



Call for Participants:

Critical Costume:

Towards a vocabulary of scenographic bodies

17th - 18th January 2013

A Symposium and Exhibition to be held at
The Arts Centre, Edge Hill University (UK)

Website: www.criticalcostume.com

Invited Keynote Speakers:

- Prof. Dorita Hannah, Architect and Performance Designer
- Dr. Aoife Monks, Theatre and Performance Historian

Costume performs. This statement is representative of a critical shift in current scholarly and artistic discourses on costume practice. With increasing interest within the fields of installation and live art, the act(ion) of costuming is being applied as a means of examining the status of the body within contemporary art and performance. In *Expanding Scenography* (2011), Dorita Hannah echoes this line of thought as she argues that 'it is high time we do speak of how design elements not only actively extend the performing body, but also perform without and in spite of the human body'. In that regard, while there has been some significant scholarship on how 'space' performs, there remains an ambiguity over the dramaturgical significance of costume within the changing contexts of scenographic practice. Consequently, the aim of **Critical Costume** is to bring together academics, artists and practitioners to reflect on the social and artistic agency of costume within contemporary and historical contexts.

Concerned with the future of scholarly research and artistic practice, it is proposed that the concept of 'costume' is taken as a means of critically interrogating the body in/as performance. As an action, the event of costuming recognises the significance of designed artefacts within our comprehension and experience of a (costumed) body. For costume is both an act of revelation and concealment, as it shapes action while simultaneously disguising the body's form and texture. While this includes the affect of fabric and the identity politics of fashion, this discussion on costume is also intended to emphasise the reciprocal interactions that occur between performer and costume, spectator and action, fabric and movement. Aoife Monks in her monograph *The Actor in Costume* (2010) supports this assertion as she writes, '[c]ostume is that which is perceptually indistinct from the actor's body, and yet something that can be removed. Costume is a body that can be taken off.'

Critical Costume thereby aims to support practice and invite provocations from the broadest range of artistic and social contexts: from architecture to installation art, musicology to dance. While we welcome all proposals on the subject of costume, below are some possible areas of study that you may wish to consider:

- Historical and Contemporary accounts of Costume Practices
- Participation and Costume
- Costume as Performance
- Choreography and Costume
- Nudity and/as Costume
- Absent Bodies and Costume
- Live Art and a Costumed Body
- The Event and Act of Costuming
- Architecture and Costume
- Site-Specificity and Costume
- Installation Art and Costume
- Costume and the Senses
- Sound and Costume
- Light and Costume
- Technology and Costume
- Dramaturgy and Costume
- Digital Costume

In addition to conventional academic papers and practice-as-research presentations, we welcome applications to be part of an exhibition that will open on the first day of the symposium. In that regard, we invite all interested parties to submit an **abstract (200 words)** with **biography (50 words)** stating which presentation format you wish to be considered for:

- 15min paper/practice presentation
- PechaKucha*
- Exhibition and Installation work
- Performance Practice
- Video Essays

Note: We welcome applications to present in more than one format.

* A PowerPoint presentation with 20 images/sides set to automatically progress after 20 seconds. Presenters are then invited to speak alongside their images if they wish. This format is ideal for sharing image-based provocations or artistic practice in a time efficient manner.

Additionally, we are currently in discussions within a peer-reviewed journal with the aim of considering papers and artistic contributions from the symposium for an edited special issue: details to follow shortly.

Please could you send your proposals before the **31st October 2012** to Rachel Hann (rachel.hann@edgehill.ac.uk) and Sidsel Bech (bechs@edgehill.ac.uk). The attendance fee is **£100.00** or **£50.00** for postgraduates and independent artists.

If you have any questions or you would like further details, please contact us at the emails stated above.

Regards

Sidsel Bech and Dr. Rachel Hann