


Institution: UAL		
Unit of Assessment: 32		
Title of case study: The Clothed Body: Curation, Dress and Identity Construction.		
		
<p>Frida Kahlo in blue satin blouse, 1939. Photograph Nickolas Muray © Nickolas Muray Photo Archives (original cropped).</p>		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2004–2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Oriana Baddeley Professor Judith Clark	TrAIN Co-Director, Centre for Fashion Curation (CfFC)	January 1985–present October 2001–present
Professor Amy de la Haye Professor Reina Lewis	Co-Director, CfFC Artscom Centenary Professor of Cultural Studies	October 2015–present September 2006–present
Professor Alistair O'Neill Professor Carol Tulloch	CfFC Research Centre for Transnational Art Identity & Nation (TrAIN)	December 1998–present September 1997–present
Dr Jeffrey Horsley	CfFC	June 2013–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>UAL has established a team of world-leading curators in fashion history, by supporting an enhanced research environment for fashion history and fashion curation and setting up two Research Centres for study across the University. Investigating international cultural identity narratives in relation to style, UAL's pioneering research into garments and collections has</p>		

foregrounded the relationship between fashion and identity. Critical examination of the dressed appearance of individuals and communities has made a key contribution to understanding dress as a central element of contemporary and historical construction and presentation of 'the self', particularly for individuals for whom identity has particular meaning—around gender, sexuality, race, religion or dis/ability. This has contributed to changes in public and professional discourse around difference and 'otherness', while, through exhibition in major public museums and galleries, the work has had impact on museological practice in the field.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

A research team across the Centre for Fashion Curation (CfFC) and the Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN) has examined the notion of difference in relation to dress and its role in identity construction, while exploring the means through which such issues can be understood by a diversity of wider publics. The two centres often work together in relation to PhD provision and externally facing events, maintaining their own strands of interconnecting research, reaching external audiences through partnerships with the museum sector.

As a joint TrAIN/V&A Fellow, **Tulloch** co-curated *Black British Style* (V&A, 2004/05, with Shaun Cole), publishing *Black Style* to accompany the exhibition. She investigated the role of dress in the creation and assertion of Black identity, looking at how the diaspora experience is expressed through personal style, particularly the influence of Jamaica, West Africa and North America on Black British dress. Using approaches including public and personal archival research and oral histories, a range of garments, accessories, photography and film were analysed, enabling an exploration of Black identities developed by men, women and children in post-war Britain, placing the choices made by individuals to define their sense of self in a historical context. [3.1]

Also underpinning later work in this field are texts by both **Baddeley** and **Lewis** concerned with the politics of dress and national or religious identity, examining how culture and identity are manifested in the display of the clothed body. **Baddeley's** catalogue essay for Tate Modern's exhibition of Frida Kahlo's work (2005) [3.2.] addressed the multiple complexities of the artist's persona, with particular emphasis on the construction of her identity through her clothing choices. **Lewis'** catalogue essay for *Portraits: Reflections on the Veil* (2007) [3.3.] examined the multiplicity of types of 'the veil', disrupting a common misapprehension amongst non-Muslims that there is a single, specific form of veiling, and posing questions about the meanings communicated by the choices made in relation to modest dress.

For *The Concise Dictionary of Dress* (2010), fashion curator **Clark** applied a psychoanalytical approach to the examination of the display of the self through dress, by investigating the nature of dictionaries and archives alongside dress curation. The exhibition element of the project (an Artangel commission at Blythe House, London, home of the V&A's archive) created a walk-through dictionary of dress, which re-described clothing using definitions of words commonly associated with fashion and appearance, juxtaposed with cast objects and photographs, tableaux of clothing and accessories. [3.4.]

Clark continued to work on the display of personal identity through dress, co-curating *Las Apariencias Engañan: Los Vestidos de Frida Kahlo/Apearances Can Be Deceiving: The Dresses of Frida Kahlo* (at the Blue House/Museo Frida Kahlo, Mexico City, 2012). Two parallel research activities were carried out: into the objects themselves, and into aspects of curatorial thinking and practice relating to the presentation of the individual through clothing, revealing how the Mexican artist used dress as a way to construct her own identity. [3.5.]

O'Neill's curatorial practice research on the representation of 20th- and 21st-century fashion cultures, and the role of surviving material culture and photography as sources, has also been influential in developing debate in this field. A partnership between UAL, the Isabella

Blow Foundation and Somerset House Trust, **O'Neill's** *Isabella Blow: Fashion Galore!* exhibition (2013) investigated the late British fashion editor's wardrobe through notions of biography and memory, portraiture and self-presentation. [3.6.]

The field of fashion curation research was further delineated by **Clark, de la Haye** and **Horsley** in their book, which focused on the V&A's pivotal 1971 exhibition, *Fashion: An Anthology by Cecil Beaton*. The research examined the ways in which the history of fashion has been presented from the early 20th century. [3.7.]

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1. Tulloch, Carol (2004), *Black Style*. V&A Publications, London, with associated exhibition, *Black British Style*, co-curated by Tulloch with Shaun Cole, V&A (7 October 2004–16 January 2005). Toured to five venues, 2005–2006: Manchester Art Gallery, Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford; Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens; Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery; New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester.
- 3.2. Baddeley, Oriana (2005), 'Reflecting on Kahlo: Mirrors, Masquerade and the Politics of Identification', in *Frida Kahlo* (Emma Dexter, Tanya Barston, Gannit Ankori), catalogue for Tate Modern exhibition (9 June–9 October 2005).
- 3.3. Lewis, Reina (2007) Picturing the Veil: Staging Faith and Ethnicity in Contemporary Art. Catalogue essay in *Portraits: Reflections on the Veil*. Exposed Photography, Belfast.
- 3.4. Clark, Judith and Phillips, Adam (2010) *The concise dictionary of dress*, exhibition and book published by Violette Editions, London.
- 3.5. Clark, Judith (2012), *Las apariencias engañan: Los vestidos de Frida Kahlo/Apearances Can Be Deceiving: The Dresses of Frida Kahlo*, exhibition, Museo Frida Kahlo, Mexico City, 2012–the present (co-curated with Circe Henestrosa).
- 3.6. O'Neill, Alistair and Marshall, Shonagh (2013) *Isabella Blow: Fashion Galore!*, Somerset House.
- 3.7. Clark, Judith and de la Haye, Amy, with Jeffrey Horsley, (2014), *Exhibiting Fashion: Before and After 1971*, Yale University Press.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

In 2014, UAL supported **Clark** and **de la Haye** in founding the Centre for Fashion Curation (CfFC), a pioneering initiative bringing together researchers with diverse research and curatorial approaches to the theory and practice of fashion history and curation from across the University. This centre, like **Tulloch** and TrAIN before it, worked closely with the V&A, with UAL's Professor Claire Wilcox appointed to a shared post across both institutions. The new research centre built on previous work in the area of Fashion History, Theory and Practice (involving **O'Neil**, **Clark**, UAL's influential fashion historian and theoretician, Professor Caroline Evans, and **de la Haye**), returned as a case study in REF2014 but with a greater emphasis on curatorial practice.

Tulloch's research forms a significant critical commentary on the relevance of dress to the assertion of black identity in different parts of the African Diaspora. *Black Style* (publication) filled a gap in this under-researched area of study where the main focus had been on parts of Africa and African-America. *Black British Style* (exhibition) was the first to challenge stereotypes associated with Black aesthetics and identities. With 45,735 visitors (V&A, not including touring venues, exceeding target of 23,000 visitors), *Black British Style* was the first major exhibition devoted to these issues to be shown in a national museum. It addressed the V&A's DCMS Strategic Priority 2: Opening up our institutions to the wider community, to promote lifelong learning and social cohesion; the exhibition was particularly well-received by its main target group, 18–34 year olds. The *Black British Style Friday Late* celebrated the eclectic styles of Black music and was the most popular Friday Late to date with 4,758 people attending. The two-day 'Black Style International Conference' (V&A/UAL) was the first dedicated to exploring black style across the African diaspora. [5.1.] *The Observer*: "The book offers a new understanding of black style in dress studies, a field that is

predominantly white, as well as affirming the central place of popular culture within scholarship on race, difference and the African diaspora". [5.2.] **Tulloch** went on to write the critically acclaimed *The Birth of Cool: Style Narratives of the African Diaspora* (2016). *The Observer*: "The Birth of Cool is the product of a lifetime's research ... into black style and culture. In the book, **Tulloch** selects a handful of images taken during the 20th century and offers an in-depth analysis of the significance of the clothes and also what the photographs tell us about wider society at the time they were taken". [5.3.] An outcome of the *Black Style* project was a successful application for an AHRC Diasporas, Migration and Identities Network grant, which resulted in the Dress and the African Diaspora Network.

The V&A's internationally touring exhibition, *Frida Kahlo: Making Her Self Up* (2018), co-curated by Wilcox, reflects the influence of the work of **Baddeley** and **Clark** in the introduction to its accompanying publication. The exhibition and related events, brought UAL's approach to fashion history research to an extensive audience, building on its work in the area to extend and expand on public understanding of key contemporary issues around gender, sexuality, race, religion and dis/ability, in particular relation to clothing and the representation of 'the self'. A total of 284,000 people visited *Making Her Self Up* (making it the museum's most popular exhibition after *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, 2015). A total of 16,469 tickets were sold in its first five weeks; the run was extended for two weeks. The V&A described how the exhibition "set off a 'Frida Mania' across the UK." Baddeley convened the accompanying conference at the V&A, 'Frida: Inside and Outside' (November 2018), which, in particular, took further thinking on dress in relation to disability. [5.4.] [5.5.]

Touring venues include Brooklyn Museum, 8 February–12 May 2019; de Young Museum, San Francisco (*Appearances Can Be Deceiving* in this iteration), July 2020. Post-COVID-19, Google Arts & Culture included *Appearances Can Be Deceiving* in 'Faces of Frida'. [5.6.]

The original exhibition, *Appearances Can Be Deceiving: Frida Kahlo's Dresses*, impacted directly on *Diego Rivera: Genio, figura y silueta/Diego Rivera: Genius, Figure and Silhouette* (2018, Museo Casa Estudio Rivera y Frida Kahlo, Mexico), which presented more than 80 pieces of Rivera's clothing, with drawings and photographs. The exhibition's curator explained how "The exhibition ... helped me to understand the garments as containers of value as well as historical documents. From this work, I considered the importance of reviewing dress as a carrier of messages and useful information for reading a historical character." [5.7.]

Isabella Blow: Fashion Galore! (Somerset House, 2013) unpacked the significance of Blow as a patron of British fashion in the 1990s. The accompanying Rizzoli publication was edited by **O'Neill**. Evans, contributed *Modelling McQueen: Hard Grace*. Evans and **O'Neill** (P.I and Co-I.) secured an AHRC grant for 'Exploding Fashion: Cutting, Constructing and Thinking Through Things' (GBP253,674.41, 2018–2020). Both *Isabella Blow* and *Making Her Self Up* make a connection between the 'individual' and the 'public' as a group of individuals responding to the subject in each case. Subsequently, **O'Neill** worked with Wilcox on *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, contributing 'The Shining and Chic' to the accompanying book (V&A Publishing).

Ideas developed by **Clark** in *The concise dictionary of dress* in relation to curation and the representation of identity are picked up in *Gluck: Art and Identity*, an insight into the way that Sussex-based artist Gluck constructed and articulated her artistic and gender identities through wearing tailored, masculine-style clothing, enabling a wider consideration of the construction and communication of identity amongst contemporary LGBTQIA communities. *Gluck: Art & Identity* was a collaboration between Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton (RPM), as part of a broader community initiative, Wear It Out, described by RPM as a "meaningful and true collaboration", which explored local LGBTQIA communities in Sussex, past and present. [5.8.] Through the project, testimonies and dress were collected from the local residents, specifically from the LGBTQIA culture. The publication, *Gluck: Art and Identity*, was nominated for the TLS Book of the Year 2017. In 2017, **de la Haye** acted as

advisor on *The Phantom Thread*, a major feature film focused on a 1950s Parisian fashion designer played by Daniel Day Lewis. **De la Haye's** co-authored book *London Couture 1923–1975: British Luxury* provided the source material for the film.

Lewis has been researching the field of modest fashion since the mid-2000s, from the earliest stages of the phenomenon, creating a global community of researchers, designers and others interested in the subject. Now a leading commentator in this field, she is described as having “a tremendous following of modest fashion enthusiasts who rely on her research work, opinions, and teachings on this topic to get a better understanding and insight to the modest fashion space” [5.9.] and is sought out regularly by press and media for her comment on developments in modest fashion (for example, BBC Radio 4, *Woman's Hour*, 21 January 2020.) **Lewis'** work is consistently pioneering and innovative—note her recognition of the importance of online communications—blogs, vlogs, brand websites, influencers—to the promulgation of modest fashion. Her relationship with modest fashion vloggers and bloggers who she speaks alongside and in dialogue with, such as Nabiilabee and Mariah Idrissi, is a testament to the credibility of her position. She has enabled interfaith dialogue as well as that between religious and secular communities, and contributes regularly to books, papers and essays; refereed journal articles; exhibition curation; and convening, speaking at and chairing events internationally.

Lewis was Consulting Curator for *Contemporary Muslim Fashions*, the first major international exhibition on Muslim dress codes (de Young Museum, San Francisco, 2018), described by the Museum's Director as “a much-needed and overdue exploration of a multifaceted topic largely unexamined by museums”. The Faith and Fashion series (est. 2013) has held events in more than 20 cities including New York, Beirut and Montreal; podcasts are downloaded for research/teaching around the world. Members of the British Council fashion team have participated in these fashion events, and “have seen how effectively they open up complex discussions for mixed, and new, audiences.” [5.10.]

Lewis took this work further in 'Modest Fashion in UK Women's Working Life' (AHRC, PI: **Lewis**, 2018–2020), with partners including the British Council and the Islamic Fashion and Design Council. Audiences for the outputs include the fashion and creative industries, and creative arts education, and employers, HR professionals, religious organisations and policymakers. Chaired by Baroness Young of Hornsey OBE, a House of Lords roundtable (March 2020) brought together organisations including Muslim Women's Council, Equality and Human Rights Commission and Religions for Peace, UK Women of Faith Network.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1. Excerpt from DCMS/V&A Funding Agreement 2003/04–2005/06 End of Year Report April 2004–March 2005, Laura Martin and Helen Jones 29, July 2005. UAL on request.
- 5.2. Tim Lewis, 'Where Auntie G Meets Malcolm X', *The New Review*, In: *The Observer*, 6 March 2016, pp.16-17. UAL on request.
- 5.3. Tim Lewis, Review of 'The Birth of Cool: Style Narratives of the African Diaspora', *The Observer*. UAL on request.
- 5.4. V&A Annual Report and Accounts 2018–2019. UAL on request.
- 5.5. V&A *Frida Kahlo: Making Her Self Up* visitor profiling report. UAL on request.
- 5.6. [Arts and Culture, Google.](#)
- 5.7. Letter from the curator of *Diego Rivera: Genius, Figure and Silhouette*, National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature. Mexico City (2018). UAL on request.
- 5.8. 'Wear it Out' letters of support. UAL on request.
- 5.9. 'Modest Fashion in UK women's working life', AHRC bid letter: British Council (15 January 2018). UAL on request.
- 5.10. 'Modest Fashion in UK women's working life', AHRC bid letter: Islamic Fashion and Design Council (18 December 2017). UAL on request.