocation or alternatively, they may transform and transcend the wearer - the man - in a ritual of disguise or masking. Can the ideal and beautiful be donned in this way? Can the dressing in another's masculinity and beauty dispel feelings of inadequacy? Perhaps it should simply be seen as play and masquerade revealing the physical ideal as superficial and transient even if you are its corporeal embodiment?
5. Imaging

The completed Wardrobe of *The Fabricated Man* was photographed in a co-operative environment that entailed discussion - not always verbal - between the photographer, the models and myself. One of the models was the Muse, who by now was quite familiar with much of the wardrobe and who would be wearing the bespoke pieces. The sourcing of the other model, at the eleventh hour, was both serendipitous and fortuitous. This model was required to model the garments in *The Fabricated Man’s Wardrobe* that predated the Muse’s inclusion in the project: garments that did not fit the Muse. He was relaxed and receptive, not unsettled by the nature of the garments.

The process was guided by reference to and re-purposing of the rhetoric of the image from men’s fashion media, specifically those of men’s designer underwear that has figured prominently throughout this project.

The minimal instructions that I gave to the photographer, Monty Coles, were predominately conveyed through these images. I showed him a suite of images that had played a crucial role as visual data at the project’s genesis and through its exploratory trajectories. These key images were instructions for re-interpreting the pose. These were images of:

1. Samuel Oldknow
2. Eugene Sandow
3. Travis Fimmel
4. The Man in the Polyester Suit
5. Samuel de Cubber
6. David Beckham
7. Garrett Neff.

The rhetoric within the visual research data gathered at the project’s inception, was reconfigured and reinterpreted into visual strategies with which to photo-document *The Fabricated Man’s Wardrobe*.

The photographic process was the actualisation of a new laboratory. The tests in this laboratory involved surrendering control to the photographer and the models. The images were shown to both the photographer and the models to explain the pose. They were also offered to indicate tone. I showed Monty some of Joel-Peter Witkin’s images. I explained that it was the tone of these images that I was interested in capturing not specifically the physical content or the mise-en-scene. The background imaging for all garments was a plain white backdrop, referencing the images of designer men’s underwear that I had shown to Monty.

I left the photographer to employ his own language, his own visual rhetoric. I also left him to direct the models.

What emerged was a visual interpretation that clearly spoke of a synergy between the photographer, the models, the environment, and of course the Wardrobe.

I feel that the images, portraits of *The Fabricated Man*, have stillness - a sense of melancholic hiatus. Colleagues, who read this tone from the images without prompting, have confirmed this. This is the tone that, at the project’s closure, I wanted conferred on *The Fabricated Man*. He may appear in a state of equilibrium - not in a state of crisis – but this is possibly surface and superficial. The apparent sense of stillness is misleading and deceptive. Within *The Fabricated Man’s interior*, the crisis of masculinities endures. It cannot be dispelled in one stroke and there is some-way to go before men attain a state of balance and resolution. They will continue, striving, in a dichotomous state of calm and crisis for some time to come.
Chapter 9 References

Reflective Summation

The triggers for this design research project lay in the nexus of two ideas separated by two hundred years of acceptance and assumption.

The first runs from the pen of fashion theorist, J.C. Flugel. His *Great Male Renunciation*, first articulated in 1930, asserts that at the end of the eighteenth century men relinquished their “right” to be seen as “beautiful”. This was as a consequence of “a tailoring that was the most austere and ascetic of the arts”. In foregoing “decoration” men “suffered a great defeat.” (Flugel 1976, p.110)

The second idea is encapsulated within an equally tidy and much more contemporary phrase. The *Crisis of Masculinities* is an expression that has become part of common and popular parlance. Like *The Great Male Renunciation*, the crisis emanates from surrender and abandonment. In both cases cited the surrender and abandonment was not necessarily voluntarily (Gavenas 2008, p.226). The crisis has sprung from the challenges to traditional masculinities over fifty years by women and marginalised men, which has resulted in diminished status.

Both of these crises are played out within the overlapping loci

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1. Macaroni fits have been viewed as resistant to the changes that occurred within The Great Male Renunciation. A Macaroni was “an affected young man who exaggerated his dress to a degree considered fussy and ephemeral, favouring highly formal hair, breeches and coats in contrast to the simple and sober styles then gaining popularity.” The name Macaroni was derived from the Macaroni Club founded in London in 1764,
of the male body and fashion. As men are seen to be reclaiming the right to be considered beautiful, and employing fashion as their canvas, the challenges to men’s traditional hegemonic status conflates proportionally. The more men engage with fashion, the more his masculinity is called into doubt and the crisis gathers momentum. Between these perceived mutually exclusive ebbs and flows of “masculinity” and “fashion”, lie the masculine physical ideal and the paradigm. This beautiful body - the paradigm - was identified as the Adonis. The vortex of conflicted masculinity that placed the beautiful and fashionable male body at its epicentre was called The Adonis Complex.

The correlation between these ideas provided me with the data with which I could conduct tests within a laboratory of making - more specifically a laboratory of speculative and experimental menswear. I identified and investigated a suite of key issues that I had distilled and extracted from the pool of research data. This research included historical, theoretical and cultural information. I identified masculinity, masculine paradigms, male beauty, and the evolution/crisis of masculinities as the key issues. I tested these issues through the themes of the nude, the ideal, the gaze, masking and phallocentricity as project markers and trajectories for making. I chose the suit, underwear and the apron as garment genres and vehicles for the project’s research through design and making.

The avenues of design testing followed a formula populated by sets of dichotomies and binary oppositions. For every design/making test there was an equal and oppositional counterpart to be explored. Every test I conducted with a masculine bias and signification, I would follow with a test with a feminine bias and signification. The same approach was used in testing inner/outer, soft/hard, strong/fragile and opaque/translucent. Poles would be reversed and opposites bounced off each other in speculative oscillations.

These dynamics were informed by the incorporation of rhetorical and semiological operations into my designer’s toolbox. I found these operations - as offered by Victor Burgin and Malcolm Barnard - to be of great value within my speculative practice as tools of designing and making.

The combination of these complimentary strategies meant that my process was driven by action, reflection and response. The process resembled a helix or three-dimensional spiral that would loop back on itself in reflection before moving on again in response to the emergence of new possibilities. This approach meant that that my experiments were not driven by the subjective - by personal prejudices - likes or dislikes. I strove to remain conscious and vigilant, in order to maintain the integrity of an objective design process. My design decisions were made in response to the outcomes of design tests, tests of speculative yet controlled making. The outcome of one test would inform the direction of the next test. It has occurred to me that that this disciplined approach has parallels with the 1990s Danish Dogme movement of filmmaking. This movement was guided by a set of principles, rules that dictated the perimeters of its filmmaking. Here I can replace filmmaking with design. I was not consciously distracted or influenced by aesthetics within this process - or at least, I endeavoured not to privilege aesthetics over process. The choice of fabrications within a round of design testing through making, for example, would not be determined by whether I responded on an aesthetical basis, that is, whether I liked it or not. It would be chosen on the basis of its oppositional signification (for example masculine/feminine) or a rhetorical operation (for example exaggeration) and its binary opposite (for example inner/outer).
Through the application of the disciplined strategy, I would not know before conducting a design test what the outcome might be, or how I might respond. This meant that the experiments would be open-ended and catalytic.

My practice was made all the richer and articulate through these self-imposed limitations. As the author and engineer of these tests, I was constantly surprised and rewarded by the project’s outcomes and trajectories. I was alleviated of the arduous and inhibiting responsibility of self-censorship. Because I was designing to a set of rules (albeit quite fluid and unpredictable), I was not always conscious of the confrontational nature of many test results. I felt that it was imperative to remain candid and transparent. I remain for the most part, unaware of the provocative nature of the project’s outputs, in terms of both the garments and the images. I was not fully conscious at the project’s inception that much was still taboo or prohibited in men’s fashion. The male body is largely unexplored terrain and many still find its uncensored presentation distressful. I did not produce work to shock or offend. I made garments and images because my design tools and strategies dictated that I should. This included the presentation of nudity, the genitals as design datum, and the erect penis as a worn response to some pieces within this wardrobe of experimental menswear.

I have also systematically addressed the research questions. I have responded to changing male archetypes and have engaged in the debate surrounding the crisis and evolution of masculinities. I have responded to representations of men in popular media, and have produced speculative menswear garments as a response.

The project’s course and outcomes was determined by another tool and self-imposed limitation. Tailoring, as technique and language - as modality - is positioned at the project’s speculative and creative epicentre. It is through the synergies of masculinities, the male body, fashion and the suit - as symbiotic and mutually supportive - that my praxis has created a bridge linking the technical to the historical, and the theoretical to the cultural. This project has proven to be an uninhibited discussion of masculinities, men and male bodies - and it is tailoring that was privileged in the conversation. I have discovered through the practice of design-based research that the suit remains and endures as the embodiment and ultimate sartorial expression of masculinity. I have found that it continues to have a metonymic relationship with the male body and that tailoring is the medium that brings the male body and masculinity together even after two hundred years.

I have found that tailoring and the suit have the power to reframe the male body; to emphasise its ideal proportions and through its art and mechanics to take the place of the body, to stand in for it. Tailoring and the suit have the flexibility and adaptability to constantly reinvent themselves in response to the demands of new and evolving masculine paradigms and physicalities. The tailored suit is able to idealise the masculine form over and over, in a trajectory that can be traced back two hundred years to *The Great Male Renunciation* and projected indefinitely into the future.

The potency of the suit is specifically evident within the bespoke. This project has shown me that it is within the framework of made-to-measure that the suit and tailoring are at their most eloquent and anodyne. It is through the bespoke that men may truly be acknowledged as individual and unique; that they wear may own
physicality as paradigm.

This project and my expanded practice have validated my enduring fascination for tailoring and its relevance to masculinity and the male body. It has proven that this is an area of great richness and that my research in this area has only just begun. The project has created a lens through which masculinity may be viewed with fresh eyes and a portal through which to enter a terrain that will continue to be explored and challenged.

And what of the crisis of masculinity and the man? I have discovered that masculinity is plural, fluid and evolving - that it is not unitary and fixed. If it is in a state of crisis, it is because it is evolving and experimenting with itself, especially in fashion. Masculinity is trying on new clothes, including the body, as it grows and matures and gains confidence. My attitudes toward the man - *The Fabricated Man* with whom I began this exploratory journey have completely changed and softened in his company.
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Bringing up Baby, 1938, Howard Hawks (dir)
Bruno, 2009, Larry Charles (dir)
Casino, 1995, Martin Scorsese (dir)
The Confessions of a Window Cleaner, 1974, Val Guest (dir)
Goodfellas, 1990, Martin Scorsese (dir)
The Man with the White Suit, 1951, Alexander Mackendrick (dir)
The Moment of Truth, 1965, Francesco Rosi (dir)
Public Enemy, 1931, William A Wellman (dir)
Scarface, 1932, Howard Hawks (dir)
Scarface, 1983, Brian de Palma (dir)
The Tailor of Panama, 2001, John Boorman (dir)
Zelig, 1983, Woody Allen (dir)

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