

<b>Institution:</b> UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 34
<b>Title of case study:</b> Fashion History, Theory and Practice at the University of the Arts London
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>This case study covers the work of five researchers at University of the Arts London (UAL), who have played a role in establishing a field of academically rigorous fashion research with a new relevance for industry and society. This has been achieved through innovative curatorial practices, publications, collaboration with practitioners, and interaction with broadcast, print and new media. The work of this group of academics has influenced the way fashion is presented and communicated within the museum, gallery and publishing sector, and in the fashion industry itself, both nationally and internationally.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Collaborative and individual research at UAL into the histories, theories and practices of fashion, by Professors Judith Clark, Caroline Evans, and Amy de la Haye, Alistair O'Neill (Reader) and Marketa Uhlirová (Senior Research Fellow), has resulted in an extension of the audience for fashion theory and history beyond the academic community. In the last two decades, the academic study of fashion gained a new, mainstream prominence by foregrounding the subject's social, political and cultural significance. Research in this area has been a long-standing specialism of UAL and past employees such as Dr Rebecca Arnold (Courtauld Institute of Art), Andrew Bolton (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Professor Christopher Breward (Edinburgh University), Dr Becky Conekin (Yale), Dr Joanne Entwistle (King's College London), and Visiting Professor Elizabeth Wilson have also played a vital part in the re-conceptualising of fashion history. UAL's current approach to fashion history and theory is informed by the art school context, in particular its world-renowned teaching in fashion at Central Saint Martins and London College of Fashion and by maintaining a distinctive commitment to the interface of practice and theory. The key insights that underpin impact are: the placing of fashion theory, history and practice within a wider social and industry context, and the development of innovative curation and exhibition making practice that straddles the boundaries of theory and practice.</p> <p>The AHRB funded <i>Fashion and Modernity</i> project (2001–2004) led by Caroline Evans (PI), brought together historians, theoreticians, curators and practitioners from across UAL and beyond (including Clark, O'Neill, Uhlirová, as well as Arnold, Bolton, Breward, Conekin, and Wilson) to explore the history, theory and practice of fashion and its relevance to the idea of 'being modern' through the integration of practice-based work alongside historical and theoretical studies. One outcome of the project, Evans's book <i>Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness</i> (2003), provided a blueprint for rethinking fashion history methodology and challenged the linearity of older paradigms. It was innovative in crediting the full range of creative practitioners who produce contemporary fashion and imagery. Clark's 2004/2005 exhibition <i>Malign Muses/Spectres</i> (an outcome of <i>Fashion and Modernity</i>) extended this idea by initiating dialogues with four practitioners in adjacent disciplines, including Evans as the theorist and historian. Clark's exhibition offered a new model for the fashion exhibition, via the conceptual framework of the installation, the choice of objects, and the design of the individual 'sets'. By taking arguments made in Evans's <i>Fashion at the Edge</i> and developing them in visual and three-dimensional form, the exhibition demonstrated how critical curation and theory could intersect in a public forum. For Valerie Steele '<i>Malign Muses/Spectres</i> was "paradigm breaking": She [Judith Clark] had used all the spatial and visual formulas to make you realise that the way fashion changed over time was so multi-faceted. It shook you out of the normal way of looking at the history which is that things are pre-determined. She freed us up a lot more to think in terms of a theatrical mise-en-scene.' (Valerie Steele, interview with Donatella Barbieri at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, December 2, 2011. p.29 quoted on p.55 of <i>The Handbook of Fashion Studies</i>, 2013.)</p>

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

De la Haye's object-led approach as a curator and writer has led her to examine the biographies of garments. Treating objects as testaments and holders of memory, she explores their shifting meanings and use values once they enter the museum. *Lucile Ltd: London, Paris, New York and Chicago 1890s–1930s* (2009) with Valerie Mendes, was the first major monograph on this influential British couturière and examined previously un-accessed work from the V&A archives. The exhibition and authored catalogue *The Land Girls: Cinderellas of the Soil* (2009/10) scrutinised land girl uniform. In the exhibition, de la Haye exploited this material evidence to propose new strategies and original forms of curation and interpretation of dress in historical and museum contexts.

In 2004 O'Neill curated *Wolf Suschitzky: Charing Cross Road in the 1930s* (an outcome of *Fashion and Modernity*). The exhibition reconsidered the Viennese émigré photographer Wolf Suschitzky's images of London street life, and analysed them through the perspective of fashion as a social agent of metropolitan change. The exhibition *Fashion Lives* (2005), devised and curated by O'Neill for the British Library, was the first of its kind to be organised around sound as opposed to material objects, challenging the pre-conception of what a fashion exhibition could contain. Relating to the Suschitzky research, O'Neill's book *London: After a Fashion* (2007) argued that fashion was central to the impact of modernity in late nineteenth and twentieth century London. It demonstrated that fashion is not only a pleasurable aspect of modern urban life but a fundamental element of contemporary cultural sensibilities. The book reconsidered the role of fashion in city life and filled overlooked gaps in the social history of London and modern design.

Uhlirová explores, via the *Fashion in Film* project (founded 2005), the intersections between film and clothing, analysing how fashion is mediated through the moving image. She argues that existing film theories alone cannot explain the representation of fashion in film, which requires the addition of formal film analysis informed by fashion studies. The curated programmes (*Fashion in Film Festivals*) and publications highlight the importance of studying film costume in movement. They have explored costume in relation to the styling of crime and violence; spectacle and colour; and posed questions about politics and society in relation to fashion newsreels during war-time and fashion and film in totalitarian regimes. Her research draws new parallels between previously unlinked periods in, and approaches to, cinema; early film (1894-1910); silent Hollywood and European cinema; American underground and experimental cinema, and their relationships to other modern cultures of movement such as dance, theatre, performance and the digital image.

**3. References to the research**

Key outputs indicative of the overall body of research and related awards are listed below:

1. Clark, J. (2004) *Malign Muses: When Fashion Turns Back*. 18 September 2004–30 January 2005. Mode Museum, Antwerp. 24 February–8 May 2005. V&A (as *Spectres: When Fashion Turns Back*) [Exhibition] UAL on request.
2. De la Haye, A. & Mendes, V. (2009) *Lucile Ltd: London, Paris, New York and Chicago 1890s–1930s*. London: V&A Publications. [Authored book] Listed in REF2.
3. De la Haye, A. (2009) *The Land Girls: Cinderellas of the Soil*. 3 October 2009–14 March 2010. Brighton Museum and Art Gallery. [Exhibition] Listed in REF2.
4. Evans, C. (2003) *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness*. London: Yale University Press, USA: UK and New Haven [Authored book]. UAL on request.
5. O'Neill, A. (2005) *Fashion Lives—A New Exhibition at the British Library*. 11 November 2005–7 February 2006. British Library, London [Exhibition]. UAL on request.
6. Uhlirová, M. (2008) *If Looks Could Kill: The 2nd Fashion in Film Festival*. Tate Modern, Ciné Lumière, BFI Southbank, ICA, and The Horse Hospital (London). Museum of Moving Image, New York (2012) [Exhibition]. Listed in REF2.

UAL, PI: Evans, C. *Fashion and Modernity (stage 2)*, (07/2001–12/2004) £301,478. AHRB.

**4. Details of the impact**

During the impact period, UAL researchers have curated and/or designed numerous exhibitions

## Impact case study (REF3b)

that exploit their innovative approach to curatorial practice and exhibition making. The articulation of theoretical concepts in fashion exhibitions has played a part in the successful extension of the audience for fashion history and theory. In an area where the commercial interests of the fashion industry have to be recognised, academic fashion research is prized for its neutrality, helping public engagement to become more meaningful. Indicators of the significance and reach of impact are demonstrated by the range and quality of the venues at which work is shown, visitor feedback, high-profile partnerships and commissions, attendance figures, and extensive media coverage. Examples include:

- *SHOWstudio: fashion revolution* (2009), Somerset House. Co-curated by Alistair O'Neill (with Claire Catterall and Professor Penny Martin) utilised innovative forms of communicating with the audience such as interactive co-design and new media interventions. Attracted nearly 25,000 visitors.
- *The Land Girls: Cinderellas of the Soil*, (2009), Brighton Museum & Art Gallery. Curated by de la Haye. The Director of the Royal Pavilion and Head of Museums credited the 'innovative and imaginative approach that the exhibition took' resulting 'in a show of appeal and interest to a wide range of visitors'. Ninety per cent of visitors rating it highly and 70 per cent felt inspired by the exhibition. More than 1100 school children participated in the related education programme and over 2600 people attended adult and family special events. Attracted over 45,000 visitors.
- *The Concise Dictionary of Dress* (2010) curated by Clark in collaboration with Adam Phillips, commissioned by Artangel 'the doyens of site-specific work' (The Observer), with the V&A. The first time Artangel had worked with a curator as opposed to an arts practitioner. The installation was described as a 'spellbinding adventure' (Frieze) and as lighting up 'unexpected places with allure' (The Observer).
- *Chloé. Attitudes: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (2012) curated by Clark, was the inaugural exhibition in the Fashion Program exhibition cycle at Palais de Tokyo. Commissioned by Chloé to coincide with their 60th anniversary and opening during Paris Fashion Week. The exhibition had extensive international press including reviews in: *The New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune* (Suzy Menkes); *Wallpaper*, as well as *Vogue online* (It, UK, Fr).
- *Simone Handbag Museum* (2012) curated and designed by Clark, in Gangnam, Seoul, South Korea. The museum was widely reviewed in Korea and abroad including by the Financial Times and the New York Times. The accompanying publication *Handbags: The Making of a Museum* (Yale) included the writings of Clark, Evans and de la Haye.
- *Valentino: Master of Couture* (2012) Somerset House, co-curated by O'Neill with Patrick Kinmonth and Antonio Monfreda. Major retrospective of Valentino with media coverage including Time Out, Vogue, The Guardian, Harper's Bazaar, and The Independent. Attracted over 104,928 paying visitors. Exhibition featured on BBC and ITV News including interviews with O'Neill. O'Neill's work with Somerset House has resulted in his curation of *Isabella Blow: Fashion Galore!* (November 2013).
- The *Fashion in Film* festivals (three since 2008) have been hosted by major cultural institutions including Tate Modern, BFI Southbank, Barbican, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Institut Français and Museum of the Moving Image/Tribeca Grand (New York). Since 2008, *Fashion in Film* has received financial and in-kind support from organisations including: Film London, Arts Council England, British Council, Barbican, British Film Institute, V&A, Arts and Business and Museum of Moving Image. National and international press coverage is extensive including: Women's Wear Daily, The New York Times, The Independent, The New Yorker, Village Voice, International Herald Tribune, El Pais, Sight and Sound, AnOther Magazine, BBC Radio and NBC: New York. The festival has been described as 'curating a selection of films that are rare and just as rich in terms of inspiration' (*Dazed and Confused* 2010); 'supremely dazzling and unique' (Steve Leggett, Program Coordinator National Film Preservation Board, Library of Congress 2008); having 'a brilliant inclusivity [...] the treatment is rightly academic but the subject matter is fascinating to all with an interest in clothing and cinema' (GQ 2008); and bringing 'forgotten wonders to the screens of London' (*Amelia Magazine* 2010). Evans co-curated the fourth *Fashion in Film* festival in 2013 with Uhlírová.

Research disseminated by publications has reached an audience outside of academia. *Fashion at the Edge* has never been out of print since it was first published in 2003 and is now in its fourth printing. A review for Evans's recent Yale publication *The Mechanical Smile: Modernism and the*

## Impact case study (REF3b)

*First Fashion Shows in France and America, 1900–1929* (2013), describes Evans as ‘a rare academic in that she can actually write in a way that the rest of us, who are not academics, can understand and appreciate’ and *Fashion at the Edge* as ‘an instant classic of modern criticism, commentary and elucidation’ (Business of Fashion, 2013). De la Haye’s writing for V&A publications include *Lucile Ltd: London, Paris, New York and Chicago 1890s–1930s* (2009); *Chanel: Couture and Industry* (2011) the *A to Z of Style* (2011); and *Clara Button and the Magical Hat Day* (2011) illustrated by Emily Sutton. *Lucile Ltd* was described by The New York Times as ‘a book for true fashion geeks’. De la Haye and co-author Valerie Mendes were interviewed on Radio 4’s Women’s Hour in relation to the publication, reaching an estimated audience of 3.8 million. *Clara Button and the Magical Hat Day* (2011) was the first ever children’s fiction book published by the V&A. Based on the V&A collections and drawing on de la Haye’s research on the narrative of objects as holders of memory it has been described as a ‘beautifully illustrated, imaginative story’ (Jacqueline Wilson). In seven weeks the print run sold out and was reprinted and a paperback version and French and Italian versions have been published. A second book in the series *Clara Button and the Wedding Day Surprise* was commissioned by the V&A (published October 2013). A Clara Button App produced by the V&A and narrated by de la Haye launched in July 2012, and featured in *The 50 best children’s apps for smartphones and tablets* (The Guardian) and *20 best iPhone and iPad apps for kids* (Apps Playground).

The representation and communication of fashion by the industry has changed in recent years. Rather than simply being about the garment itself, it now encompasses fashion as image mediated through the media, exhibitions, fashion films, blogging, online publishing and magazines. Here UAL researchers have demonstrated that fashion history and theory have relevance. Evans, O’Neill and de la Haye participated in live panel discussion during London Fashion Week 2012 and Paris Fashion Week 2013 for the influential SHOWstudio.com. O’Neill was consultant on *British Style Genius*, five hour-long programmes on BBC 2 (2008) with YouTube clips from the series being viewed over 200,000 times. Evans was the second individual to be covered in the *My Career* series in *Elle* (2012), and was interviewed by Donatien Grau in *AnOther Magazine* (2012) in a series that asks prominent thinkers and practitioners about fashion and its connections to contemporary creativity. For *Chloé. Attitudes* a series of digital films were created for *Chloé.com* to which Clark contributed the brief and featured in three of them. Other examples of impact reaching into the fashion industry include emerging designer Phoebe English interviewing Evans for ideas on how to stage her 2013 London Fashion Week show, and commissioned extensions of *Chloé. Attitudes* being designed by Clark for Selfridges Concept store/window; Isetan, Tokyo; and Barneys, NYC.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

### Impact in relation to curatorial practice:

1. Statement from Director of Somerset House Trust. UAL on request.
2. Statement from Head of Cinema, Barbican. UAL on request.
3. Information on the Concise Dictionary of Dress available at [http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2010/the\\_concise\\_dictionary\\_of\\_dress](http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2010/the_concise_dictionary_of_dress)
4. Letter of appreciation from the Director of the Royal Pavilion and Head of Museums to Professor de la Haye in relation to Land Girls. UAL on request.
5. Media coverage in relation to Simone Handbag Museum at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/53b14594-c9b5-11e1-a5e2-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2II7kjVwO>

### Impact in relation to publishing and extension of audience:

6. Review of Mechanical Smile in the Business of Fashion, comments on Evan’s writing generally. <http://www.businessoffashion.com/2013/08/colins-column-tomes-of-the-times-2.html>
7. Statement from Head of V&A Publishing. UAL on request.

### Impact in relation to industry:

8. Live panel discussions SHOWstudio.com can be found at [http://showstudio.com/collection/lanvin\\_paris\\_menswear\\_a\\_w\\_2013/live\\_panel\\_discussion](http://showstudio.com/collection/lanvin_paris_menswear_a_w_2013/live_panel_discussion)  
[http://showstudio.com/collection/chanel\\_paris\\_a\\_w\\_couture\\_2013/chanel\\_live\\_panel\\_discussion](http://showstudio.com/collection/chanel_paris_a_w_couture_2013/chanel_live_panel_discussion)
9. 2012 interview with Evans in *Elle Magazine*. UAL on request.