

Dressed Bodies: A Symposium

Call for Papers



To mark the end of the three-year research project *If the Shoe Fits: Footwear Identity and Transition*, funded by the ESRC, we are hosting an interdisciplinary symposium in conjunction with the Centre for Gender Research. The symposium is designed to investigate the dressed body in social and cultural contexts with a concern to deepen understandings of identity as an embodied process. We are interested in the dressed body in its broadest sense, from shoes, bags, gloves, scarves, hats and jewellery, to hair, piercings, tattoos and more.

Over the last three decades, work on the body in social theory has gained considerable momentum with increasing emphasis on what it does rather than what is done to it. More recently the body has been seen as the locus through which culture and self merge, are reproduced, or indeed are contested and challenged - consciously or unconsciously. Both the 'affective turn' and attention to mobilities - perhaps the latest advances in body theory - attribute bodies in motion with the power to transcend, disrupt and confuse 'body image' ideals. As such, these approaches question the dominance of previous notions of the body as a particularly conscious and intentional project.

Despite these advances in body theory, academics are still seeking what Budgeon describes as 'methods and models' that help us to transcend the dualisms of mind and body, image and embodiment, and that 'implicate the subject in the object [lending] insight into the constitutive articulation between the inside and the outside of the body.'¹ Work on clothing and fashion has begun to develop models of this kind. However our project has identified further questions that we believe deserve fuller attention. These questions have provided the inspiration for this symposium and examples include:

- How do the affordances of specialist shoes, for example climbing shoes, football boots or ballet shoes, change body movement or ability in different environments?
- What does the dressed body tell us about the relationship between representations and embodied experience?
- How can objects that dress the body carry memory?
- How might shifts between the ordinary and the extraordinary be effected through dress?
- What can we learn about identity through the dressed virtual body?
- How does the imagined body relate to practices of consumption?

Drawing upon these ideas, we invite academics and practitioners to submit abstract proposals of up to 250 words for papers or activities that use dress as a 'lens through which to understand our bodily engagement with the world'² in physical, representational or virtual contexts.

Date: 17th July 2013
Location: ICOS
(Interdisciplinary
Centre of the
Social Sciences)
Registration: £20
Abstracts: 31st May 2013
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For more information and to register visit:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/iftheshoefits/
symposium](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/iftheshoefits/symposium)

The deadline for registration is
3rd July 2013

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¹ Budgeon, S. 2003. Identity as an Embodied Event. *Body & Society*, 9, 1, 35-55.

² Hockey, Jenny; Dilley, Rachel; Robinson, Victoria; Sherlock Alexandra, 2013, *Worn Shoes: Identity, Memory and Footwear*, Sociological Research Online, Vol. 18, Issue 1, Available at: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/18/1/20.html>

