

**Second Skin: Annette Kellerman, the modern
swimsuit, and an Australian contribution to
global fashion**

by

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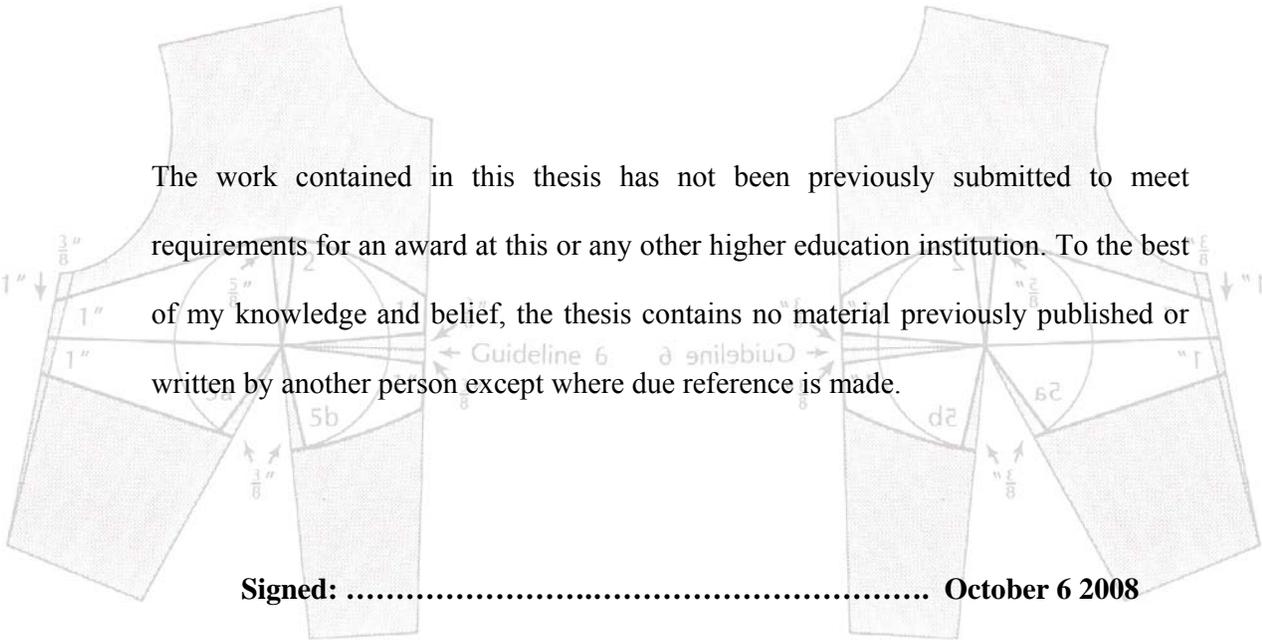
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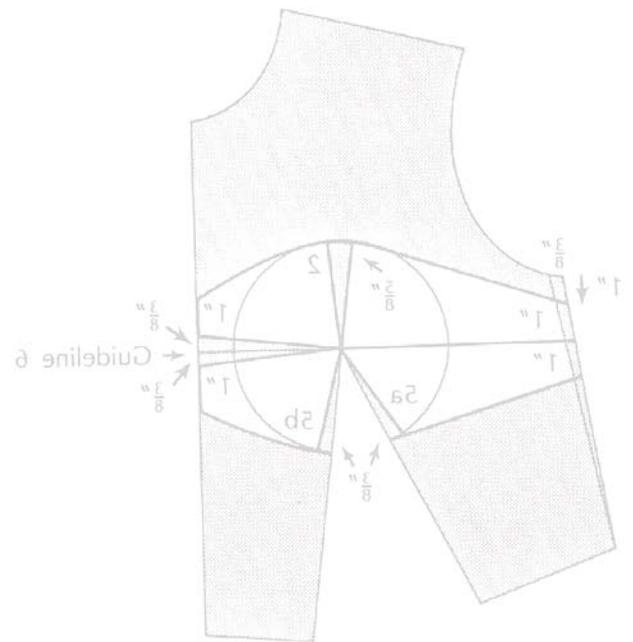
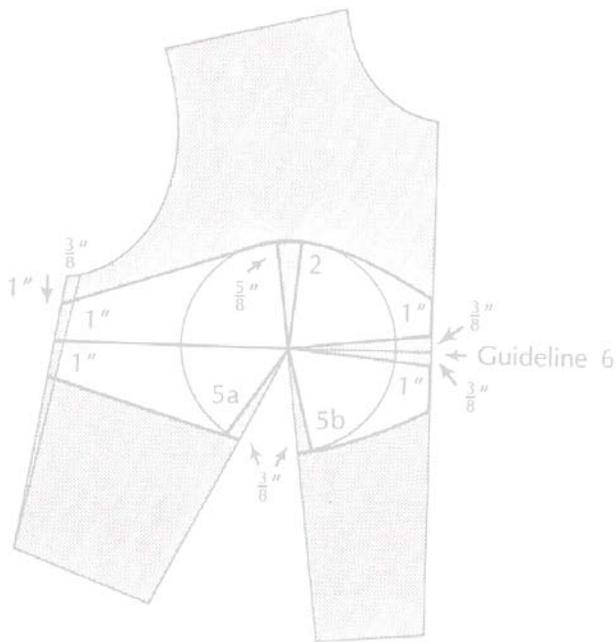
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Statement of Original Authorship



The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signed: **October 6 2008**



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1 Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Fashion is a medium that attracts considerable deliberation, analysis and discussion. Among art, design, and cultural historians, sociologists and philosophers, it is classified, dissected, reconstituted, and disseminated as a social and cultural construction. However, in his paper 'The Invisible Man', Ian Griffiths, a fashion designer and academic, expresses his frustration as a practitioner when reading these texts. He objects to the omission of research into the 'design process, realization and distribution of clothes in relation to their meaning' (Griffiths 2000: 70). A core intention of this project is to make the design process visible and to give a voice to fashion from the designer's and wearer's perspectives.

As an Australian, I am interested in investigating how as a nation we have contributed to and continue to contribute to global fashion. Alexander Joel observes that:

There is an entirely erroneous impression ... that Australians, past and present, are either not 'up with' fashion, not interested, don't know, don't care, and certainly do not have any of their own. This is patently untrue. There have always been Australians of great style (Joel 1984: 6).

The last 30 years have done much to change this perception of Australian fashion with a number of designers receiving international recognition, including: Paris-based Martin Grant, Australian-based Akira Isogawa, Collette Dinnigan, Sass and Bide, and local Queensland team Easton Pearson, who show their collections in Paris, London, and New York. This gravitation to the fashion centres of Europe and North America reflects how the 'modern fashion industry has defined itself over time' (Breward

2003: 16). Paris' establishment as an international capital of fashion is the result of 500 – 600 years of clothing and textile manufacture (Laver, Tucker, and De La Haye 2002: 278; Kawamura 2005). German born, Paris based fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, considers Paris 'the best platform to make it to the surface' (Hallstrom Bornold 2004: 28). By comparison, Australia 'has no substantial tradition of haute couture or fine garment manufacture' (Maynard 1994: 1), with the exception of Beryl Jents and Hall Ludlow, and there was limited local manufacturing in the critical early years.

It is only since 1995 that Australia has staged its own fashion week biannually. Although a young event, it has proved successful. According to fashion journalist for *The Times* Lisa Armstrong, Australian fashion weeks are 'sexy and commercial', attracting a number of international buyers (Armstrong 2004). By contrast London Fashion Week has 'cutting edge catwalks' and is 'a launchpad for quirky young designers from all over the world' (Robson 2004). It suggests the Australian version may not be associated with innovative design. Yuniya Kawamura, Professor of Sociology at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, in her analysis of the French fashion system and how Japanese designers have gained acceptance in France, argues that the systems developed in other centres such as Australia, are weaker and 'work off and compete with the French system' (Kawamura 2005: 15). Either by creating a presence through local fashion weeks with a parallel or similar framework, or by gaining entry via inclusion in the fashion weeks of major fashion hubs, Australian designers are conforming to a central fashion system. It provides a basis for legitimising their status as designers and optimises a global profile and credibility.

The designers mentioned above do not, however, represent Australia's largest fashion exports, as this acclaim goes to such swimwear and surfwear labels as Speedo, Quiksilver, and Billabong. These companies originated in Australia and are now international corporations with a global influence on the swimwear/surfwear market. Their marketing strategies have not prioritised the showing of their collections at fashion weeks either in Australia or overseas, but rather focused on the sponsorship of surfing events and sporting talents. Does this represent an innovative and uniquely Australian contribution to global fashion? Researching swimwear and its origins, I learnt of Annette Kellerman and her popularisation of the one-piece swimsuit in the early 1900s. Like many Australians I was unaware of our national heroine or her contribution to swimwear and this discovery was a trigger to explore this topic further.

1.2 Against the Grain: Australia and the Swimsuit

Grain: The direction in which the yarn is woven or knit (lengthwise grain or warp, crosswise grain or weft) (Armstrong 1987: 14)

The fabric threads fall into place when drawn with the grain and fray and ravel when drawn against the grain (Campbell 1971: 77)

Historical studies of fashion for the most part explore its social and cultural significance as national forms evolved and circulated through Europe from the end of the Middle Ages. Fashion was shaped by: 'the breadth of international exchanges, the urban renaissance, the new dynamism of the craft industries' (Lipovetsky 1994: 39). From the 1850s the use of sewing machines to produce ready-made garments and the establishment of industrial clothing manufacture changed the face of fashion (Wilson and Taylor 1989: 35-6), and at this time Australia, dependent on imported clothing, was the site of a threadbare, fledgling industry. Diana Crane historically tracks

fashion and clothing from this period in France, England and the United States, in part, to compare traditional class societies with a nation with egalitarian roots, and how different social systems influence and shape the style of fashion production and consumption (Crane 2000: 19 -22). These nations as major centres for textile and clothing manufacture represent a focus for examining how fashion diffuses from dominant cultures to the periphery. An investigation from an Australian perspective reveals the process and transmission of ideas and ideals back to the centre from the periphery. Margaret Maynard in *Fashioned from Penury* suggests that colonial Australia and its inhabitants did not fall in with 'Eurocentric theoretical models, for they had specific local resonances' (Maynard 1994: 3). Australian society was neither classless nor a cultural desert, however, with a number of the population starting life in Australia as convicts or their gaolers, in a harsh and often inhospitable landscape, the model was different. The clothes worn and the type of production that evolved in Australia provide an opportunity to explore how geography, lifestyle and a nation stitched to social outcasts contributed to the swimsuit's evolution.

A conception of clothes as disguise infuses not only Romantic literature but allegory and the whole vocabulary of metaphor itself. Nothing is more common than the metaphorical mention of clothing, first of all to indicate a simple screen that hides the truth or, more subtly, a distracting display that demands attention but confounds true perception.(Hollander 1993: 445)

Fashions in clothing have been tracked through 'shifting erogenous zones' – concealing and revealing the body's sexual characteristics. Steele's analysis of J.C. Flügel's theory of fashion change and its connection to sexuality suggests that 'clothes are both erotic and moral' with wearers conflicted by 'both the desire to display oneself and the reaction formation of modesty or shame related to the naked body', with a resulting ambivalence to the 'image of a fig leaf' (Steele 1985: 25-27).

The unadorned body did not have the appeal of one that was clothed, and the swimsuit, a clothing neophyte in the mid-late 19th century, unclothed the body exposing for many its flaws, age, and a lack of aesthetic or sexual appeal. Design flourishes and silhouettes in dress that had defined femininity and masculinity were stripped to expose a raw synergy between the body and a garment that thinly veiled it.

Bathing costumes were and are closely aligned to underwear in terms of styling and with the move from the boudoir to public spaces challenged moral codes. Similarly to women's underwear, the swimsuit, 'articulated conflicts in moral and gender codes associated with sexuality; and played off notions of the 'natural', untrained body against codes of civility and acceptable social conduct' (Craik 1994: 131). Claudia Kidwell suggests the 'trickle-down' theory of fashion does not apply to the swimsuit – that it 'entered the fashion pages by a different route' as a result of women who went 'against popular opinion' and swam (Kidwell 1969: 30). It is not surprising therefore that rather than the aristocracy marked as early adopters of the swimsuit, it was left to the working man and woman to fashion and shape its acceptance as a fashionable item of clothing, in spaces, particularly beaches, that Mark Herlihy refers to as 'social laboratories' (Herlihy 2000: 128); and what better space for it to evolve and thrive than Australia?

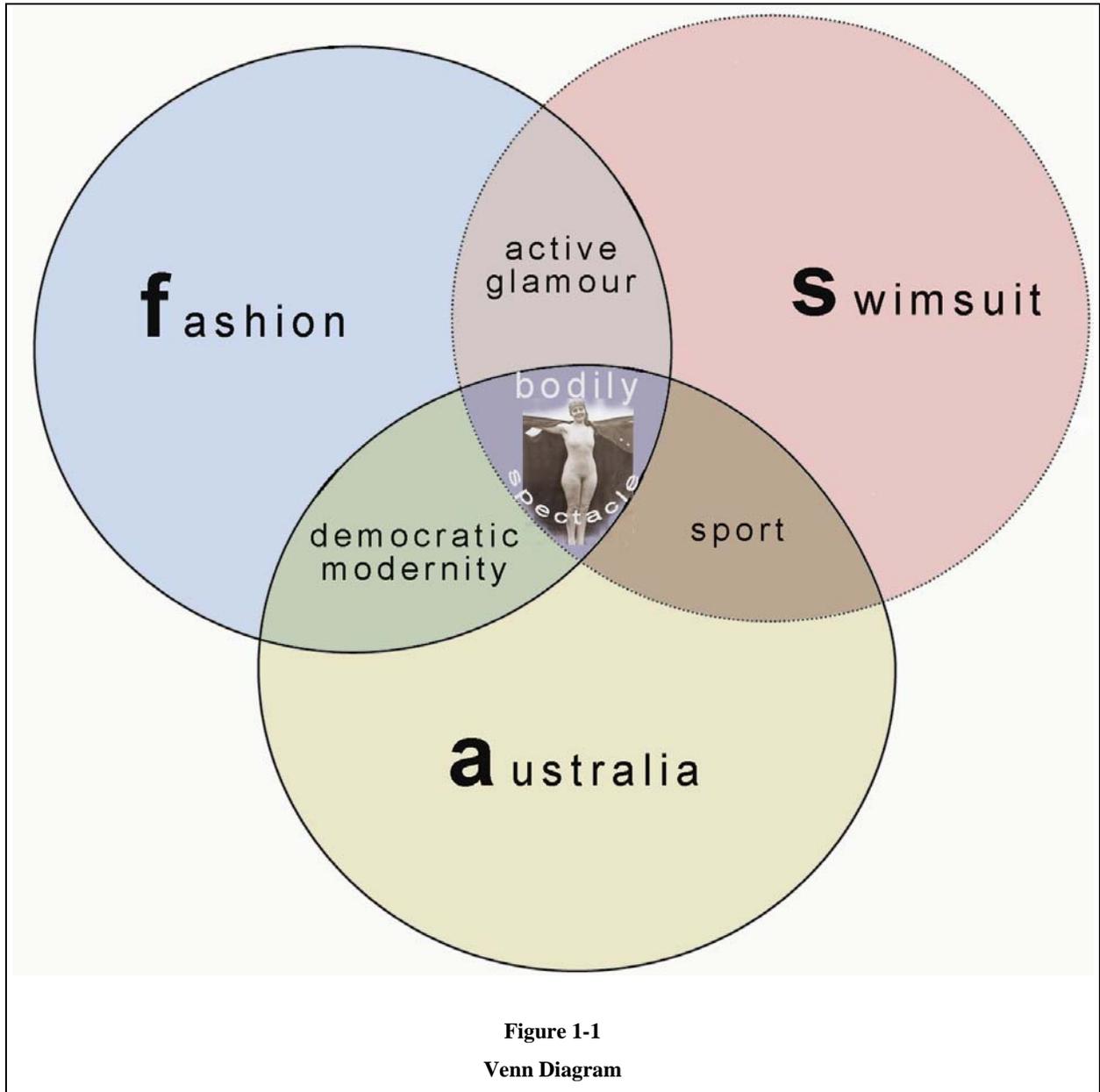
The swimsuit goes 'against the grain' of 'old world' fashion, fitting with a new century and 'the democratic-individualistic universe affirming the primordial autonomy of individuals' (Lipovetsky 1994: 62). In a modern world, fashion design was brokered by a rejection of tradition and conformity, and conventional notions of masculinity and femininity, with the additional benefit of a celebration of

individuality. The raw potential of individuals unfettered by a compliance to existing fashions, and with a desire for change, made them the makers and markers of fashion trends. However, wearing a swimsuit created new constraints. The body itself was toned and exercised into a compliant form suitable for a style that stripped the wearer of their personal bodily secrets. The individuals who popularised the swimsuit embodied an aesthetic that ‘tended toward the purification of forms and the rejection of the decorative’ (Lipovetsky 1994: 63).

The swimsuit was not tied to any one nation and, the styles that evolved and where they were produced was outside the fashion centres. Joanne Eicher describes the types of clothing worn by ‘ordinary people’ as examples of ‘world fashion’ and includes generic forms such as jeans and t-shirts in this ‘daily dress’, in recognition of fashions that have not emanated from a central hub such as Paris (Eicher 1995: 300). Maynard discusses the nature of global attire – the types, and complexities of a ‘supposed universality of dress’ that is challenged by marked differences in ‘fabric quality, stitching, and to an extent pattern’. Stylistic features additionally layered by a garment’s price-point (Maynard 2004: 41). Jeans are a modern world garment; they ‘are regarded as an archetypal product of America’, yet conversely ‘not all jeans are ‘American-made’, are subject to ‘customisation’, and any pair may have ‘their component parts come from an international range of sources’. Maynard posits that there is a belief that jeans are egalitarian, expressing an honesty, neutrality and authenticity (:47-48); sentiments that are also a ‘fit’ for the swimsuit. Martin and Koda suggest that American sportswear, ‘implicitly opposed to European fashion’, shaped the swimsuit and, that although they acknowledge it is not entirely accurate – ‘swimwear is inherently American’ (Martin and Koda 1990: 75). The concept that

world fashion and generic garments are neither generic nor attributable to a single nation but subject to cultural infusions from a number of nations has led to an investigation of the Australian contribution to global fashion.

1.3 Venn Diagram Analysis



In this study, the key fields are fashion, Australia, and swimwear. To understand how these fields intersect and to strengthen the conceptual and theoretical framework, a Venn diagram was created. It is a visual identification of the relationship between the fields shaping the direction of the enquiry and how collected material is analysed. The diagram explores the mutual relations between the fields and the relationship between the intersecting classes (Edwards 2004: 3-9). Connecting the three fields became clear by focusing on what was central and therefore common to them all - Kellerman, the embodiment of modern fashion and beauty ideals who possessed a creative and individual style that manifested in the one-piece bathing suit. The interconnecting and overlapping spaces have been defined to guide the direction and analysis between the key elements and will inform how the research questions are explored.

Fashion and Australia

Fashion is contextualised as being centrally based in Europe and North America and can be traced back to the early Renaissance period. From the mid-14th century until the middle of the 19th century, fashion was associated with elite social groups that influenced and shaped the direction of fashionable clothing. Philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky refers to this as ‘the artisanal and aristocratic stage of fashion’ (Lipovetsky 1994: 17). During the reign of Louis XIV, the Sun King (1643-1715), the French consolidated and cultivated their position as the ‘international arbiters of fashion’ (Batterberry and Batterberry 1977: 143). The courts of Europe were kept up to date with latest design developments in Paris through full- and half-size fashion dolls that replicated the styles worn by Parisian royals and aristocrats (Kawamura 2005: 83), however, these designs were not slavishly copied and ‘fashion retained a certain national character’ (Lipovetsky 1994: 59). With the advent of mass production

in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and more immediate and effective communication systems, fashion was no longer monopolised by the elite. It resulted in a cross-fertilisation of ideas between social groups and nations. This in turn influenced seasonal design directions and produced clothing that rejected traditional notions of social rank in favour of styles that reflected modern ideals of youth and physical beauty.

Australia, a western outpost that was colonised in the early 1800s, was born into the modern world of industrialisation, commercialisation, and urbanisation; however, as an isolated penal colony there was little access to the knowledge, technology, or skills to build a strong fashion industry and the 'supply of clothes to early Australia was haphazard' (Maynard 1994: 9). Dress historian Margaret Maynard reports that, contrary to 'persistent myths about colonial dress', Australians dressed differently from their British and European counterparts, preferring lighter garments that were more suited to the sub-tropical climate (Maynard 1994: 151). Away from the fashion hubs of Europe Australians created forms of colonial dress that were less constraining and more comfortable. Australia, with its non-traditional fashion roots conveyed a democratising aspect of modernity, a model that had the potential to manifest in a relaxed informality towards fashion and how it is worn.

Democratic Modernity

What, then, is the connection between fashion and Australia and how do they intersect?

During the period 1870-1920, European fashion was consolidating its organisational structure to cater to all social groups and Australia was attempting to create a national identity. The individuals, who transcended social barriers in the pursuit of acceptance and commercial success through personal style and unique talent, emerged as key contributors producing novel and desirable fashionable ideas and ideals. Lipovetsky (1994: 61) notes that the fashion system 'did not eliminate signs of social rank, but it attenuated them by promoting values that stressed more personal attributes'. Coco Chanel (1883-1971) is a much cited example of a French woman of low birth, a courtesan in her youth, who revolutionised fashion through her creation of innovative, minimalist sportswear that rejected traditional feminine styling, adopting instead masculine textiles and a relaxed elegance that was associated with the country wardrobe of an English gentleman. She was the 'first celebrity fashion designer' (Garelick 2001: 38), an ideal model for her designs; slim, chic with a unique stylistic approach to fashion. Significantly, although there were a number of designers who influenced the trend for modern sporty designs, it was Chanel who 'most successfully synthesised, publicised, and epitomised a look that many other people also developed' (Steele 1992: 122).

Kellerman grew up in Australia with relative freedom from social constraints, learning to swim, dive, and publicly compete in body-baring swimsuits. She was a

modern woman at the turn of the century who had an original style representative of a democratised fashion that acknowledged the importance of the individual and their role in the creation of new styles and designs. Although not a fashion designer, she was inventive and contributed to the world of fashion, popularising the men's one-piece bathing suit for women and fashioning social acceptance of the body through the ideals of beauty, glamour, and physical fitness. Like Chanel and the look she is attributed with creating, Kellerman was one of many who were experimenting with body-exposing bathing suits and engaging in challenging sporting activities, however she had the ability to redefine and construct a modern look that other women could imitate at a time when the ground rules for fashion were changing. Australia and Australians like Kellerman were positioned to contribute a fresh and innovative approach to design and stylistic development.

Australia and the Swimsuit

The swimsuit is a modern invention that emerged in the last 150 years and was not initially a fashion garment. Early swimsuits for men and competitive female swimmers were produced by underwear manufacturers and were primarily functional garments that did not require the tailoring and manufacturing skills of more complex items of clothing. Fashion curators and scholars Richard Martin and Harold Koda, suggested that in America the swimsuit was driven by consumer demand for a product to suit the lifestyle of a 'health-worshipping nation' (Martin and Koda 1990: 75). Similarly, Australian swimwear manufacturers proved capable of producing inventive, well-constructed swimsuits that were influenced by the early adoption of aquatic pursuits, particularly competitive swimming and beach culture.

Sport

How do Australia and the swimsuit interconnect?

Australian society and the swimsuit are embedded in modernity and share a relationship predicated on physical culture and sport. Australia is a sporting nation and has had significant success at the Olympics and international competitions in swimming and surfing over the last 100 years. Sport has shaped the evolution of the swimsuit and has ‘made a crucial contribution to the changing lines of women’s clothing in general by creating a new aesthetic ideal of femininity’ (Lipovetsky 1994: 62). Key to understanding this connection is Kellerman, who symbolised the modern woman: physically active; bold; adventurous; and sporty. Through her long-distance swimming and diving achievements, she contributed to the acceptance of women engaging in active sport in functional one-piece swimsuits. She was the ‘Australian mermaid’ who communicated these ideals that were representative of Australia’s cultural identity to a global community in an item of clothing that was still to be recognised as fashionable.

The Swimsuit and Fashion

In *Vogue’s* history of swimwear, Christina Probert states that ‘the swimmer was not part of the fashionable set until 1910’ (Probert 1981: 7), and that elegance as opposed to fitness was the idealised look. She notes that the swimsuit received little coverage

in *Vogue* prior to 1914 and at this juncture due to social upheaval caused by World War 1 it was accepted into the ranks of fashionable clothing:

It took a certain amount of courage for the bathing-girl to appear in this daring costume, and she really deserves the credit for firing the first shot in the Battle of Modern Dress. *Vogue* 1914 (Probert 1981: 8)

Kellerman did indeed fire the first shot when she was allegedly arrested for indecency on Revere Beach in 1907. For some years prior to this she had been promoting the swimsuit, encouraging women to throw away their corsets and shape their bodies through physical exercises and a healthy diet. Fashioning the body was essential, creating a new focus on self-improvement and physical fitness. The popularity of the swimsuit prior to its inclusion in the fashion system and who wore it and where it was worn are key factors in understanding the evolving structure of global fashion, its democratisation, and how an item of clothing gains cache and acceptance.

Active Glamour

How do fashion and the swimsuit interconnect?

Cultural historian Stephen Gundle suggests that glamour is a modern phenomenon associated with: the social shift of power from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie in the late 19th century and the increased importance of fashion. City dwellers were influenced by ‘the closer proximity of the theatre; and ‘high society’’; and leisure activities that were available to all urban classes’ (Gundle 1999). Glamour is a quality that is associated with an individual who exudes a magical and charismatic power elevating them to star status in the eyes of the public. As a rule, this is not an inherent personality trait; it is manufactured and, as fashion commentator Annette Tapert observes it is ‘about self-invention and reinvention’ (Tapert 1998: 10). Glamorous

stars through theatre and cinema become global citizens communicating ideals of physical beauty and style to all. The fashion they wear and their personal style provides guidelines for imitation and acceptance in a broader social context. Kellerman popularised the one-piece bathing suit through public aquatic displays, vaudeville acts, and early silent movies. She was not one to languish and her personal style reflected a highly active and physically demanding lifestyle on and off the stage and screen. She firmly believed that the body was the fundamental basis of beauty and disseminated information through books and public lectures on how to achieve this beauty. Her body displayed in revealing bathing suits heralded the emergence of active glamour.

Bodily Spectacle

Central themes that emerge from the intersecting classes of democratic modernity, sport, and active glamour include:

- Individuals with style and personality can influence the stylistic direction of fashionable clothing;
- These individuals focus on self-development, personal achievement: invention and reinvention;
- The emergence of a new hierarchical social structure that favours physical beauty, youth and fitness;
- Sport contributed to the stylistic direction of fashions in the 20th century and provided a method of shaping the body to conform with the new beauty aesthetic that idealised a slim and athletic form;
- The body as a site of fashionable construct;

Bodily spectacle in the swimsuit heralded a democratised era in modern fashion that embodied a new aesthetic of feminine beauty in the 20th century. For many it does, however, raise the question of whether there is an exploitative or negative edge to high-profile swimsuit wearers in relation to gender issues. I have included participants starting with Kellerman who shaped and controlled their destinies through performative bodies and, although clad in swimsuits, proved to be anything but submissive or merely the object of male fantasies. What unfolds is how independent, innovative individuals transgress traditional gender roles or stereotypes through self-transformation, producing new models of femininity and masculinity. Their ability to create economic value as celebrity entrepreneurs across a variety of industries suggests new methods of challenging conventional notions of the swimsuit and its wearer.

The purpose of the Venn diagram is to establish the relationship between Australia, fashion, and the swimsuit and, led to sport, fitness, and research into individuals who are associated with national identity, or who are identified as global citizens and, how they have contributed to fashioning the swimsuit. The swimsuit and Australia are newcomers and initially outsiders to the fashion system. By plotting how the garment and the nation have gained inclusion as part of the global fashion network, illustrates the role of exceptional individuals and nations on the periphery to innovations in fashion design.

1.4 Theories interfacing Fashion

The common threads woven through the research for this study are establishing how a garment transforms into a fashion item; the process of design and the permutations that occur as a result of who wears it and how, where, and why a swimsuit is worn; and the methods of transmission that shape how it gains broader acceptance.

In *Fashion Classics from Carlyle to Barthes*, Michael Carter examines fashion theorists, including: Thomas Carlyle; Herbert Spencer; Thorstein Veblen; Georg Simmel; Alfred Kroeber; J.C. Flügel; James Laver; and Roland Barthes, observing that all ‘agreed that clothes and fashion are a social phenomena’ (Carter 2003: xiii). Their approach to understanding fashion and explaining it is connected to how we operate socially: individualism versus collectivism; imitation versus differentiation; and modesty versus exhibitionism. These behavioural patterns are shaped by economic imperatives materialising as Veblen’s three principles: conspicuous consumption; conspicuous leisure; and conspicuous waste. Prior to the 20th century, this was connected to a hierarchical class system characterised by a social ranking linked to aristocratic bloodlines. Lipovetsky notes that ‘the democratisation of fashion did not mean that appearances had to be uniform or equalised’. Nor was social rank eliminated – there was however a ‘new criteria of slenderness, youth, sex appeal, convenience and discretion ... values that stressed more personal attributes’ (Lipovetsky 1994: 61).

Quentin Bell's analysis of fashion's theories in *On Human Finery* places them into four categories:

1. 'Those which explain fashion as the work of a few individuals';
2. 'Those which see in fashion a product of human nature';
3. 'Those which find in it a reflection of great political or spiritual events';
4. 'Those which suppose the intervention of a Higher Power'; (Bell 1976: 90)

Bell suggests: the influential individuals would be leaders who set the fashion, or the businessmen who create it. If it is human nature shaping fashion, then it is the result of 'boredom or fatigue with current fashion, curiosity, desire to be different or self-assertion, rebellion against convention' (: 93). Influential external events outside human nature could be: climate; commerce and international trade; accidents; wars; revolutions; and the emergence of new moral and political ideas' (95). Alternatively fashion is a result of 'the determining force, the spirit of the age, who may be dignified with the appellation of *Zeitgeist*' (: 102). Bell concludes that these theories cannot conclusively explain 'Fashion', choosing to take a Veblenian economic approach to 'come to an account of fashion which will at least tally with the salient facts in the history of clothes' (: 106).

In addition to the above, sociologist, Fred Davis examined a number of fashion theories used to define fashion's meaning as 'some complex amalgamation of inspiration, imitation, and institutionalization', including the notions that:

- Haute couture designers as the fashion leaders, although 'more open to "outside influences"', such as street fashion, are the 'principal locus of fashion

inspiration' and, are often imitated by high street designers and mass manufacturers;

- The movement of fashion down the social ladder – trickle-down theory;
- Purchase of designer fashion to increase social visibility, methods of consumption – economic theories (Davis 1992: 123-158);
- Different parts of the body are revealed and concealed in 'a clash of modesty and display' – 'the shifting erogenous zone' (82-3);
- Fashion is the result of the collective following of trends, as opposed to class-based influences, because 'it is fashion ... and a wish to be in fashion' – collective selection (116).

If these theories are homogenised, it is possible to explain how fashion is played out. It is, however, an outside-in approach to understanding fashion and participant motivations in what is worn and what is fashionable. If theory were part of a garment, it would be the interfacing – a usually unseen interior fabric, woven or non-woven that is used to structurally strengthen the outer material. A decision was made to take an improvisational approach to building the theoretical framework in order to encourage discovery 'in places it was hitherto unlooked for' (Hartley 2002: 3-4), to describe the practice and process of fashion.

1.5 A Practitioner's Approach to Enquiry

The dilemma in terms of the methodological approach stems from who I am as a researcher. Prior to this research project I was a fashion practitioner including 15 years' experience working as a project director for an international corporate design company. My skill base as a designer is extensive and includes: creating design concepts; researching and locating manufacturers globally; researching, developing, and purchasing textiles for individual projects; print design and development; supervision of prototype development and bulk manufacture in Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, London, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Dubai, Thessaloniki, Barbados, and Seoul. Professor of dress and textile history, Lou Taylor, discusses the divisive debate between the artefact-based approaches of the museum/curator and the economic/social history approaches in traditional universities in relation to the development of new methods of researching dress history. Taylor suggests that the friction is waning with a fusion of both approaches resulting in an interdisciplinary research practice (Taylor 2002: 64-85). The question is: Where does the practitioner fit as a researcher, especially one who intends to write a traditional thesis as opposed to undertaking a practice-led project? Patricia Cunningham advises that dress historians:

... should not follow other approaches blindly, but rather let our own questions and materials lead us to new approaches. We must try out available models, but devise our own as well (cited by Taylor 2002: 85).

It is advice that has shaped the approach to this study.

1.6 Research Design

Drawing on my experience as a practitioner and the methods and techniques I use as a designer to understand a problem or to develop a design proposal shaped the collection of data and approach to formulating the research topic. The process for design concepts involves creating sketches, gathering data and ideas from a range of historic and contemporary primary and secondary sources, and collecting potential textiles and colour swatches. These items are collaged and explanatory notes added to structure the direction of the design concept and preliminary sketches. This parallels the process I have used to refine the research topic and is detailed in Appendix 1. The strategy has been to develop the conceptual context for this research study by a series of evolving concept maps that can provide guidelines for the theoretical and methodological structure. Maxwell (1996:25) states that understanding which components are integral to the research is an essential part of the design process and that explaining them ‘graphically or in a narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts, or variables’ , facilitates an insight into what is happening and why.

1.7 Patternmaking for Research Purposes

The method of visually describing and making sense of complex ideas through a mapping process fits with a creative practice approach to enquiry and entails an inside-out analysis to explain what is happening. Through it I am engaged in a reflective conversation, relating concepts that are not within the parameters of my existing knowledge, to build an understanding of the situation. Schön (1983: 131-32) describes this process: ‘The situation talks back, the practitioner listens; and he appreciates what he hears, he reframes the situation once again’. The construction of visual frameworks moves the enquiry forward – it has led to drawing on a repertoire of existing knowledge skills to describe what I think is going on and is a response to a unique and indeterminate situation. A component of my design ‘repertoire’ is patternmaking, which is used to develop a metaphorical construction of the study. I have constructed a fashion model and a series of patterns with text and images placed together, creating relationships that are contained within the parameters of the pattern design, flowing together to describe the fashion process. The patterns pinpoint defining characteristics that influenced the swimsuit’s evolution and how it is culturally disseminated, and creates a structure systemising concepts. Patternmaking has been used to illustrate and explain how fashion operates in the real world with the intention of interlocking theory and practice. The garment is turned inside out to show the seams and how it has been constructed.

Flat patternmaking for fashion design is a form of pattern designing that uses basic pattern blocks or templates that correspond to the specific parts of the body: bodice for torso; skirt for the waist to ankle; pants for the bifurcated body waist to ankle; and sleeve for the arm from shoulder to wrist, as foundations for developing a diverse range of designs and stylistic variations. These blocks are representative of specific dimensions of an assumed body standard and this controls the size and fit of the patterns developed. They are a second skin and a blank canvas on which designs are created; a master copy or blueprint. Design lines are plotted onto these blocks and traced off to create pattern pieces that are then transformed into toiles. A toile is a test fitting process where the pattern pieces are transferred onto calico or a fabric with similar properties to the designed garment. It is constructed with large stitch seams and remains unfinished. Its purpose is to ensure the flat pattern is a true representation of the intended three dimensional form prior to sampling the final prototype. Each pattern piece is designed with intent and is implicitly essential to the construction of the finished garment.

The bodice block is the working pattern used to create a bikini top for swimwear. Armstrong explains that the patternmaker requires the skill ‘to analyse the creative detailing of each design ... to study and compare the finished pattern shapes with the completed garments. This will help the patternmaker visualise the relationship between them.’ She continues that the design features are plotted onto the block and, importantly, ‘through the process, the original shape of the pattern is changed to represent the design rather than the basic garment’ (Armstrong 1987: 112-113). Figure 1-2 illustrates the process – the pattern plot and development reframes and constructs the guidelines for the intended physical garment. The design features are

represented in this diagram by the areas in white and the grey area is discarded when the pattern pieces are traced off. It is a 1/2 front bodice, or 1/4 of the total body. In the cutting layout, the pattern piece is mirrored on the fabric to create a complete front. The completed garment replicates the flat design concept moulding and shaping to the body.

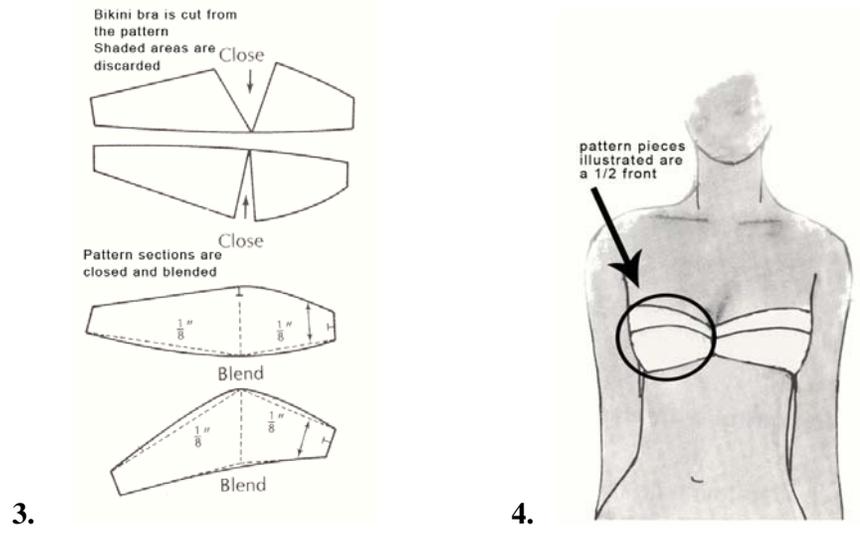


Figure 1-2

Pattern development for a bikini top with horizontal styleline

1. Bodice Block 2. The design features are created by plotting design lines on the bodice front 3. Pattern pieces are traced off, closed and blended. 4. Stitched up to create a 1/2 front
Technical drawings sourced from (Armstrong 1987)

By using a block as the parameters for the scope and scale of the study and designing a pattern that determines the relationship between key concepts, a visual understanding emerges. It is the building block from which the swimsuit and fashion takes shape. All patterns for this study have been developed from swimsuit design patterns and chosen on the basis of their suitability to plot and visually articulate specific concepts being researched. The key terms and ideas that emerged from the evolving concept maps detailed in Appendix 1 have been plotted onto a bikini top with horizontal styleline; the first pattern in the library.

An important part of the process was positioning and describing everyone as participants, thereby implying the transition from product to distribution to consumption as only part of the whole. What happens to a garment before and after participants as consumers make a purchase can contribute to the ongoing design process. Early innovations in swimsuit textiles were a result of collaborations between sporting participants and the manufacturer; for example, Speedo's close association with the Amateur Swimming Association of Australia from 1930 ensured optimised performance for competitive swimmers. Surfwear companies, now big business, were initially started by keen surfers who wanted specialised garments for their sport; and Paula Stafford, who is attributed with designing the first bikinis in Australia in the early 1940s, found there was a demand from other beach participants for the swimsuits she had created for herself that were unavailable on the market.

Figure 1-3 pinpoints participants as wearers, spectators, and commentators illustrating how we all participate in the fashion system. Producers represent the core influences

on the design process; however, not all fashionable clothing is the result of designs by fashion designers or garment manufacturers. The pattern piece recognises the influence of inventive individuals and cultural and social groups at a national level.

Figure 1-4 plots the participation sites where the swimsuit was and is worn, which led to participants who contributed through performance in vaudeville, film, sport, beach culture, pageants, and bodily spectacle illustrating the diversity of influences shaping the swimsuit's stylistic directions. The transmission of ideas and ideals of fashionable swimwear between individuals and the collective has been captured through images in magazines, newspapers, television, and the internet representing intermediary participation sites.

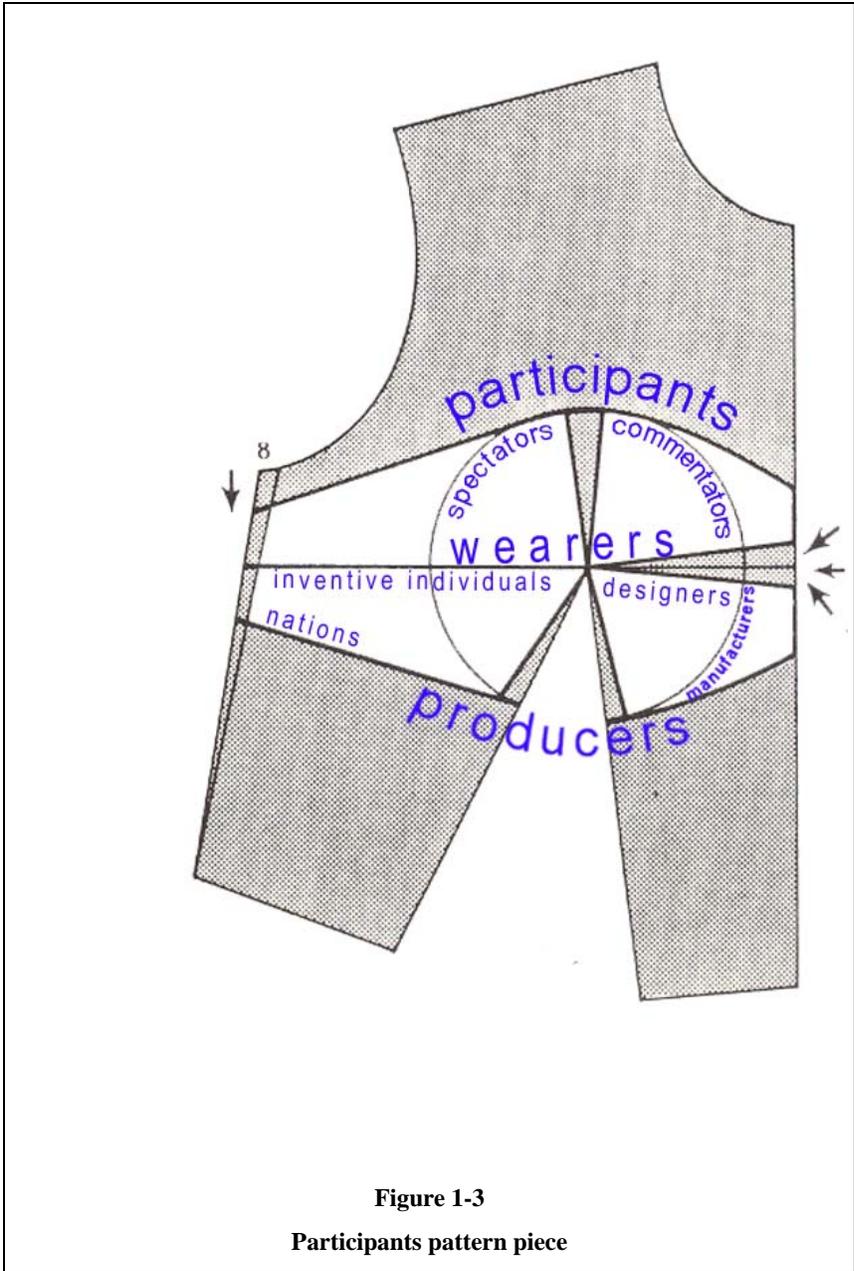


Figure 1-3
Participants pattern piece

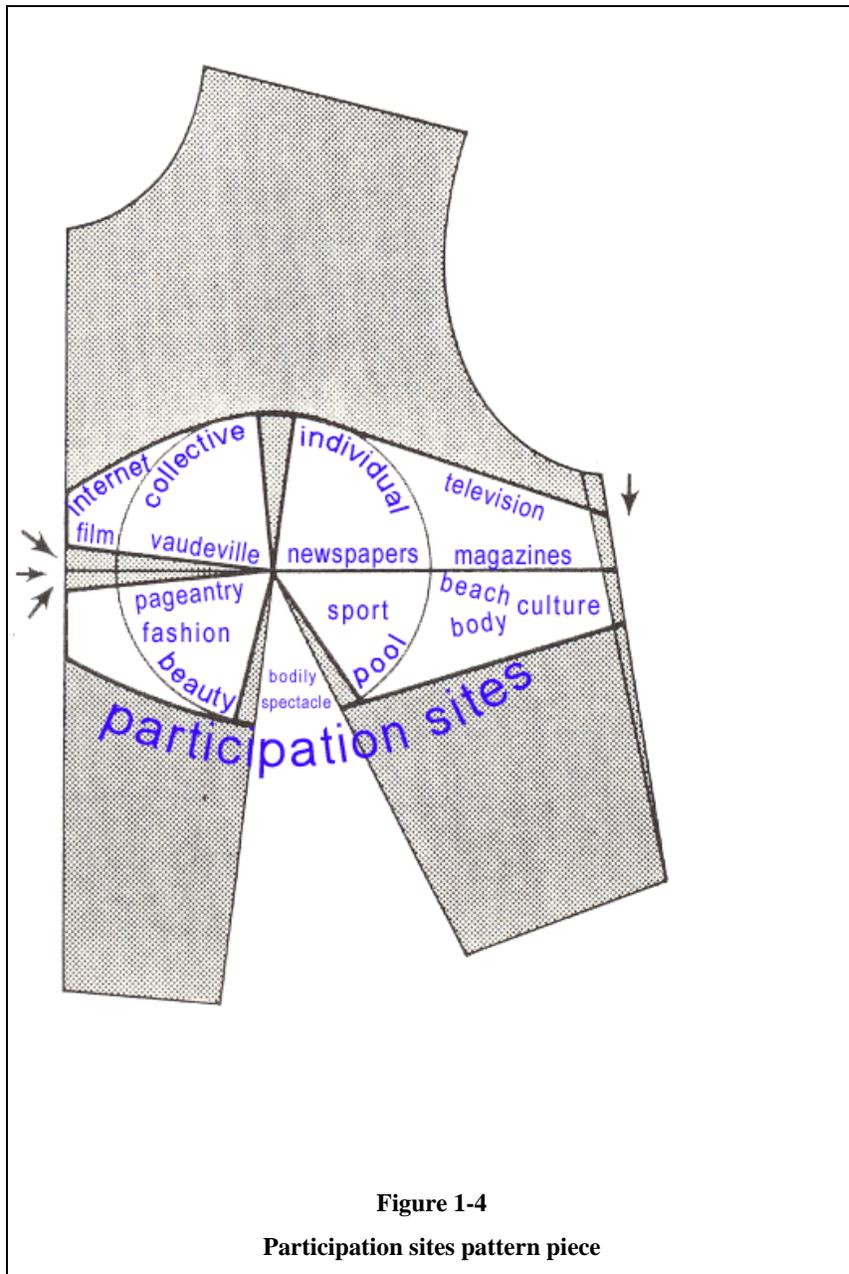


Figure 1-4

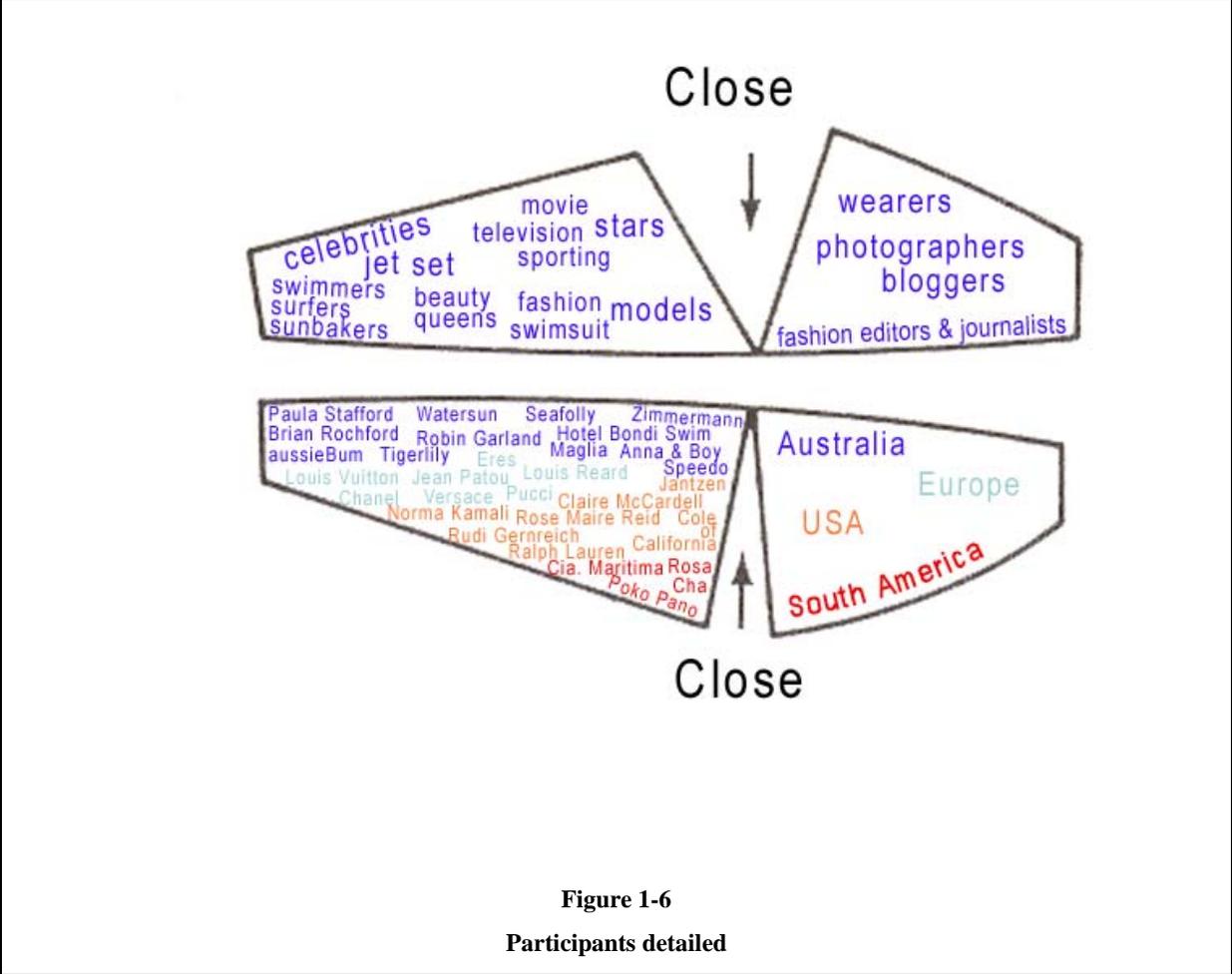
Participation sites pattern piece

1.8 Fashion model

The approach taken in this study is to describe the practise of fashion, describing what is being designed and worn, a model that explores the complex relationships between participants and the process of fashion. The patterns pinpoint defining characteristics that influenced the development of the swimsuit by mapping how the designed garment ‘becomes part of the fashionable set’, building on existing theories through participants and participation sites and contributing another layer of understanding to what is going on. Drawing on fashion practice in the form of patternmaking is a creative approach which strengthens the position of the designer as researcher.

The fashion model situates the theoretical stance and argument for this study and is a driver for how information was gathered and analysed. Figure 1-5 illustrates how the designed sections of a mirrored bodice are extracted from the pattern design to define and construct a visual framework that describes and interprets the influences on how an item of clothing, the swimsuit, has evolved and developed into a fashionable garment.

The pattern pieces detail who the participants are and which participation sites have influenced the swimsuit’s evolutionary path and can be viewed more closely in Figure 1-6 and Figure 1-7. Once these pieces are stitched together, they represent a finished bikini front producing an inter-connected flow of ideas dressing the body where, drawn together, they produce a cohesive representation of how this study has been structured (Figure 1-8).



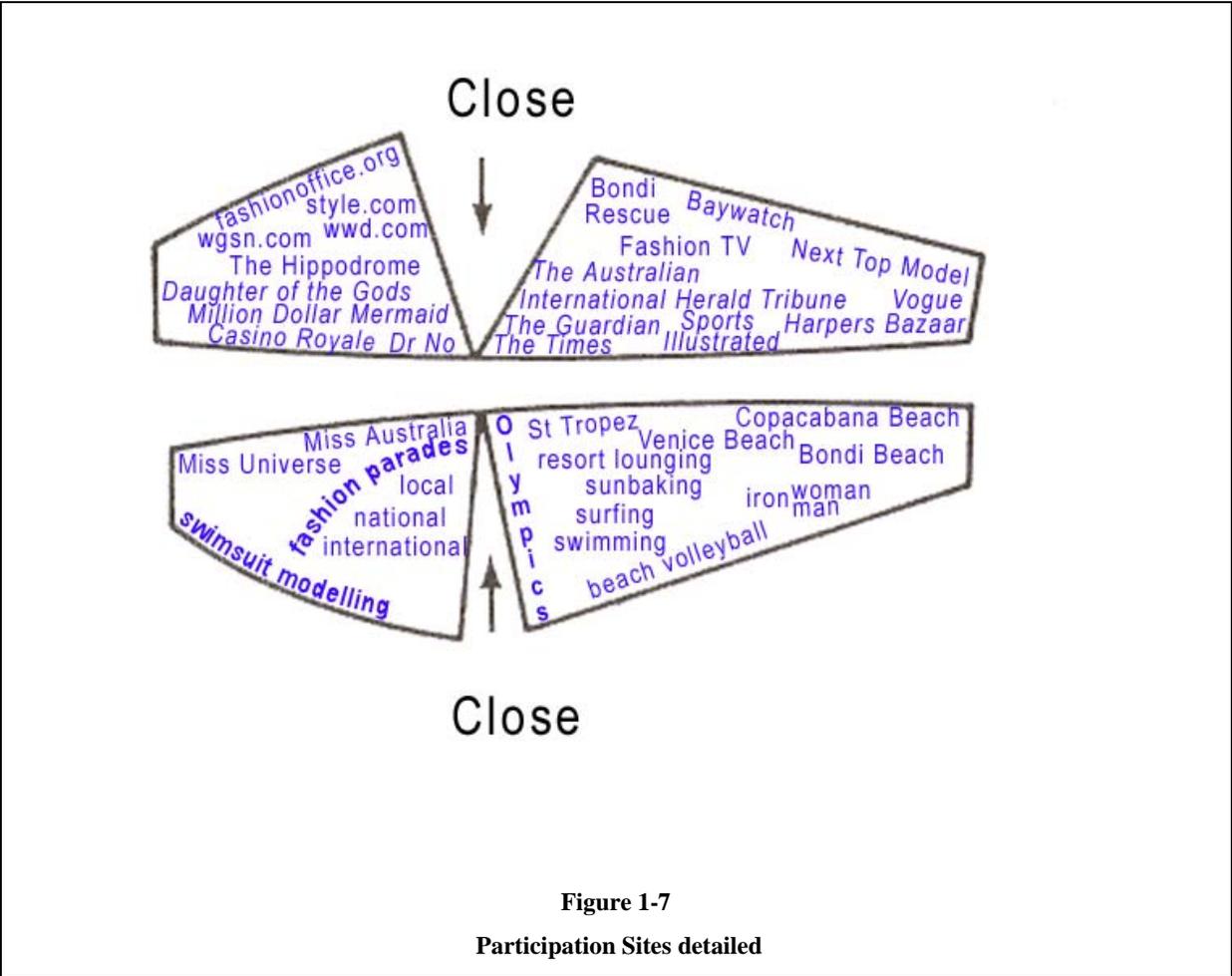


Figure 1-7
Participation Sites detailed

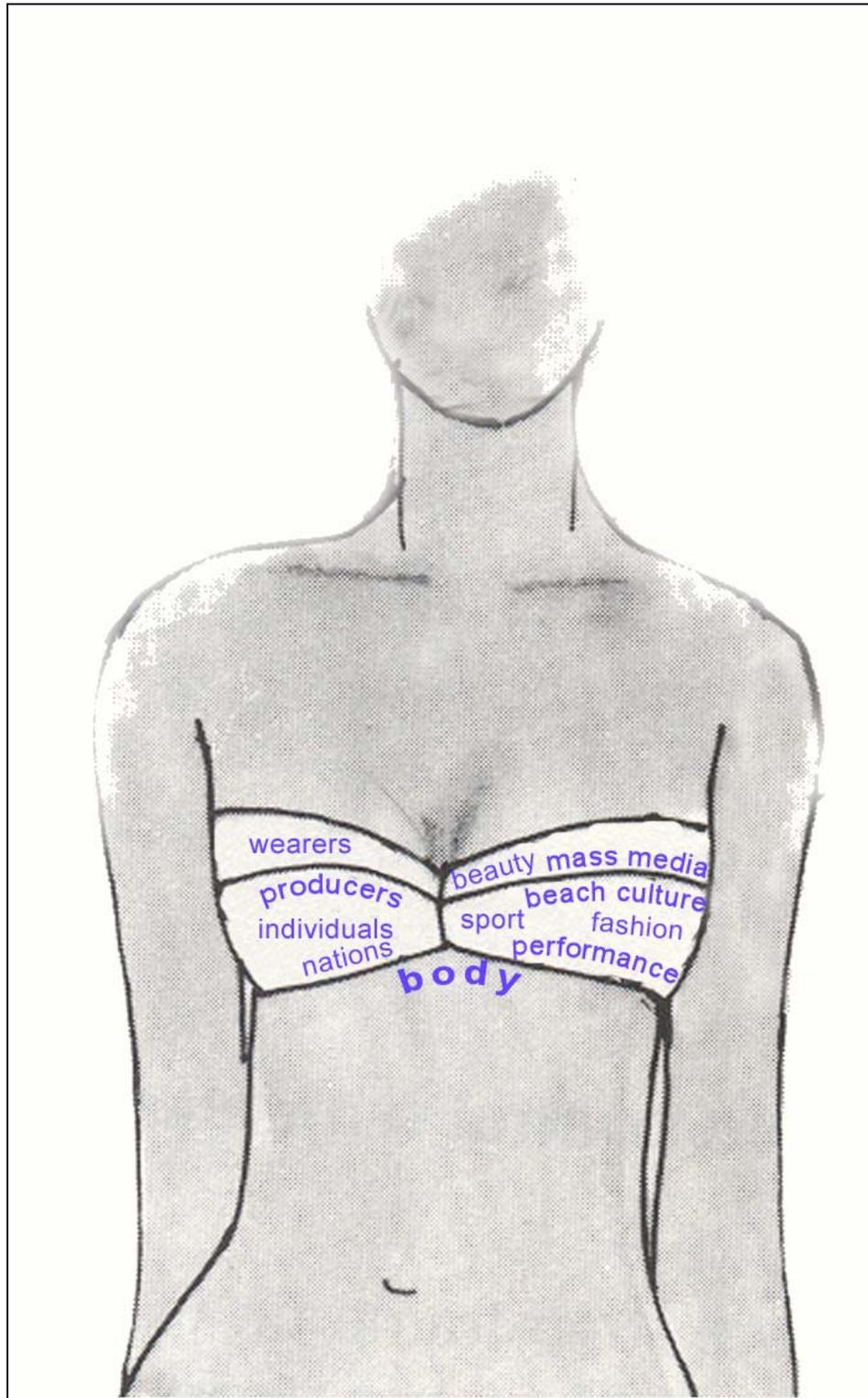


Figure 1-8
Fashion model stitched up

As the research process progressed, informed by the targeted participants and participation sites, further patterns were developed. The swimsuit barely rates a mention in fashion histories, triggering searches for material in non-fashion sources, including sport and men's magazines and internet sites. Visually articulating and contextualising the topic through images constrained by patterns resulted in a pattern library that produced a customised perspective of how the swimsuit has evolved.

Figure 1-10 is the first draft body stocking mapping the concepts through images. The left side of the body represents inventive individuals, swimsuit designers, and commentators. The right side body stocking represents participation sites with obvious connections to Australia's contribution to the swimsuit in the 20th century and is detailed in Appendix 2. Figure 1-11 is the body stocking refined and developed with a shortened leg design to define four core concepts. The maillot is a close-fitting, one-piece swimsuit and the fashion model maillot (Figure 1-12), is based on an asymmetrical design that is developed through a slash and spread principle to add fullness to part of the garment. For the purpose of this study, the maillot pattern proved useful for creating an image timeline for the swimsuit. The stitched-up version (Figure 1-14), illustrates what the finished garment would look like and represents the culmination and extraction of central ideas from the images analysed during the research process. These patterns are discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

All technical drawings represent swimsuit designs and were selected on the basis of their suitability to tailor to the concepts and images. Collectively, the patterns map the swimsuit's life to date, creating a visual method of exploring the topic. The patterned ideas are shaped and toiled to develop a conceptual framework for this study.

Image Copyright Protected

Figure 1-10
Draft Body Stocking



Figure 1-11 Core Concepts



Figure 1-12
Fashion model Maillot

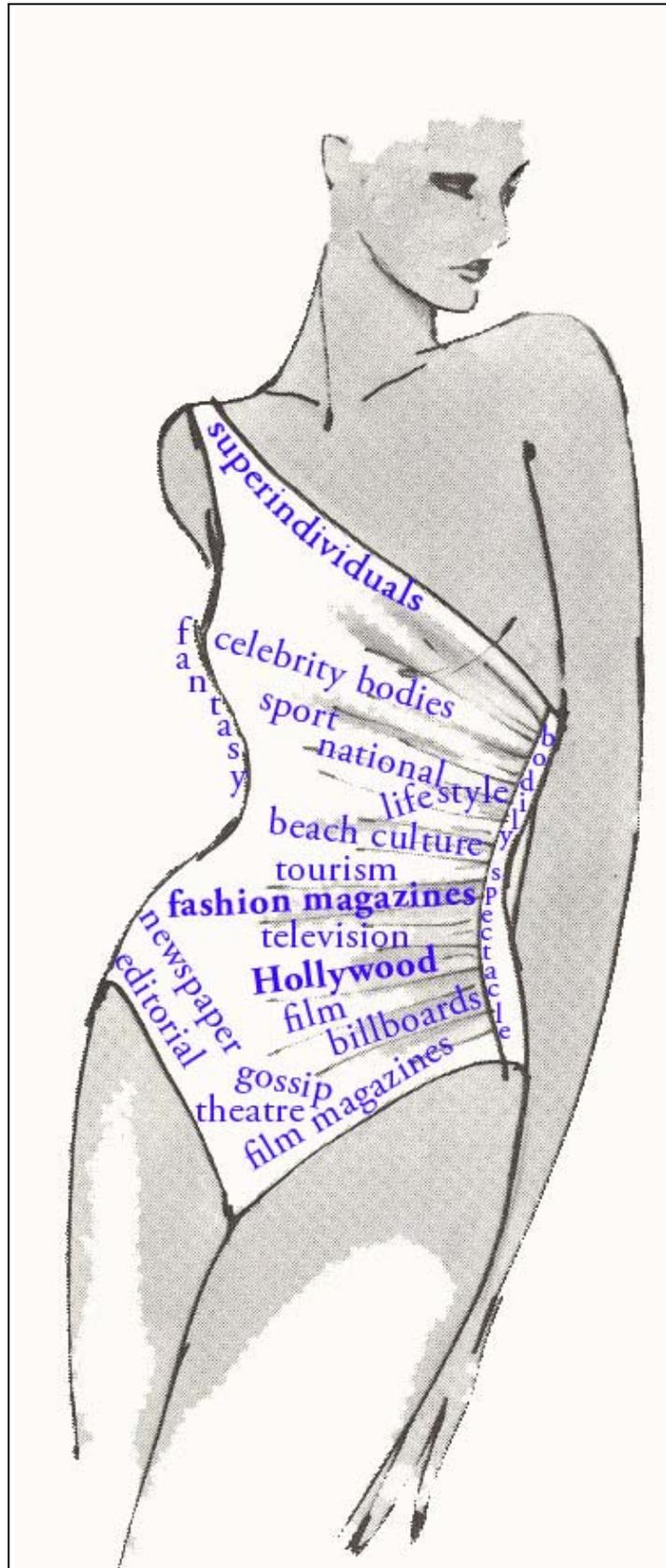


Figure 1-13
Fashion model maillot stitched up

Body of Evidence

The approach to this thesis has been shaped by the visual material collected to articulate underlying theories and concepts. The intention is to construct a thematic narrative that threads together the history of the swimsuit, both real and imaginary, through individuals and nations, to produce a body of evidence that describes how a garment is shaped and fitted to the fashion system, and woven into a cultural product with multi-layered meanings and values. The methodological model draws from fashion practice with the aim of examining fashion first-hand and the role of geography and lifestyle, and media and celebrity to global fashion.

2 The Study in Context

2.1 Design Pattern

The flat pattern replicates a three-dimensional form of a garment and is called the design pattern; in this case a two-piece bathing suit. Each pattern piece is designed with intent and is implicitly essential to the construction of the representational garment. This parallels the literature review process, which involves seeking existing knowledge that can create a construction of the swimsuit and how it fits into fashion, a core component of which is to establish Australia's contribution.

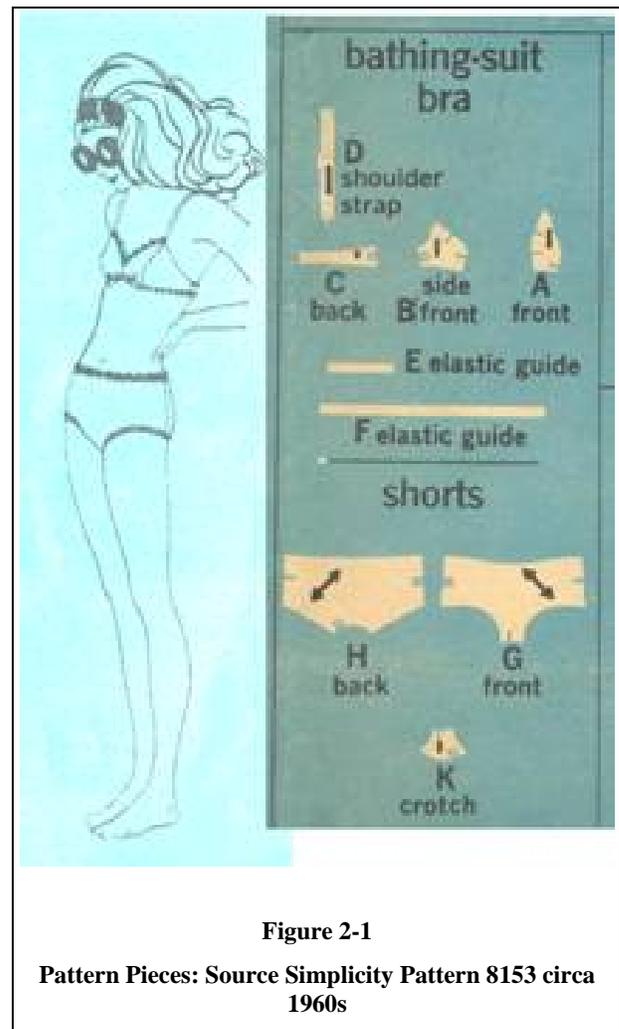


Figure 2-1

Pattern Pieces: Source Simplicity Pattern 8153 circa 1960s

2.2 Cutting Layout

The cutting layout is the arrangement of the interconnected pattern pieces on a suitable fabric and placed for the most efficient use of the material. In this diagram the black area represents the fabric. Each pattern piece is marked with a grainline \leftrightarrow , which ‘indicates the direction in which the pattern is placed on the grain of the fabric relative to the selvage edge’ (Armstrong 1987: 22). Correct placement ensures the garment will hold its shape and resist bagging. The purpose of this visual metaphor is to describe my approach to the literature review. The design and style of the garment, the bathing-suit, determines the fabric selection and the shape of the pattern pieces. Identifying significant sources, extracting relevant data, and connecting this information



Figure 2-2

‘A well-sewn garment starts at the cutting table.

Laying out your pattern on the fabric to prepare for cutting is an important step that must be done carefully and accurately for great-looking results.’ Bones

Source of cutting layout: Simplicity Pattern 8153 circa 1960s

in a meaningful fashion will ensure that, once constructed, it presents a ‘well-sewn’ and synthesised representation of the research topic. It is a visual prompt to focus on material that is relevant to the bathing suit and its evolution and the pattern pieces are labelled with key references and methods of data collection to define the scope of the inquiry and identify gaps in knowledge.



2.3 Early Swimsuit History

There is evidence that beach culture existed in the ancient world with the Greeks and Romans wearing simplified togas and embracing ‘the pleasures of the sea’ and swimmers (Lencek and Bosker 1998: 31). Costume and swimwear historians contend that Sicilian murals depicting young women in two-piece garments that were worn for gymnastics are a precursor to the modern bikini. There are similarities between the styling of these early clothing items and the contemporary bikini, showing an early

relationship between sporting activities in garments that expose the body. The murals belong to a period when ‘fashion as we understand it hardly existed’, with little change in the style of garments worn (Wilson 2003: 16). Wilson suggests that fashion is ‘dress in which the key feature is rapid and continual changing styles’, and is a characteristic of modern Western society (Wilson 2003: 3). It is linked to early capitalism in the European city states of the late

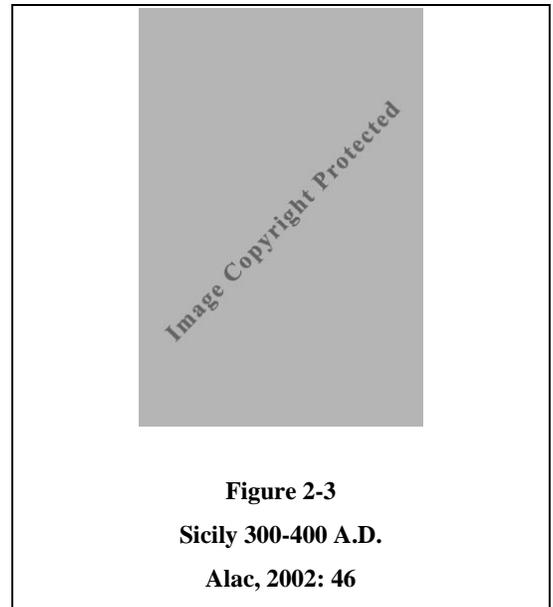


Figure 2-3
Sicily 300-400 A.D.
Alac, 2002: 46

Middle Ages; an urban rather than beach creation. The swimsuit, the participation sites where it would be worn, and its inclusion as fashionable was centuries away. Beach life disappeared with the demise of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. and a new Christian ethos discouraged a narcissistic interest in the body or physical fitness. Prior to the mid-1800s in Europe, bathing or swimming was associated with health and medicinal treatments and the belief that fresh water had ‘healing properties’ (Kidwell 1969: 5); men and women swam separately - usually choosing to swim naked (Craik 1994: 136). With the advent of swimming as a popular leisure pastime in the 1850s and the introduction of mixed bathing, there was social pressure to adopt clothing for the sake of modesty. The standard costume for men was a heavy one-piece that covered the arms, torso, and thighs, (Craik 1994: 138), while the typical women’s costume consisted of a yoked dress that was pleated, long-sleeved, and belted. Drawers that extended to the ankle were attached to the dress to ensure that the body was not exposed. These garments were generally made of wool or cotton and were cumbersome and restricted movement in the water (Kidwell 1969).

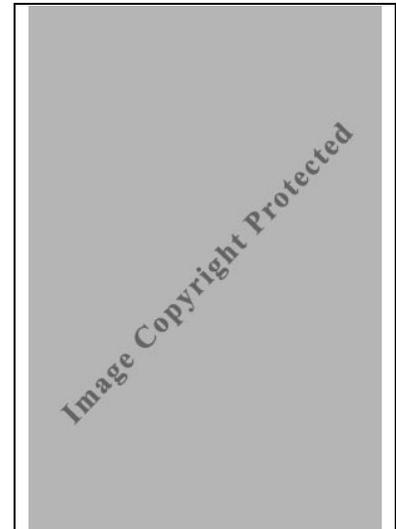


Figure 2-4
Bathing Dress 1855
Kidwell, 1969: 17

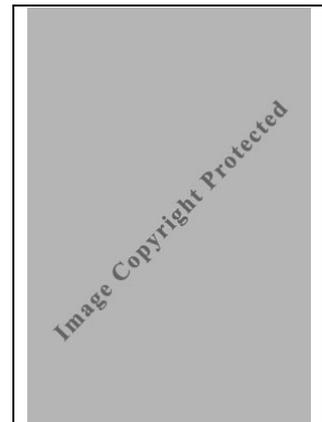
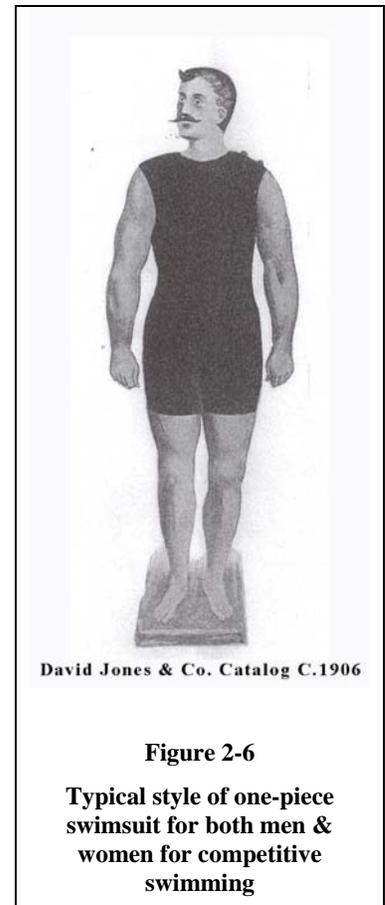


Figure 2-5
Image - Herald & Weekly
Times
Joel, 1984: 31

By the 1870s the bathing suit for men was sleeveless and had come to resemble underwear in styling. Women's bathing suits had, by comparison, become more elaborate. They included corsets, stockings, and shoes and could weigh up to 30 pounds when wet. These bathing costume designs, which originated in England and Europe, were adopted in the United States (Kidwell 1969: 6). Johns compares the sea-bathing suits of the Americans, English, and French, noting that in the United States and France 'mixed sex groups' bathed together but the costumes completely covered the body, whereas in England the bathing suits were lighter and less attractive and bathing was segregated (Johns 1997: 36-37). Australian women also procured 'capacious woollen seaside' ready-made costumes of uncertain manufacturing origins during this period – possibly locally produced or imports – and engaged in 'mixed sex group' bathing. These garments were worn with oilskin caps and merino woollen socks (Maynard 1994: 104,120-21).

From the early 1800s, women in Australia pursued an interest in sports and physical activities, including swimming. There was a split between recreational bathing and swimming as a form of exercise and competitive sport. It was impossible for women to swim in the ornate and billowing bathing suits (Figures 2-4 and 2-5) or to adopt a man's style of bathing suit. The term bathing costume refers to swimwear's earliest form when people bathed as opposed to swam. Kidwell defines bathing as 'the act of immersing all or part of the body in water for cleansing, therapeutic, recreational, or religious purposes' and swimming as 'the self propulsion of the body



through water' (Kidwell 1969: 5). 'Costume' or 'suit', words used in conjunction with bathing, are terms that originated in England and were imported to America and Australia to describe what people wore at beaches or baths in urban locales (Gwynn 2003).

Australians were early adopters of swimming for sport or leisure. A swimming enclosure was constructed in 1828 next to the Domain in Woolloomooloo Bay, Sydney. By the 1830s, middle class women were embracing recreational swimming and, as James Cumes reports, it 'was a period in which aquatic sports were organised and became a significant part of the recreation and public entertainment' (Cumes 1979: 156). The first recorded competitive women's swimming races were held in Adelaide in the mid 1870s, and by 1892 the indoor 'Natatorium' in Pitt Street, Sydney held races for both sexes. During this period, the NSW Amateur Swimming Association was formed (Raszeja 1992: 31-41). Wool or cotton non-skirted, short-legged costumes were worn by men and women for training and racing purposes and women may have worn cotton tights under the swimsuit and cloaks before and after races to protect their modesty.

The current sources of information on the history of the swimsuit are limited to the work of authors who focus on the evolution of the bathing suit in the United States and France. American women in the 19th century were more likely to adopt a skirted bathing costume and to associate more streamlined bathing suits with being 'masculine and fast' (Warner 2006: 68). Author of a history of modern sportswear, Patricia Campbell Warner, reports that British women swam more than their American sisters, and although British women may have worn knitted one-piece

swimsuits for swimming, it was ‘still considered shocking in America’. Kellerman, who was performing in the United States in 1910, is recorded as saying in the *Ladies Home Journal* that it was ‘timidity that kept so many women in this country from learning to swim’ (Warner 2006: 78). Annette Kellerman is generally the only mentioned connection or early contribution that Australia has had to the evolution of the swimsuit; however, research for this study has found that she was not alone in her pursuit of aquatic activities in her home country (Kidwell 1969: 6; Lencek and Bosker 1989; Martin and Koda 1990; Johns 1997; Warner 2006).



2.4 The Dynamic Individual

Annette Kellerman is central to understanding how swimwear evolved from an adapted version of the existing daywear in the last quarter of the 19th century to the modern and fashionable swimsuit of the 1920s. It was popular during the 1890s to learn to swim and dive in the floating baths around Sydney Harbour. Kellerman was encouraged to swim to overcome rickets, a disease caused by a deficiency of Vitamin D, learning to swim at the famous Farm Cove baths run by the Cavill family, who are recognised for developing the Australian crawl stroke, a precursor to the internationally accepted freestyle stroke (Hellmrich 1929). Finding a freedom in water that she not experienced on land, Kellerman developed ‘mermaid fever’ (The Original Mermaid 2004) and, by the age of 16, held the women’s record for swimming 100 yards in 1 minute 22 seconds, in addition to the mile championship of New South

Wales swim which she completed in 33 minutes 49 seconds (Walsh 1983: 548). Kellerman regularly competed – and won – against men in races and was encouraged to train and proved capable of swimming long distances. Swimming historian Murray Phillips points out that this is one of the few sports where women could compete equally with men (The Original Mermaid 2004). During this period Kellerman became a skilled diver and was able to dive from 40 feet, increasing to heights of over 92 feet – a first for a woman. Kellerman enjoyed performing and when her family suffered financial difficulties and moved to Melbourne, she was able to support them by swimming record distances for a woman of between five and 10 miles. She extended her repertoire to include performing underwater displays at the Melbourne Aquarium with its fishy inhabitants. Here she developed her mermaid persona through water ballet sequences that she continued to refine throughout her career. Sydney’s ‘swimming elite’, including the Cavill brothers and Snowy Baker, who was one of the best divers in the country and who would later teach Johnny Weissmuller to dive, believed that Kellerman had the potential to be the first woman to swim the English Channel. There was to be a commemorative Channel swim to celebrate the original crossing by Englishman, Captain Webb in 1873 (Gibson and Firth 2005: 10) and, with their encouragement and the support of her father, she travelled to London in 1905 to try her luck. Kellerman swam the Thames from Putney Bridge to Blackwell, a distance of 26 miles, as a publicity stunt and her notoriety increased when the *Daily Mirror* sponsored her to swim the English Channel (Walsh 1983). She made the first of three unsuccessful attempts on August 24, 1905 and it would be another 21 years before the first woman, Gertrude Ederle, from the United States would succeed.

Kellerman was a natural self-promoter and the *Daily Mirror*, dubbing Kellerman the ‘Australian Mermaid’, engaged her to undertake a series of beach swims averaging 45 miles per week. The *Daily Mirror* (publication commenced 1903), was in a unique position as the first pictorial newspaper in England to provide photographic images of Kellerman’s extraordinary swimming feats. Documenting these events ensured her celebrity status and exposed the public to the natural female form in a one-piece bathing suit. The newspaper continued to exploit her popularity, encouraging Kellerman to set new records for a female swimmer. Swimming 24 miles from Dover to Margate, she broke all previous records and was greeted by the largest crowd gathered to support a swimming event to date (Gibson and Firth 2005: 25-30). She had become a novelty and a number of swimming clubs around England were now interested in engaging her to perform for their members. A performance was arranged at the exclusive Bath Club for the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, (Queen Victoria’s third son). It was deemed unacceptable for her to appear before members of the royal family in a man’s bathing suit, which was her standard attire for

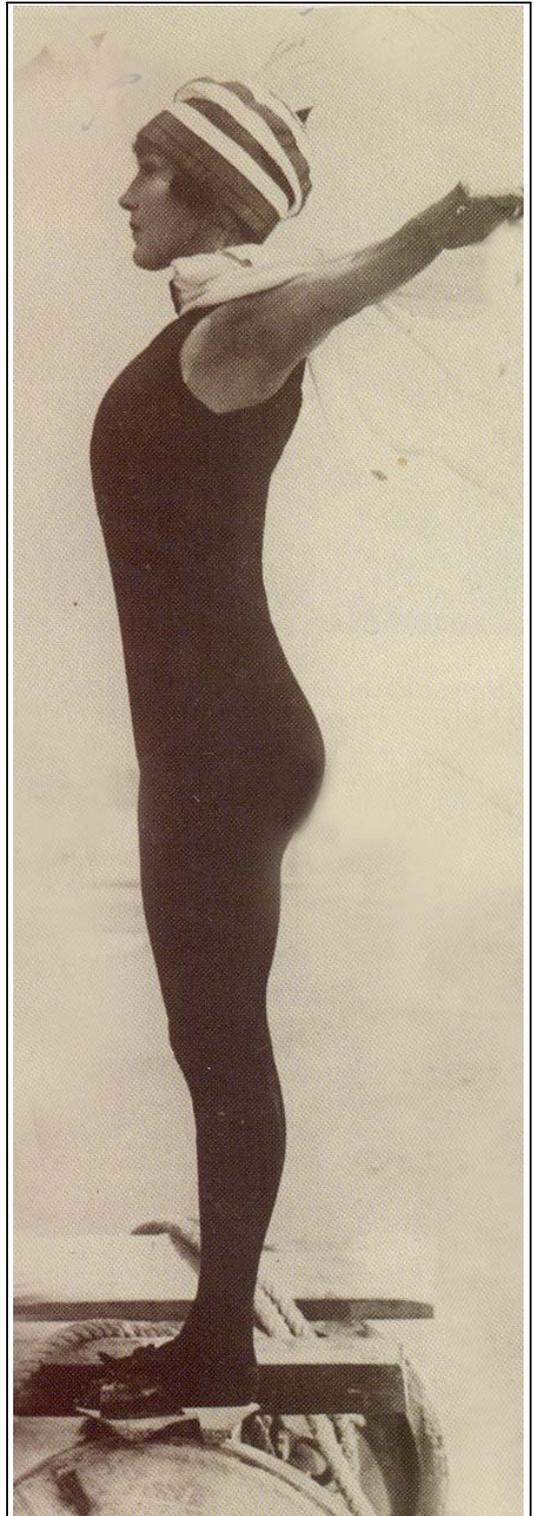


Figure 2-7
Kellerman's signature
one-piece swimsuit

both distance swimming and diving; however, she had no intention of donning the heavy and cumbersome garments of a conventional woman's bathing costume and accordingly devised a method of retaining a streamlined design by stitching a pair of stockings to the legs of a man's one-piece swimsuit. The effect was striking and Kellerman created her trademark style that is consistently attributed by costume historians as the inception of 20th century swimwear for women.

In 1905, Kellerman travelled to Europe to compete in an annual swim along the River Seine. She was the only woman competing against 17 men and placed third in the race. Returning to London, she was hired to perform a 12-minute aquatic spectacle at the Hippodrome in a large water tank as part of the variety programme, which was a combination of circus and variety acts. In 1906, Kellerman accepted an offer to appear at the White City Amusement Park in Chicago, a forerunner to contemporary theme parks. Her act included a variety of dives and swimming techniques that proved popular with the crowds. Her next engagement was at the Wonderland Amusement Park at Revere Beach in Boston and it was here that the profile of the one-piece bathing suit gained momentum. Kellerman was allegedly arrested at Revere Beach for indecency in 1907 while preparing to swim along the coastline in 'her Australian man's bathers' (Gibson and Firth 2005). The publicity surrounding this event guaranteed Kellerman and the one-piece suit had the public's interest. She was acquitted on the condition that both before and after performing she wore a concealing cloak. The media interest surrounding her sporting achievements and physical prowess came to the attention of a Harvard professor Dr Dudley Sargent, who was conducting the first research project into physical fitness in women. The criterion was someone who radiated health and physical beauty and he had measured over 10,000

participants using the measurements of the Venus de Milo as a guideline. In 1908, he declared that Kellerman most closely resembled this mythical beauty resulting in her being named as the 'Perfect Woman'.

A season ensued at the New York Hippodrome. Vaudeville provided a vehicle for her to develop a romantic and phantasmagorical water act unlike other underwater performers who were kitsch and freakish. For example, other acts included reading a newspaper, eating a banana or smoking a cigar (The Original Mermaid 2004). Kellerman's act was magical, artistic, and ideal entertainment for the new urban mass audience with her allure heightened by costumes that left little to the imagination. It assisted in disseminating the ideal of a natural body, which in turn contributed to the perception of swimwear as fashionable and desirable as well as functional. She pioneered a form of active glamour by exemplifying the benefits of physical pursuits and encouraging participation by all.

It was a transitional period for the notion of the ideal feminine beauty. Victorian and Edwardian women had aspired to achieve womanly curves of full proportions, a plumpness that was accomplished through a hearty appetite and then sculpted into shape with body contouring corsets. In a study of ideals of feminine beauty at this time, fashion theorist and historian Valerie Steele refers to Baroness Staffe and her 1892 book, 'The Lady's Dressing-Room', that describes an unacceptable female figure as: 'An angular form and a want of flesh that displays the skeleton under the skin are considered a disgrace in a woman' (Steele 1985: 221-2). By the early 1900s, this was changing with the interest in health and the pursuit of active sports. She comments that the 'ideal modern beauty' was more an image than the reality. The

body cannot change radically to embrace a new aesthetic instantaneously and this could explain why the design of fashion did not evolve as quickly as the modern ideal. It would take time to modify those shapely curves into a more muscular and lean frame through diet and exercise. During the 19th century, women could rely on their undergarments to mould their bodies to the accepted form and to conceal their imperfections. The more body revealing fashions that would emerge in the 20th century would be less forgiving and required the body itself to provide the necessary structural silhouette.

Kellerman had the advantage of early exposure to physical culture in Australia and was exceptionally fit. Her body represented a new sporty physicality and through her innovative invention and promotion of the one-piece bathing suit, she led women and the fashion market towards styles that would reflect this modern look. Kellerman was a visionary who was determined to help women throw away their corsets. She gave a series of lectures in cities across the United States and Germany where she extolled the virtues of exercise and a healthy diet to shape their bodies naturally. Her 1912 self-published first book, 'The Body Beautiful', promised that through a series of simple daily exercises in the home and a sensible diet, every woman could achieve a level of physical beauty that was essential to the wearing of a body hugging one-piece bathing suit with confidence.

A new medium that could disseminate these modern ideals was the moving picture which would supersede vaudeville. Kellerman would become Hollywood's first 'swashbuckling heroine' (Gibson and Firth 2005) in a series of movies that included the first movie to cost a million dollars to produce: the 1916 'Daughter of the Gods'.

It was considered a masterpiece at the time due to the creative and artistic cinematography, which was enhanced by Kellerman's daring and exotic costumes. The homage to her in *Motion Picture Magazine* in 1917 reflects the success of her initiative:

Daughter of the Gods! We're in thy debt!
Annette, Annette!
To conquer weakness nor to frette,
Until each obstacle is mette
Thy triumph, dear, is one safe bette,
Annette, Annette!
(cited by Gibson and Firth 2005: 127)



Figure 2-8
Kellerman's Star: Walk of Fame, Hollywood

Kellerman clearly influenced the evolution of the modern swimsuit and the separate design branches that emerged as a result of the need for functional swimwear in competitive swimming, active-sportswear, or the desire for a bathing suit that created glamour in the form of sophisticated leisurewear. She embodied a new aesthetic for the 20th century, expressing a beauty that predicated athleticism – a natural, unaffected beauty suited to bodily spectacle. The Kellerman legacy includes the early inclusion and acceptance of women in long-distance swimming and the functional swimsuit it required. She extended the terrain, feminising what was initially a male garment, creating exotic swimming costumes for use in underwater ballets that influenced the direction of the Hollywood glamour bathing suit of the 1940s and '50s, and inspired Esther Williams to dazzle in a series of Busby Berkeley aquatic musicals, including the biography of Kellerman's life, 'Million Dollar Mermaid'. Through an expressive and creative style, Kellerman influenced the evolution of the modern bathing suit and represented a modern influence on the fashion system through the

democratic inclusion of the inventive individual. She communicated fashionable ideals of accessible active glamour to female audiences through performances in vaudeville and early silent movies. By the 1960s, water ballet had morphed into synchronised swimming which Hartley observes is ‘not only sport but also spectacle’ (Hartley 2006: 137), not unlike the water ballet sequences through which Kellerman had made a strenuous physical activity look feminine, graceful, and effortless.

In the last five years, Annette Kellerman’s story has been told through a biography and a documentary. Recovering our forgotten mermaid coincides with a growing interest in the influence of sport and sportswear on fashion in the 20th century and the role of the modern woman in challenging gender stereotypes and embracing clothes that had been the provenance of menswear (Chadwick and Latimer 2003; Warner 2006; Roberts 2002). Kellerman is central to this study and further analysis of her contribution to fashion, film, and celebrity in the 20th century will clarify and support this study.

Kellerman was both a global identity and an Australian. This raises the question:

Does Kellerman’s participation in shaping the modern swimsuit represent the only contribution made by an Australian or Australia to the evolution of the swimsuit?



2.5 Australia and the Modern Swimsuit

2.5.1 Individuals: More than One

Kellerman was not Australia’s only aquatic export in the early 1900s. Beatrice Kerr, referred to as the ‘Forgotten Mermaid’, was the Australasian Amateur Swimming Champion in 1905. A consummate swimmer and diver, it is reported that she performed the ‘show stopping Monte Cristo Fire Bag Trick’, which entailed being fastened in a canvas bag saturated with petroleum, set alight, and thrown into the water. Within 10 seconds she would spectacularly surface in a spangled costume (Nelson 1991: 74-76). Kerr followed Kellerman to England in 1906 determined to challenge Kellerman to a series of diving and swimming races. Kellerman declined and retired from competitive swimming soon after. Historian Angela Woollacott maintains that both ‘Kerr and Kellerman’s careers were built on sensationalism, based both on their remarkable physical accomplishments and their daringly revealing swimming costumes’ (Woollacott 2001: 192). Together these women established an international reputation for Australian female swimmers and promoted

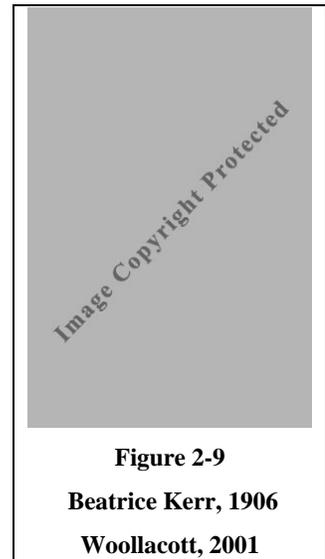
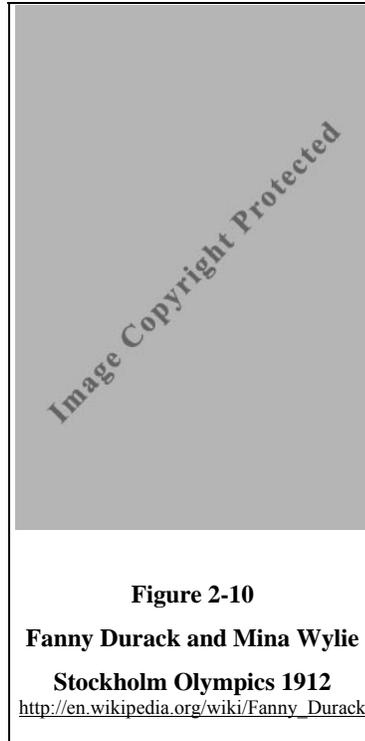


Figure 2-9
Beatrice Kerr, 1906
Woollacott, 2001

the pursuit of active sport and acceptance of the one-piece swimsuit. Kellerman and Kerr represented performers who had transcended the sporting arena by providing entertainment and novelty acts.

Although Australian women were competing in more functional and practical swimsuits in swimming races and carnivals, acceptance of revealing swimsuits in public spaces was far from seamless. Rose Scott, early feminist and vice-president of the Sydney Ladies' Swimming Club (SLSC), was a firm believer in women's rights to physical freedom to engage in competitive sports, however, with the proviso that it occurred in a segregated male-free space. The formation of a central controlling body for women's swimming similar to the existing organisation, (New South Wales Amateur Swimming Association), the New South Wales Ladies' Amateur Swimming Association in 1905, led to a bitter division with the SLSC, with the latter suggesting 'there was not the need for the women to become "like men", that is, to become seriously competitive' (Raszeja 1992: 64). Scott's insistence that public competition 'posed a threat to the desirable images of femininity – modesty and moral inviolability' resulted in a return to the private sphere (: 62). The upside was women were allowed to wear streamlined swimsuits that led to swimmers such as Fanny Durack and Mina Wylie setting world record times. The private-public debate escalated as the 1912 Olympics drew closer, and a decision was made to allow Durack and Wylie to attend and compete for their country. The most controversial aspect was their scantily dressed appearance in front of men in public; this led to Scott resigning in protest from the SLSC and NSWLASA.

Durack and Wylie were elite athletes who had the honour of being the first two Australian women to represent their country at the first Olympic Games to include women in the swimming events in 1912. They won the gold and silver medals respectively in the 100m freestyle race. Warner reports that in the first modern Olympic Games held in 1896, women were not allowed to compete in any events, and at the 1900 Games there were a meagre 12 female athletes decreasing to eight at the 1904 Games. By 1908, the number of women had quadrupled, with 36 competing.



Tennis, golf, and archery were the first sports women were permitted to participate in, with officials believing the fairer sex should be confined to playing sport for recreation and pleasure (Warner 2006: 84-89). Raszeja notes that individual sports such as tennis and golf were ‘largely elite, fashionable pastimes’, whereas swimming was the first sport to avoid being labelled as either a suitable activity for lasses awaiting marriageable age or a ‘masculinising activity’ (Raszeja 1992: 6-7).

The 1912 Games saw a change in the number of women competing and it may have been the result of the ‘more enlightened views’ in the Scandinavian countries. It is significant that at these Games no American women competed (1920 would be their first Games for swimming), and it was the Australian contingent who won the women’s swimming event. It suggests that Australians were ahead of their counterparts as a result of a progressive approach to women engaging in swimming as a competitive sport and the early adoption of swimsuits that were skirtless, sleeveless

and similar in styling to those worn by men at this time. According to Warner American women did not dare to wear this style of costume in their home country much before the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp (Warner 2006: 96-97). Raszeja reports the 'Stockholm affair marked the beginning of a new phase' for Australian women swimmers – 'with champions lauded and praised by the press and public for their contributions to the image of the nation' (:74).

2.5.2 Australian Beach Culture: Early Days

From its beginnings as a penal colony at the periphery of the West, Australia evolved into a nation with a unique identity, 'a nation of swimmers with an enthusiasm for sport and the beach' (The Original Mermaid 2004). Australians embraced the temperate climate and pursued outdoor activities such as swimming and bathing from the early 1800s. Australian Midge Farrelly, a surfer who won the first world surfing championship in 1964, describes our colony in a documentary tracking the swimsuit's journey in Australia, *Nothing to Hide*:

We may have been the descendents of white outcasts from England ... they threw us in a wonderful place ... in Australia. They consigned us to heaven and they stayed in hell (Rymer 1996).

In this heavenly environ, major cities and towns grew close to the coastline and beaches were accessible to all. In a study of the development of body culture in Australia, Isobel Crombie observes that although beaches are a 'generic zone', Australian culture has embraced the beach as an inherent part of our national identity. J.S. McDonald, director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales (1931) reflected on the utopian qualities of the Australian coast and the physical beauty of these paradise dwellers as beaches inhabited by Australian gods and goddesses (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 188). A society had evolved that was driven by the

hedonism of sunbaking and surfing, aspiring to freedom and a level of leisure pursuits that had been unknown in previous centuries. A quaint article in *The Home*, an Australian quarterly magazine published from 1920-1942, expresses this aspect of Australia's cultural investment in the beach.

Getting rich. Australians know exactly what they would do if, by dint of cutting out a surf and working one hour longer every day, they became rich. They would knock off working one hour earlier, put on a well-worn bathing suit and go for a surf. Why toil to get rich in order to do exactly the same thing that you are doing now, not-rich? Why get all hot and bothered over More Production when the thing you want is produced by the Pacific, cost-free? (Curlewis 1929: 31-32)

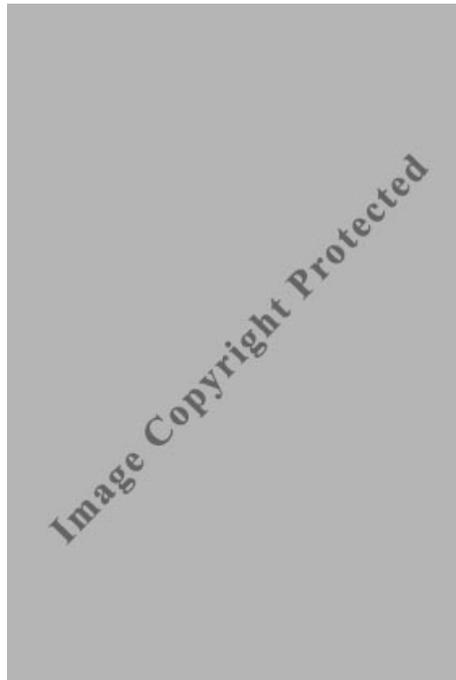
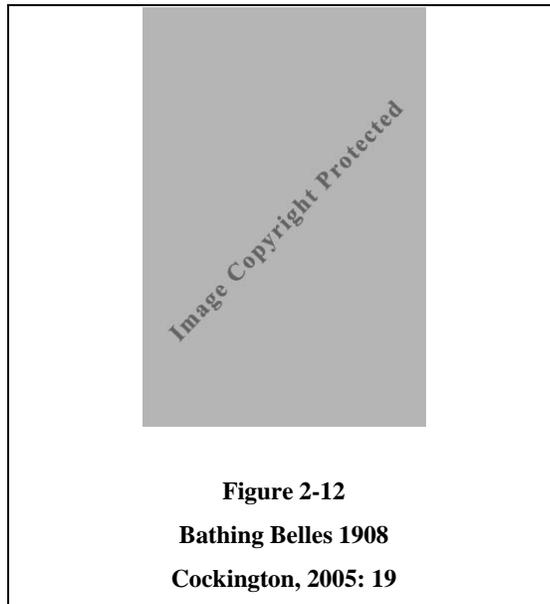


Figure 2-11
'The Growth of Culture in Australia –
A Browning Society on a Sydney Beach' 1908
Woollacott, 2001:190

Australia's national identity has been shaped by Australians embracing beach and surf culture with zest. Combined with a sporting history in competitive and long distance swimming, it is reflective of an element of modernity: leisure. Figure 2-11 from the

Lone Hand, an Australian magazine that celebrated the bush and beach as integral to the national character (Woollacott 2001: 189), portrays perceived characteristics of modern Australians as relaxed, beach-loving folk who are comfortable in their own skin, lacking any false modesty or Victorian conservatism. Although many Australians at the beginning of the 20th century were swimming at baths and beaches and competitive female swimmers wore the same streamlined bathing suits as men, there still existed a social Puritanism and not all swimmers wore the more functional suit as can be seen in figure 2-12, which depicts women in more conventional bathing costumes.



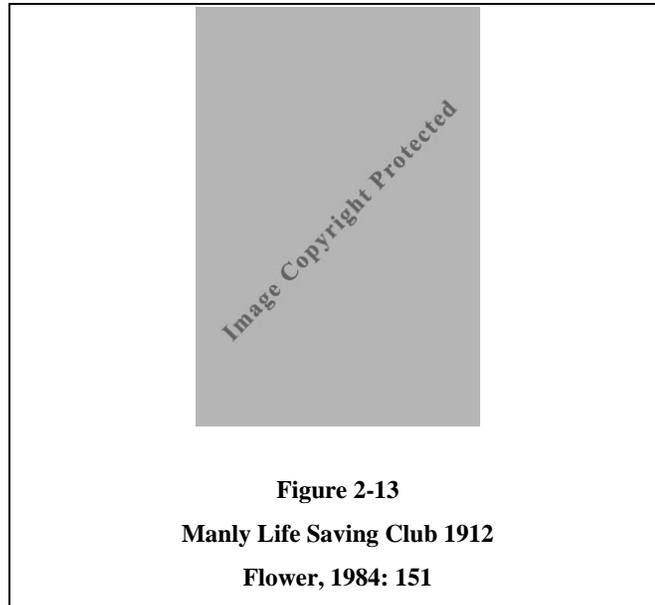
The battle to expose the body had started in 1833 when the New South Wales government passed an Act stating that bathing was prohibited ‘near to or within view of any public wharf, quay or bridge, street, road or other public resort within the limits of towns ... between the hours of six in the morning and eight o’clock in the evening.’ As offenders incurred a fine of £1, most citizens observed the Act. Veronica Raszeja,

in a thesis researching the rise of women's competitive swimming in Sydney, reports that by the mid 1800s the combination of shorter working hours, increased leisure, (more than their 'British counterparts'), and a burgeoning population were triggers for the development of swimming baths in Sydney. The baths were segregated and provided women with the opportunity to pursue their interest in aquatic activities with relative freedom from conventional social constraints and by the 1870s there are records of competitive women's swimming events that were open to the public. The swimming costume worn by these women evolved similarly to the men's and Raszeja posits that, unlike the hindering bulky costumes worn by women engaging in land sports such as hockey, tennis, bicycling, and athletics, swimmers were able to circumvent social dress codes due to the 'long acceptance of the sport and its required need for a specialised form of dress'. An added advantage was that unlike land sports which resulted in sweat and associated notions of strength and muscularity, spectators would not have been aware of the physical stamina or effort involved in competitive races and the swimmers 'retained a feminine image of gracefulness and non-exertion'. In 1902, the first New South Wales State Ladies' Swimming Carnival was held at the St George Baths in Redfern 'in the presence of the trousered sex' and swimmers including Annette Kellerman received the support and admiration of the crowd (Raszeja 1992: 31-55). This was the year that beach bans on daylight swimming were lifted, although there is evidence that there was 'a relaxation of the rules in the last decade of the 19th century and ... many sinful folk of Sydney town were defiantly breaking curfews' (Cockington 2005: 16). William Gocher, editor and publisher of the *Manly and North Sydney News*, is credited with influencing the Sydney councils' decision to rescind the by-law through bathing in daylight hours after publicly

announcing his attention to do so, and by 1903 Sydneysiders were legally free to engage in mixed bathing at the many stunning local beaches.

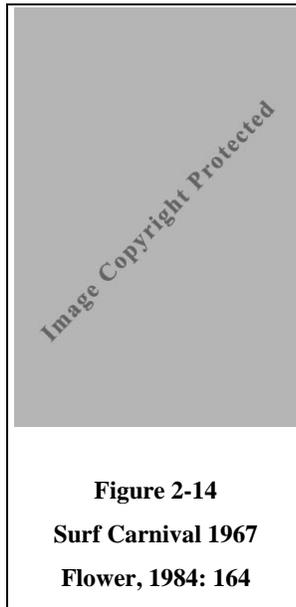
Social and fashion commentators James Cockington and Alexandra Joel refer to the continuing battle fought by Australians to bare their bodies in public and the resistance to the 'Mrs Grundy' element in society (Joel 1998; Cockington 2005). As early as 1907 there were a series of public protests resisting laws that councils tried to enforce, which required both men and women to wear a skirt from the hips to the knee to ensure modesty was preserved. Referred to as the 'Bondi Burlesque' (*The Great Aussie Cossie* 2007), local men paraded in embroidered ladies' petticoats, ballet skirts, and sarongs mocking the establishment and demanding the right to wear functional swimwear, eventually prompting the local councils to rescind the laws. By 1911 the 'Australian Surf Suit' was the standard costume and was thick enough to be worn without V trunks, also known as 'athletes drawers ... bikini swimbriefs that were also popular among runners and circus performers' (Craik 1994: 138). In 1912, a Surf Bathing Committee was formed to report to the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales on the status of beach culture and resulted in a recommendation that bathers would be required to cover their bathing costumes with 'an overcoat, mackintosh, or other sufficient wrapper or clothes' when mixing with non-bathers on and off the beach (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 178). The beach population chose to ignore this ruling and continued to enjoy the liberating and sensual pleasures of the beach experience.

2.5.3 Surf Lifesavers



As the beach was colonised and popularised, there was an increase in the number of drownings at unpatrolled beaches and it led to the establishment of surf lifesaving clubs. Australians were at the forefront of this movement globally, organising local clubs initially at Bondi and Bronte in Sydney in 1906-1907, spreading to other states and territories over the next two decades (Lencek and Bosker 1998: 179). The lifeguard encapsulated the physical god-like beauty J.S. MacDonald referred to as model sportsmen whose activities were aligned to a regimented, athletic endeavour as opposed to leisure and recreation. Crombie observes that the lifesaving movement was an egalitarian movement whose members were drawn from all social classes and ‘one of the last major national types to be added to the catalogue of Australian icons’ (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 85-91). Women were not encouraged to join their ranks, as clearly demonstrated when Edie Kieft, the first

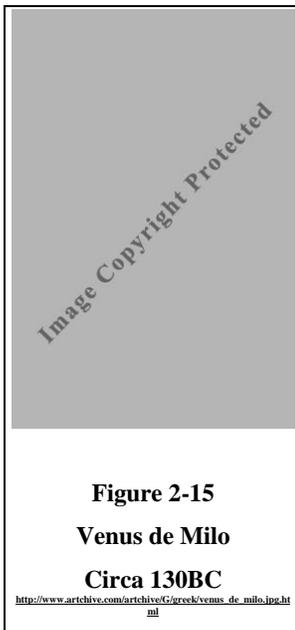
woman to qualify for the Surf Bronze Medallion in 1923, was not awarded a medal due to her gender. It was not until 1980 that women were eligible to become active patrolling members of surf lifesaving clubs (*Surf Lifesaving: Our History* 2007).



The early ‘soldiers of the sea’ were a motley crew who wore V trunks over one-piece swimsuit similar to those worn by competitive swimmers (Figure 2-13). Over the next two decades, the surf lifesaving clubs developed their own unique costumes and held regular carnivals that provided an opportunity for them to display their physical prowess through surf and swimming skills, while baring their Adonis-like bodies in the march-past to produce a healthy form of bodily spectacle. The costumes worn by the surf lifesavers at a 1967 surf carnival in Figure 2-14 are similar in design to those worn by their predecessors in the 1930s and represent a stylistic stability and

continuity. Woollacott suggests that, ‘Australian women’s very bodies came to represent the modern, through physical fitness that the Australian climate supposedly nurtured and Australian culture valorized’ (Woollacott 2001: 188). Through their diverse aquatic activities in a garment for the modern world, Kellerman, Kerr, Durack, and Wylie represent the modern Australian woman and surf lifesavers, the modern Australian man, and the Australian body itself had become a symbol of modernity.

2.5.4 Venus de Milo: Beauty and its Measure

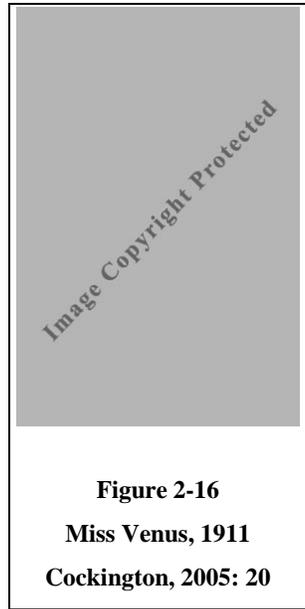


Through associations with the aesthetic purity of Greek classicism and the mythological goddess of love and beauty, Venus, in the early 1900s, an emphasis was placed on the artistic nature of women’s physical beauty, minimising accusations of sexualising or commodifying women. In 1908, Annette Kellerman was declared the Perfect Woman with her measurements compared to those of the Venus de Milo as the benchmark of perfection in the female form. Her body was the result of healthful physical activities and a wholesome diet and she was a source of

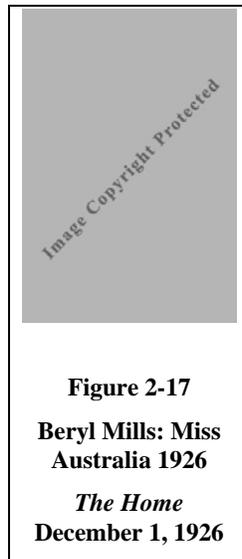
encouragement to women to shape and tone their bodies with the intention that they could reveal their bodies with confidence in both clothing and the swimsuit without the aid of corsets. The idea that women may be measured and then judged as beautiful flourished and led to the rise of the modern beauty contest. Caroline Daly’s research on the modern body and leisure in New Zealand revealed there were local beauty

contests in Australia and New Zealand being held from as early as 1906 that were part of an international trend. Magazines like Sydney-based *Lone Hand* and local newspapers both advertised for contestants and reported the results of competitions and pageants (Daley 2003: 84-99). A one-off Miss Australia contest was sponsored through *Lone Hand* in 1908, with entrants from New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland competing for the title. The winner was Victorian, Alice Buckridge. According to Saunders and Ustinoff in a study of Australian beauty and the Miss Australia Quest, their primary goal was ‘to attract customers: whether they were newspaper readers,

patrons at an amusement venue, or visitors to a country fair’ (Saunders, Ustinoff, and National Museum of Australia. 2005: 4). Early competitors’ measurements were compared to both the Venus de Milo and women like Kellerman by a panel of experts, and the winners could revel in their new fairy tale status as the most beautiful girl locally or nationally. Held in 1911, the first Australian Venus competition displays a body conscious, figure-hugging swimsuit that focuses on the body as a site of fashionable construct, a new take on bodily spectacle. Miss Venus does appear to conform to the S-bend shape popular in the Belle Époque, which would suggest a corset was worn underneath the bathing suit to ensure an ideal silhouette. The beauty contest extended the swimsuit’s terrain and acceptance of body exposure and by the 1920s was socially less daring, with the bathing suit segment a prerequisite for contestants in most pageants and contests, including the first official Miss Australia competition in 1926.



Beryl Mills was lauded as a fine example of Australian womanhood. She was physically fit, a competitive swimmer, and university educated. In short she possessed both beauty and brains. A key focus of any competition was the quest for a perfect woman and, although the Miss Australia Quest stressed the importance of education, no entrant who reached the finals was unattractive. Contestants such as Mills ‘represented the kind of modern femininity that Australians could proudly claim and defend ... not just physical beauty, but also youthful vigour and vitality (Saunders, Ustinoff, and National Museum of Australia. 2005: 11).



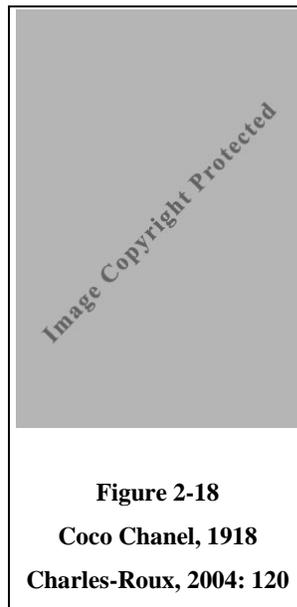
Throughout the Miss Australia Quest’s history, the swimsuit category has been a source of debate and excluded from some of the pageants, a cursory attempt to focus on other aspects of the Miss Australia entrants’ qualities, in particular fundraising for charities. However, in the early stages the swimsuit ‘was used to determine the important aspect of “beauty of figure”’ (: 73), and ‘literally embodies the modern well-bred young Australian woman (: 21). 2000 saw the demise of the Miss Australia Awards and the title of Miss Australia is now associated with global beauty contests Miss Universe and Miss World. Australian Jennifer Hawkins was crowned Miss

Universe in 2004, continuing the celebration of body, beauty, and feminine spectacle packaged in a swimsuit.

Measuring up to an ideal female form is not confined to beauty contests and in 1989, Australian über fashion model Elle MacPherson was dubbed ‘the body’ by *Time Magazine* and, arguably the clothing most associated with MacPherson is the swimsuit. She has been a regular in the swimsuit issue of *Sports Illustrated*, with her body and its measurements the subject of numerous fan sites and magazine articles – an ideal for other women to aspire to and for men to admire. Closer to Amazonian than waif in proportions, MacPherson like Kellerman nearly a hundred years ago is individualistic yet distinctly Australian and subject to public judgments about her physical assets. Whether beauty contestant or model the essential ingredient is captured by Esther Williams’ comment: ‘the gene pool, the best pool of them all’ (Morton 2003).

2.5.5 The Swimsuit as Fashionable

Around 1918, Coco Chanel, who is attributed with creating fashionable sportswear for women, is recorded as sunbaking and inventing the tan (Charles-Roux 2004). By comparison there is evidence that Australians had already embraced the suntan and in 1908 it was reported in Melbourne’s *Punch* that, “‘the browner the better’ was admired north of the border” (Booth 2001: 20). Chanel popularised the suntan in the 1920s, but it was not her innovation and it is clear from this demure photo of her in 1918 (Figure 2-18) that her bathing costume reflects a conservatism, supporting the opinion that the French did not directly influence the early stylistic evolution of the swimsuit.

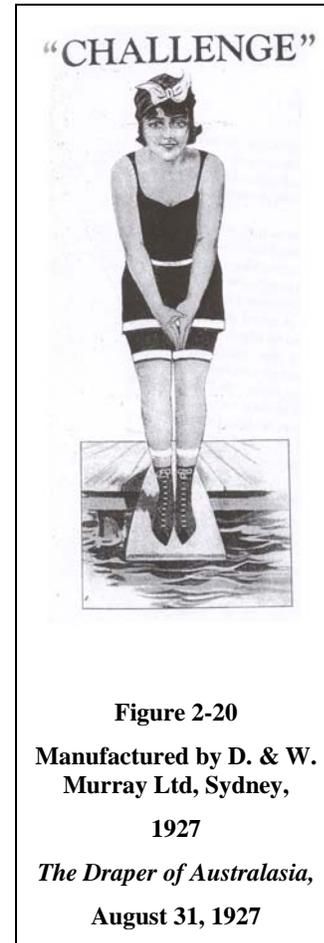
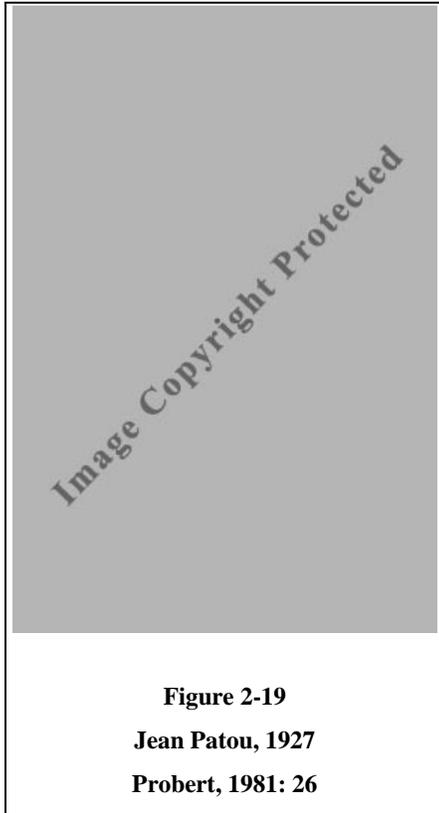


The swimsuit was neither a Parisian or French innovation nor initially fashionable. Its evolution is linked to the need for practical and functional garments for aquatic pursuits, in particular swimming. According to Steele (1985: 223), ‘the vogue for physical culture, however (which was much less noticeable in France) had little direct or immediate effect on the design of fashion’. The swimsuit primarily targeted the young and physically fit, with the body playing an important role in creating the image. Sociologist Diana Crane’s research into the social significance of clothing examines the style of clothing French women wore in the early 20th century, noting that ‘the mature woman was the fashion leader for whom fashions were created’. She contrasts this with women in the United States and England who were athletic and inclined to wearing sporty clothing, expressing a greater freedom and independence than ‘their French counterparts’ (Crane 2000: 107-108). Steele and Crane’s findings

support the concept that the development of the swimsuit was influenced by nations other than France. In investigating the identity of the Australian woman, Woollacott found them to be women who embraced physical fitness and sporting activities (Woollacott 2001: 157, 188-191). The notion that Australian women epitomised the modern outdoor woman and played an important role in the acceptance of the swimsuit by fashion leaders in Europe and the United States will be explored further in this thesis.

By the 1920s, Parisian designers Sonia Delaunay, Jeanne Lanvin, Jean Patou, and Elsa Schiaparelli were designing glamorous beachwear for the rich and famous who frequented the beach resorts of Deauville and Biarritz. In particular, Patou, like Chanel, worked in jersey fabrics and is remembered for his contribution to sportswear and swimsuits – ‘clothes for the modern woman’ (Callan 1998: 179-80), albeit a wealthy variety. He is remembered for being one of the first to brand his product with a signature logo; swimsuits and beach pyjamas embellished with his decoratively embroidered initials. An additional innovation was calling the Patou boutiques ‘Sports Corner’ offering the elite clientele garments for tennis, swimming and golf (Kennedy 2007: 45-50). Patou was a visionary who realised the advantages of the sport-fashion fusion. The accompanying text to Figure 2-19 reflects a general direction swimwear was taking towards the end of the decade: ‘More and more skin on display: the body on show at the smartest beaches clad in the newest knitted, clinging fabrics (Probert 1981: 27). Probert continues that, ‘Haute Couture began to take a leading role in designing new styles for all beachwear: a role played earlier in the 20th century by personal dressmakers and large stores’. Figure 2-20, an advertisement for a bathing costume in *The Draper of Australasia*, August 1927, illustrates that this style of

costume was already available for the mass market in Australia and, as the transmission of fashion information in the 1920s was not immediate, it could not possibly be an imitation of Parisian styling.



Although these bathing suits have common stylistic features the design intent behind them reflects different places and people. The Patou is worn with confidence and elegance, accessorised with an equally elegant canine. It is possible that the wearer may never actually engage in strenuous aquatic pursuits, just retire to a sun chair with a glass of champagne: the Parisian at leisure. By comparison, the Australian cutie is modest and sporty, preparing to dive in, an active outdoor girl at a local beach or public baths. These images describe a stylistic approach that is influenced at a

national level by participants and participation sites, reflecting the diversity of fashion through how it is worn. American swimwear historians Gideon Bosker and Lena Lencěk, credit a number of key knitting mills on the West Coast of America that transferred their attention from underwear production to the development and manufacture of affordable swimwear from the 1920s with ‘popularizing fashion for the beach’ (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 44). The companies included Jantzen, Catalina, and Cole of California, which were indeed high profile swimwear manufacturers and which no doubt influenced the burgeoning local American market and, in the ensuing decades, extended their market share to include export to Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

This prompts the question:

What is the Australian contribution to the evolution of the modern swimsuit?

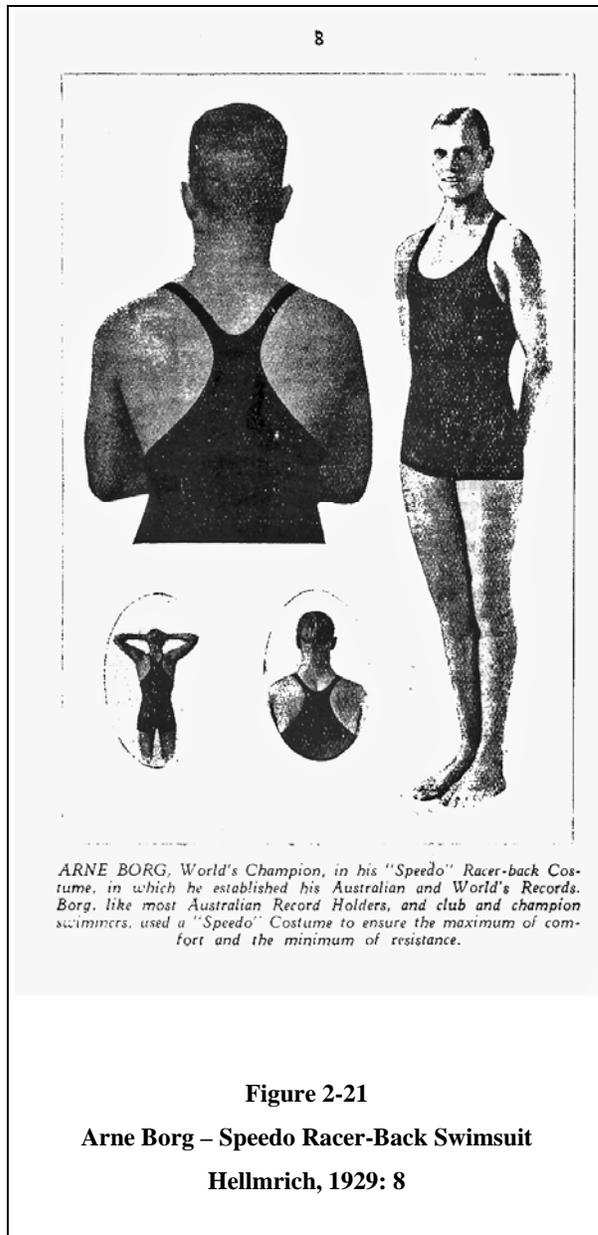
2.5.6 Challenge, Racer, Sprinter, Rocket, Champion

By the 1920s, people in Europe and America flocked to the beach in their thousands, enjoying a new found freedom to frolic and play in the sea. In Australia, a national obsession was spawned (Rymer 1996). The beach symbolised a youthful, body-conscious nation and the swimwear was suitably relaxed and functional. Records from David Jones and Mark Foy’s catalogues and *The Draper of Australasia*, an Australian trade journal, show Australia was manufacturing swimwear from the early 1900s. These early swimwear producers offered both one-piece and the Canadian two-piece bathing costumes for men in unshrinkable wool, with the option of cotton or silk for racing. For women, they offered the choice of both woven bathing costumes in the

dress and bloomer combination or the Canadian two-piece knitted style. There is evidence that by the 1920s there were a number of local knitting mills that were producing fashionable bathing suits, including Metropolitan Knitting and Hosiery Co., T. R. Hill Ltd, D. W. Murray Ltd, and Australian Knitting Mills. Early in this decade they did not have specific label names, carrying only the name of the manufacturer;

however by 1927 brand names started to materialise, many with an Australian flavour: Challenge; Penguin; Golden Fleece; Kookaburra; Top Dog; and Dolphin.

1928 was the birth of the iconic Australian swimwear label, Speedo. The company introduced an innovative design in 1929 called the Racer-Back swimsuit. The Racer-Back reduced the back width and centralised the straps to ensure they did not slide off the shoulder, essential for the serious swimmer. The design was developed for the Australian Olympic team and was adopted by teams from other nations. Speedo has continued to be a leader in



the performance swimwear market and 22 swimming teams at the Barcelona

Olympics in 1992 wore Speedo costumes (Craik 1994: 147). The needs of competitive swimming were driving design and influencing swimwear styles for the wider public.

The Speedo Racer-Back for women was approved by the New South Wales Amateur Swimming Association for 'lady competitors'; however, in the advertisement for Speedo in Figure 2-22, wearers are informed that the Speedo swimsuit should be viewed as a fashionable garment stating that, 'in addition to its features of utility, the smart shape and attractive appearance of the SPEEDO will recommend it to the modern girl' (Hellmrich 1929: 52). This style of swimsuit was designed as performance sportswear; however, dependent on the participation site and the wearer, the swimsuit could be a fashionable ensemble.



Figure 2-22

Speedo for the modern girl 1929

Hellmrich: 52

The 1930s was the decade that saw technological advances in textiles for the swimsuit with the introduction of Lastex, manufactured and patented by the Adamson Brothers Company, a subsidiary of the U.S. Rubber Co. It was a rubber yarn that, unlike its predecessors, had considerably more stretch and control and gave designers the flexibility to create more figure-hugging and daring swimsuits (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 63). Australians did not delay in embracing Lastex with distributors for the

Dunlop Perdriau Rubber Co. importing the 'Miracle Yarn' from 1934 (The Miracle Yarn 1934).

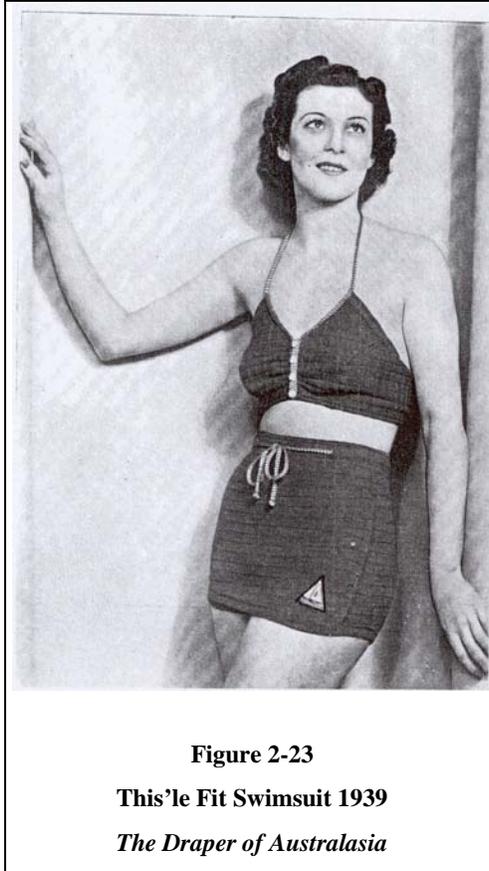
The 1920s had seen the phasing out of dress-style bathing costumes and an androgynous one-piece swimsuit for all. By late in the decade and in the early 1930s, the trend was to expose more of the body through cut-outs in the back, under the arms, and sides of the swimsuits. The new styling is the subject of Kenneth Slessor's 1933 poem 'Backless Betty of Bondi' and describes the enthusiasm for the shrinking swimsuit and its wearers:

Oh, make the great Pacific dry,
And drive the council speechless,
Remove the breakers from Bondi –
The beach, and leave us beachless,
The fair, the bare, the naked-backed,
The beer, the pier, the jetty –

TAKE ANYTHING AT ALL,
IN FACT,
BUT LEAVE,
OH LEAVE US BETTY!
(Slessor 1983: 32)

Public acceptance of body-baring swimsuits that were less daring than many of Kellerman's costumes in the early 1900s was tempered by a resistance to men baring their chests by local governments. Many styles were designed for easy roll down, with Jantzen creating the Topper model, a zipped two-piece which allowed for the top section to be removed (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 70-71), as did Melbourne manufacturer Paterson Laing & Bruce Limited for their Black Lance label in 1934. Local council regulations had not been altered since the 1907 skirt scuffle and in 1936 Eric Spooner, the Minister for Local Government in New South Wales, determined to enforce compliance of men not baring their chests or nipples. There was resistance,

public protest, a stalemate and beach inspectors refused to enforce the by-law (Cockington 2005: 37-44).



During this period swimsuits reflected the sporty beach lifestyle of many coastal-dwelling Australians, with names such as Speed Cut, Surf Cut, Surf Suits, Racer, Rocket, Sprinter, and Champion. Women's swimsuits had so many portholes it was not a quantum leap to the two-piece that emerged in the mid 1930s that modestly exposed the midriff while leaving the navel concealed. The mode to reveal the body was picked up by Australian companies like This'le Fit, which produced a number of variations on the two-piece for women and topless trunk styles for men.

2.5.7 Castaways and Survivors

The 1940s saw a variety of styles in both the one-piece and two-piece, with a broader selection of fabrics and prints. The companies manufacturing swimwear appear to change during this period and newcomers such as Scamp and Sphinx advertised and received editorial in *The Draper of Australasia*. Scamp swimsuits were produced by a company that manufactured parachutes during the war, and the designer Ben Turner focused on producing youthful styles with novelty features such as lace-up sides. Joel reports that in the 1950s, retailers were ‘all locked into the big-name American firms such as Jantzen, Cole of California, and Rose Marie Reed’, and the trade journals throughout the 1940s and ’50s indicate that they did have a strong presence. But, she continues, ‘support for the local clothing industry was gaining momentum’ with an Australian style emerging (Joel 1984: 141).

Vogue Australia was launched in 1959 and the swimsuit collections regularly featured local designers: Watersun in the 1960s; Robin Garland and Maglia in the 1970s; Rochford and Seafolly in the 1980-90s; and Zimmermann in the 1990s and the noughties. With the exception of the no-longer-Australian-owned Speedo, little has been written about these labels or other Australian swimwear companies in the 20th century. The fact that Speedo is a recognised dictionary term for a pair of men’s swimming trunks would suggest that Australian style has permeated the global market at an intrinsic level. Further, the review of available historical material about the swimsuit has identified a gap in knowledge in the form of the recurring omission of Australia from its development, with an emphasis on the French and American contributions (Alac 2002; Lencek and Bosker 1989; Martin and Koda 1990; Probert 1981). The Australian-made documentary ‘Nothing to Hide’ is presumably a history

of bathing suits and social customs in Australia in the 20th century and should remedy this situation. It is, however, a confusing blend of Australian and American facts and images, which may be the result of the involvement of Lencěk, an American swimwear historian. A contribution of this study will be to recover images and information about significant designers – current and historical – focusing on the Australian style and how this has influenced the evolution of the swimsuit.

2.5.8 Surfers Paradise: The Bikini Capital of Australia

A key benchmark in the evolution of the swimsuit was the invention of the bikini, which ‘erupted in Western civilisation in 1946’ (Rymer 1996). Two French designers presented their creations in the summer of this year. The least provocative or revealing was Jacques Heim’s costume called the Atome. Louis Réard, an engineer, introduced his basic design called the bikini. It is believed both designers were inspired by atomic tests at Bikini Atoll and drew on the explosiveness of atomic testing and its symbolism for the name of their designs (Alac 2002; Rymer 1996).

The bikini design, essentially two triangles of cloth for the top and bottom provided minimum concealment, creating a dramatic and sensational look that was adopted by only a daring few. Réard launched the bikini at the first bathing beauty contest held since World War Two where ‘shapely misses from the Folies Bergères compete for the crown’ (Rymer 1996). The bikini was modelled by dancer Micheline Bernardini, as conventional models refused to wear such a revealing costume. The year before a

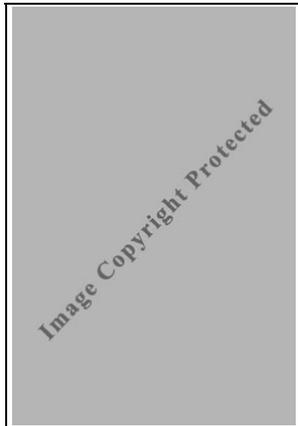


Figure 2-25
Micheline Bernardini,
Paris July 6, 1946 Alac,
2002 :26

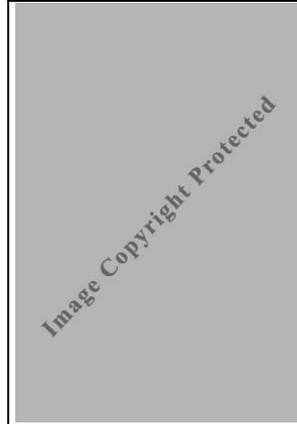
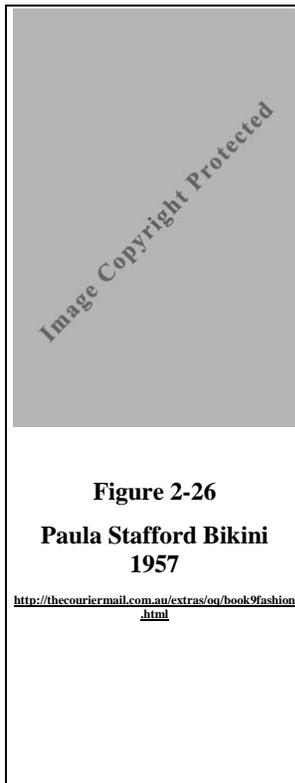


Figure 2-24
Patricia Niland, Sydney
October 27, 1945
Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny:
A brief history of the
bikini 2002: 4

Tivoli showgirl, Patricia Niland, was snapped by a photographer for the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper wearing a bikini in George Street in Sydney. It was a publicity stunt to promote an upcoming event at the Roosevelt Cabaret and proved a successful way to receive press coverage. There is no mention of who designed this bikini or whether it was imported from France or produced locally. It illustrates that Australians were at least aware of global trends and clearly not lagging behind. A key similarity revealing the garment's unconventionality is that in both France and Australia, the first public sighting of the bikini was on cabaret dancers not fashion models.

The bikini was not immediately adopted by any nation, and the one-piece continued to be the dominant swimsuit design. Swimsuit historians consistently jump to the 1960s as the decade in which the bikini gained social acceptance as a result of the youth revolution which equated nudity with liberalism (Alac 2002; Batterberry and Batterberry 1977; Lencek and Bosker 1989; Glynn 1978; Rymer 1996). Bosker and Lencek report that in the 1940s and '50s Americans were conservative and slow to



adopt the bikini, a skimpy garment, preferring more conventional one-piece designs (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 90-93). By contrast, a number of Australian beaches, particularly Queensland's Surfers Paradise, eagerly embraced the bikini. Queensland designer, Paula Stafford was designing and selling bikinis from as early as 1946,

although beach inspectors battled the trend, demanding women cover up or be sent off the beaches. Wearers were not deterred and the sale of bikinis was brisk. Stafford recognised that she could use the controversy surrounding these tussles to her advantage when Ann Ferguson, a model, was ordered to cover up at Main Beach by inspector Johnny Moffatt, while wearing a Stafford creation. Stafford promptly produced more stock and invited the authorities to view five of her designs on girls on location at the beach (Cockington 2005: 87-89). The flow on from beautiful models wearing her creations on Gold Coast beaches and sensationalistic newspaper reportage popularised the bikini and ensured its success with local and national beach participants. Stafford is remembered as the one of first and best bikini designer/manufacturers in Australia continuing to expand her business by promoting the bikini in Sydney and Melbourne and inventing the reversible bikini in 1953.

Unlike the Americans who patriotically avoided the French innovation, Europeans were also embracing the bikini. Comparatively there is a level of sophistication in how the bikini was worn in this Cannes example (Figure 2-27) that is not evident in Stafford's. Stylistically, the French version is briefer and with the models holding glasses of wine against a cityscape backdrop, it suggests the bikini has moved away from its natural habitat, the beach. In 1959, *Vogue* Australia declared the bikini 'has become almost a classic, the best undressed look on the beach' (Joel 1984: 141), and by the mid 1960s Stafford was exporting her ranges to the United States and Britain. Australia's early adoption, design and

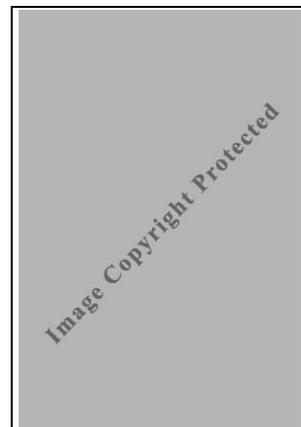


Figure 2-27
Cannes, 1958
Worsley, 2000: 536

manufacture of the bikini supports the position that Australians had a relaxed approach to more daring swimsuit styling and body exposure, continuing a history of participants challenging restrictions by local councils and governments on what they wore.

Surfers Paradise was the bikini capital of Australia and ‘there is no doubt that Australian fashion houses do produce the best under-dressed women in the southern hemisphere’ (Rymer 1996). An initiative taken by local businesses to ensure local retailers were not negatively affected by the introduction of gold parking meters as a revenue raiser by the local council occurred when Bernie Elsey devised a plan to send out girls in gold, Paula Stafford-designed bikinis to feed the meters before they expired. Needless to say, it was a huge success and the Meter Maid became a Queensland icon (Cockington 2005: 151-154). While the bikini may not have been invented in Australia, it soon became adapted and naturalised in its new environment.

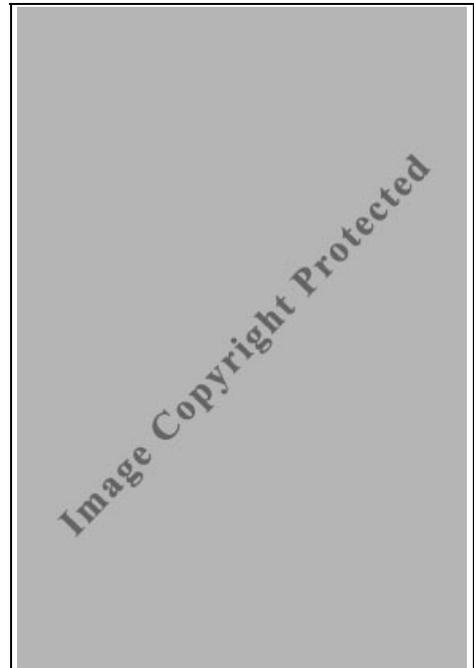
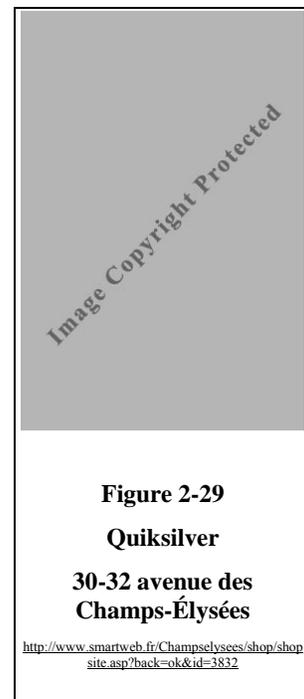


Figure 2-28
Annette Welch - Australia's first
Meter Maid 1965
[http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/federation/CMFedPastMaids.
htm](http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/federation/CMFedPastMaids.htm)

2.5.9 Surf Culture

‘We put on our boardshorts and the girls put on their bikinis’ (Rymer 1996). The birth of surf culture signalled a new direction in the development of the swimsuit. Hawaiian, Duke Kahanamoku ‘regarded as the inventor of the modern sport of surfing’ (*Duke Kahanamoku* 2006), introduced surfing to Australia in 1915. By the 1950s, it was a popular pastime for both men and women. The first world surfing championship was held at Manly Beach in 1964, when the men’s title was won by Midget Farrelly and the women’s title by Phyllis O’Donnell, both Australians. Australia claimed surfing as its own and continues to produce champion surfers (Rymer 1996; Southerden 2005). Three surfwear companies catering to local male surfers were founded between 1969 and 1973 in Australia: Ripcurl; Quiksilver; and Billabong. The early designs were primarily boardshorts and wetsuits; however, by the late 1980s their markets had expanded to include swimwear and beachwear for both sexes.

All three companies are now internationally recognisable brands supplying beachwear that has morphed into fashion apparel for a young urban market. Quiksilver has flagship stores in London, Paris and New York, and Billabong opened a lifestyle concept store known as a ‘shopping playground’ with simulated outdoor environments at The Camp in Costa Mesa, California, (Schoenherr 2006). The adoption of Australian surfwear and swimwear by a global market through the major



fashion hubs affirms the stylistic influence Australian designers and beach culture participants have had on the evolution of the swimsuit and will be further explored in Chapter Six.

2.6 Swimwear Research 2007

In June 2007, British magazine journalist Sarah Kennedy released a book about the history of the swimsuit. Like previous publications, it tracks the swimsuit from neck to knee to its contemporary form, acknowledging the role of fashion, film, sport, and travel in its design development. Following the patterns of previous swimsuit histories, the role of American and European designers, actresses, swimsuit models, and beauty contestants are used to describe the influences on swimsuit design innovation. Did Australia rate an inclusion? Speedo is mentioned in the introduction and in the swimsuit timeline (pages 8-11), with some recognition of its contribution to performance swimwear for competitive swimmers. A photo of the first women winners at the Stockholm Olympics in 1912, Australians Fanny Durack, Mina Wylie, and British bronze medallist Jenny Fletcher with a caption stating they are wearing swimsuits produced by the ‘Australian company that would later become Speedo’ is unlikely as McCrae knitting mills had not been formed in 1912. Manufacture of stockings began in 1914, with swimsuits not part of their product range until 1928. A further comment that competitive swimming for women would not be acceptable in the United States and Britain for a couple of decades (Kennedy 2007: 29), does not do justice to the role Australians had in the early days of international competitive swimming. Speedo is acknowledged for its contribution as the driving force behind improvements in swimsuits for Olympic swimmers, but the focus remains on its

competitor, Arena, a European company that was formed in 1973, with Kennedy making the doubtful claim that ‘it remained the first choice for swimmers in all major competitions’ (Kennedy 2007: 227). Although it may not have been Kennedy’s intention, what this does show is that Australia was there from the beginning of the swimsuit’s evolution.

What of Australian designers and companies? Kennedy mentions that Quiksilver was launched in Australia in 1970, although later contradicts this by stating that ‘Quiksilver was a key brand to come out of California’ (Kennedy 2007: 254). Quiksilver, although internationalised in the early ’80s was conceived in Australia along with Billabong and Rip Curl in the late 1960s and early ’70s. Again, this suggests that Australia was not merely following overseas trends and developments in swimsuit and surfwear design but creating its own unique vision. A section called *The New Australians* included in the chapter on the ’90s is accompanied by the comment that ‘Just when the European designer labels thought that they had a monopoly on glamorous fashion-forward swimwear, along came a whole range of Australian designers’ (Kennedy 2007: 276). The brands: Jets; Zimmermann; Seafolly; Sergent; TC Swimwear; Baku; Watersun; Anna & Boy; Bond-Eye; and Marajoara are mentioned with notes about the key influence being the climate in Sydney and Melbourne where swimwear can be worn most of the year. It is unlikely that Melbournians would be participating in beach activities in the winter months, which has more in common with London weather conditions – drizzling rain and, at times, miserable cold patches. A focus on the southern capitals omits significant producers of Australian swimwear in Queensland and Western Australia where sub-tropical weather conditions prevail. Kennedy reports that Australian ‘fashion designers have

always included swimwear in their collections’, which has not been the case for many designers. It does, however, imply that Australian designers view the swimsuit as a fashion garment, which is supported by interviews conducted with Paula Stafford, Gloria Mortimer-Dunn, and Brian Rochford for this study as well as a *WGSN* interview with Nicky Zimmermann in 2000. The fashion focus of Australian swimwear will be illustrated through the interconnecting concepts in the Venn diagram in later chapters.

2.7 Locating the Research Position

Rather than exploring why Australia’s contribution to the evolution of the modern swimsuit has been overlooked, my intention is to focus on the Australian style of individuals and social groups. A reconstructed history of the modern swimsuit will endeavour to create an informed and comprehensive understanding of the topic knitting together theory and practice. The research to date supports the hypothesis that inventive individuals, social groups, and nations on the periphery of the global fashion hubs of Europe and the United States can influence and shape the stylistic direction of fashion.

This hypothesis is the result of the initial research process and led to the research questions, which are designed to create an interactive approach and steer the study towards suitable methods of enquiry. Janesick metaphorically describes this process through dance. She comments that dances commence with a question about what the

dancer wants to say through the dance; that without the question there is no approach to selecting the methods (Janesick 2000: 209-219).

2.7.1 Research Questions

The primary research question is:

What is the Australian contribution to the evolution of the modern swimsuit?

Leading to subsidiary questions:

If there is an Australian style, what is it?

How has it influenced the development of swimwear and surfwear?

What is the role of Australia and Australian designers in the evolution of the modern swimsuit and its inclusion in global fashion?

Exploring the role of inventive individuals has been an important part of this study.

How did Kellerman contribute to the evolution of the swimsuit and shape analysis of other individual contributors?

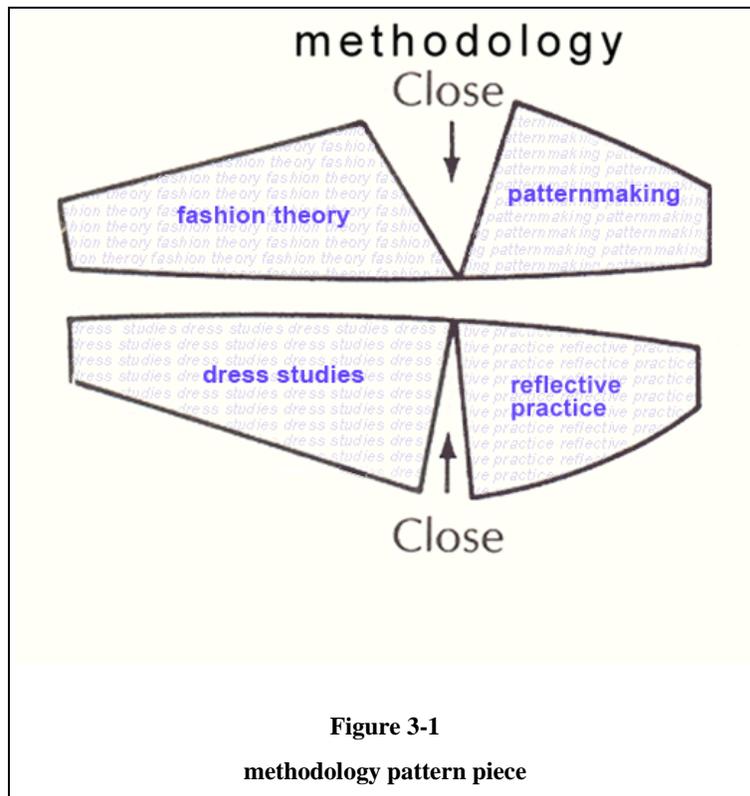
3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to take an in-depth and constructivist approach to investigating the history of the modern swimsuit. It is an interpretative paradigm and the purpose is to create a 'more informed and sophisticated construction' of the swimsuit both historically and in its contemporary forms, with the researcher involved as a participant observer, facilitating a 'multi-voice reconstruction' (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 111-112). The literature review has mapped an incomplete understanding of the swimsuit's evolution and has led to the formulation of research questions that will extend the terrain to include the Australian contribution. The historical research component requires the collection of data from a number of contributing nations to compare and contrast through a dialectical interchange. These findings will inform and chart the developmental stages of the swimsuit, define the historical influences and will establish the differences or similarities in stylistic approach to fashion design. Mapping the contemporary swimsuit, including the designers, wearers, and participation sites that influence its continuing development, will create a more complete understanding of how the swimsuit fits into the fashion landscape. It involves a multi-methodological process that can be compared to the construction of a garment pattern in that it requires a visualisation of the intended three-dimensional outcomes, initially in a two dimensional form, resulting in modification and refinement once it is physically created. The method of piecing together a number of elements to create the whole and the awareness that the direction may change as it

emerges and takes form is understood and is as much a challenge for this researcher as it is for a designer.

3.2 Methodological Framework



The methodological structure is constrained by the relationship between the participants and participation sites in order to find out what their relationship is, and how it affects the evolution of the swimsuit. The pattern pieces are taken from the Fashion model and connecting the methodology visually and metaphorically through the patternmaking process serves to inform what methodology or combination of methodologies will determine the methods used in this study. These pattern pieces are

a diagrammatic representation of how the multi-methodological approach has been constructed or pieced.

Patternmaking reflects ‘a more artistic research strategy’ (Gray and Malins 2004: 72), and provides an opportunity to produce something new that fits with a more intuitive methodological structure. The terrain is mapped and articulated visually, the construction is tailored to reveal an openness to an experimental approach to existing methodologies. By constraining the scope and scale to a pattern block, new patterns are created to determine and explain the relationship between key concepts and ideas. It is a useful methodological approach to shape and build research and allows patterns to be remade or refined as new knowledge comes to hand.

Theories exploring the fashion process through economic, social, and psychological filters have been explored by a number of scholars, resulting in a body of work that Michael Carter describes as ‘standard texts of fashion theory’ (Carter 2003: xi). These texts represent a conceptual and theoretical basis for understanding what fashion is, who wears it, why and how fashion changes – in effect the fashion system. Existing fashion theories represent an important foundation block contributing a structure to the way new material is analysed.

Dress studies, a term Christopher Breward chooses as opposed to dress history, incorporates cultural studies, design, and art historical approaches to understanding and analysing fashion. He notes that, ‘used carefully, these methods promised to provide a fluid framework for the study of fashion in its own right’,

creating ‘a more questioning framework which allows for explanations that are multi-layered and open-ended’ (Breward 1998: 303-4).

Reflective practice takes the form of a reflective conversation connecting the practitioner-researcher with the study interactively. The approach is emergent and is responsive to knowledge that is accumulated from diverse sources (Schön 1983: 295-307).

3.3 Completing the Pattern Pieces

To understand the relationship between the methodology and methods, the methodology pattern is mirrored, with the methods mapped onto an identical pattern piece symbolising their integrated relationship.

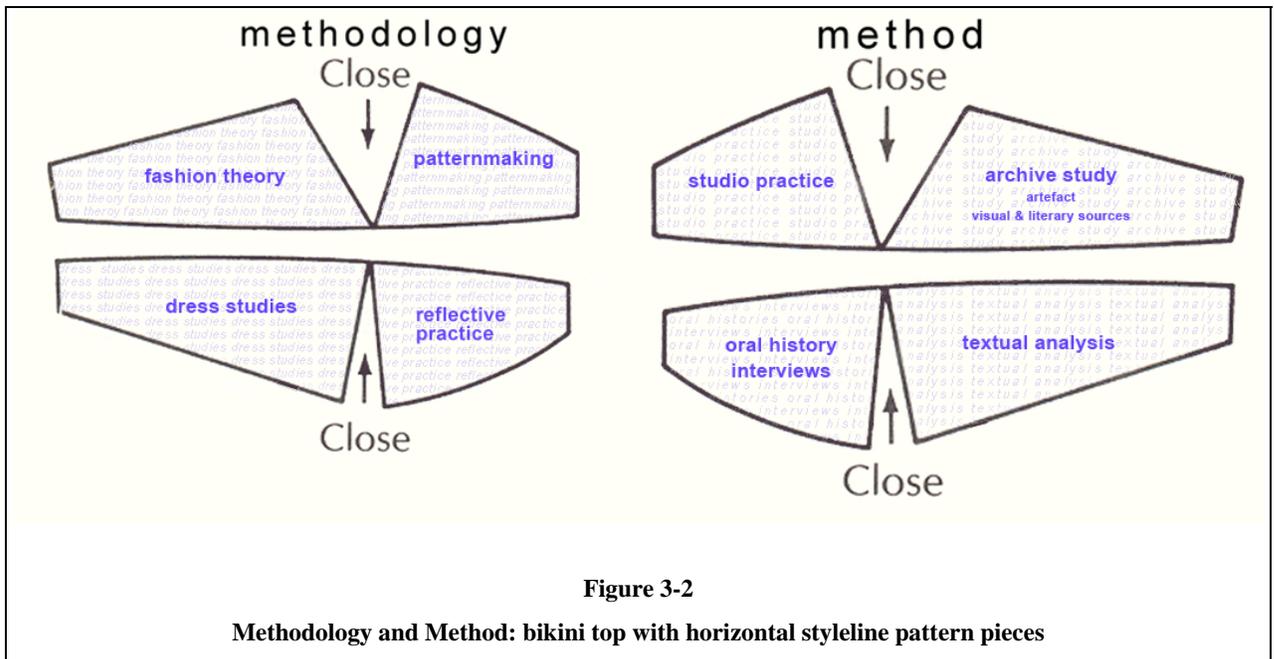


Figure 3-2

Methodology and Method: bikini top with horizontal styleline pattern pieces

To create the garment, the pattern pieces are arranged on a suitable piece of fabric for the most efficient use of the material, and are then cut and prepared for assembly. The darts are stitched closed on each individual pattern piece and then sequentially stitched together, to produce a three-dimensional representation of the design concept that is fitted to the body. The construction of a bikini top with horizontal styleline used for the fashion model requires the pattern pieces to be doubled to create a lining for the garment. Figure 3-3 illustrates how two sets of pattern pieces are produced with the methodology and methods in this study included as lining of the garment. Although internalised, they represent a cohesive and complementary partnership that underpins the research design and the way the research questions are explored.

Collectively, these pattern pieces become the template that is then cut out in the fabric of fashion. When stitched together, the pieces merge and produce the garment, the swimsuit. The result is a constructed representation of the original design concept, in this case the fashion model. Importantly, the pattern pieces are meaningless as isolated pieces, but when assembled are all essential to the final construction.



Conceptual Framework

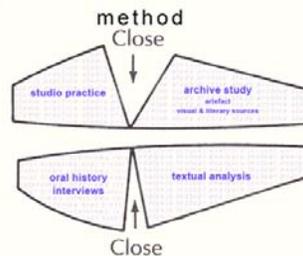
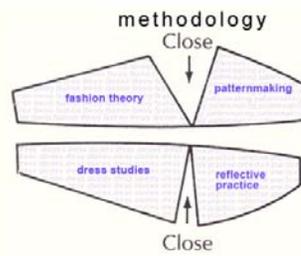
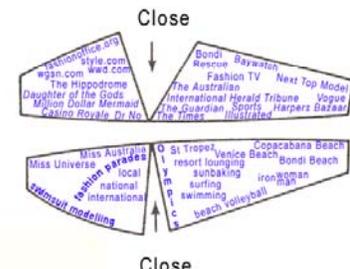
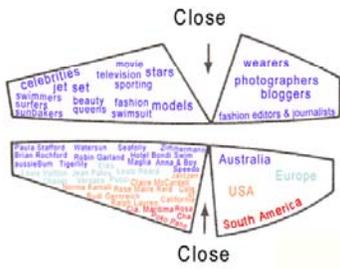
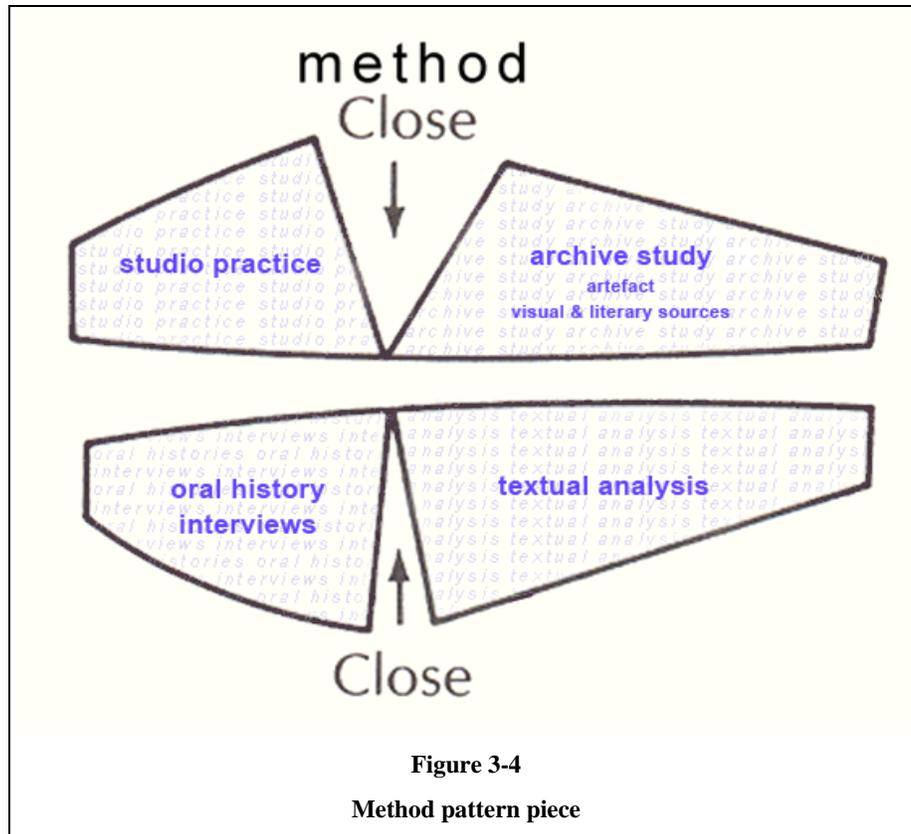


Figure 3-3
Conceptual Framework

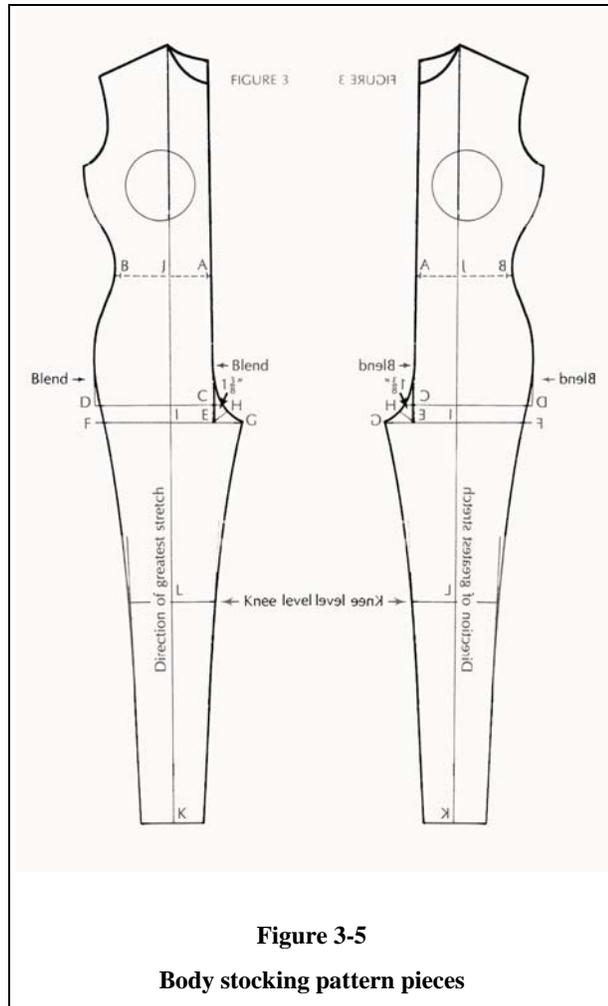
3.4 Method



3.4.1 Studio Practice

‘The product of the bricoleur’s labor is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings, and interpretation of the world or phenomenon under analysis’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 3).

Through studio practice, explicit methods of understanding and contextualisation are generated in order to describe what I am researching. The process has been to create a diagrammatic representation of how the evolution of the swimsuit, and Australia's contribution to this process has been interpreted. An A1 size plan of the pattern pieces for a body stocking similar in style to that worn by Annette Kellerman has been printed in a mirrored format as a visual prompt to maintain a focus on the key contributors.

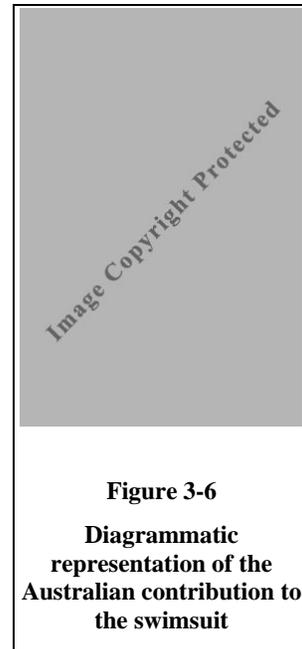


Gathering images was guided by the concept map (Appendix 1), the participants, and participation sites, and was shaped by the data collected during the literature review. As the process is reflexive, it encourages a focus on the key elements of Australian swimwear history and how it is culturally manifested. Once the images were in place, the diagram was scanned. The images were then removed and numbered. Finally, a written document explaining why these images were included was created (Appendix 2). The process consolidated the current research position and facilitates the communication of ideas generated by the fashion model. I have taken a participatory role, 'developing and making creative work as an explicit and intentional

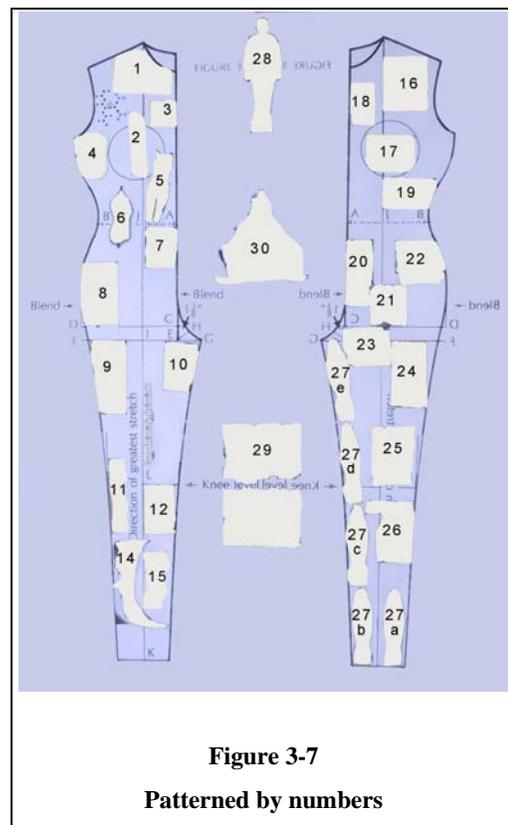
method for specific purposes (Gray and Malins 2004); a studio practice method that continues to inform and identify how the data is gathered and analysed. These methods are emergent and relate to Janesick's notion of dance: What do I want to say visually that cannot be expressed through the written exegesis?

To date the methods I have used include:

- Visualisation through drawings and diagrams;
- Use of metaphor;
- Concept mapping;
- Visual diary;



These studio practice methods shape the research design and direction and form a toolbox for formulating and explaining what is being researched: the evolution of the modern swimsuit and Australia's contribution. From initial observations, thoughts are organised and analysed, strengthening an understanding of the fashion model and the approach to inquiry. The process and ideas communicated are the result of a reflective and personal dialogue, and a visual diary follows the progress of the conversation.





3.4.2 Timeline

Prior to undertaking archival research, a timeline was created to develop temporal relationships between Kellerman, Australia, and global swimsuit/swimming events. Breward's fashion/events timeline for Europe and the United States, 1730-2002, has been included to represent a comprehensive topography of fashion from a global perspective (Breward 2003: 256-260). It is a reference and research tool that is updated as new and relevant information is collected. The basic structure is chronological and geographical, with a focus on relevant historic and contemporary events locally and globally. The columns detail key events: Kellerman's life; Australian events; Australian and global swimsuit and swimming events. The timeline provides a site for comparison and contrast, contextualising the evolution and developmental path of the swimsuit in relation to broader general, and fashion events.

Comparing events years across the timeline revealed that in the year Australia was discovered for the West by Captain James Cook in 1770, in Europe, Rose Bertin was establishing herself as a premier *marchand de mode* in Paris by designing fashionable clothing for Marie Antoinette. Annette Kellerman was born in Sydney in 1886, the year the Statue of Liberty was erected in New York, a recognised symbol of freedom and friendship between France and America. In 1901, the British parliament passed

legislation permitting Australia's then six self-governing colonies to unite and govern in their own right. In Britain, it was the year Queen Victoria died, and in Europe, Poiret 'was hired by the Maison Worth, then directed by the two sons of the great couturier' (Steele 1998: 229). Just a few years later in 1908, five years after he had opened his own atelier, Poiret collaborated with artist Paul Iribe to create the first fashion catalogue as a method of displaying his 'work to the world, publishing *Les Robes de Paul Poiret*' (Fukai, Suoh, and Kyoto Fukushoku Bunka Kenkyu Zaidan. 2002: 333). In the United States, Henry Ford modernised car production by developing an assembly line technique to manufacture affordable cars with 'Model T' Fords. In Europe, influential Austrian architect Alfred Loos published *Ornament and Crime* and Annette Kellerman was declared the Perfect Woman. It was also the year the Federation International de Natation Amateur (FINA), swimming's governing body, was founded in London.

The trajectory for Australian events and world events in the 18th and 19th centuries illustrates why there are initially no obvious connections between Australia and fashion or industrial design for that matter. Sport, particularly swimming, provided an activity in which at times Australians could have a competitive edge. Film, a modern medium evolving in the 20th century, proved another area where Australians could be active contributors, and Australia is attributed with producing the first full-length feature movie in 1906, *The Ned Kelly Gang*. It was the birth of the film genre that was 'notable for their peculiarly colonial themes of convicts and bushrangers' (*Film in Australia* 2007). Kellerman would a few years later would create a form of fantasy genre underscoring her aquatic abilities and setting the scene for the development of both water ballet and synchronised swimming.

The timeline is a source of contextualising the participants and participation sites contributing to the swimsuit's evolution, illustrating the role of individuals, Australia, and other nations to shaping and styling the swimsuit.

Timeline

Date	Annette Kellerman	Date	Australian Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Australian Events	Date	Global Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Textiles & Key Developments	Date	Breward 2003: Fashion	Date	Breward 2003: Events
						1696	<i>L'Art de Nager</i> by Melchisédec Thévenot first printed - established breaststroke as the scientifically correct stroke						
										1730	Industrialization of British textile industry increases with invention of John Kay's Flying Shuttle		
						1742	First indoor swimming club in London						
						1750	Quaker, Benjamin Beale invents the bathing wagon at Margate Beach						
						1769	Martha Washington bathes at Berkley Springs West Virginia in a blue/white checked linen chemise with lead weights in the hemline						
				1770	Captain Cook discovers Australia for the West					1770	Rose Bertin emerges as premier <i>marchande de modes</i> in Paris		
										1778	George 'Beau' Brummell born		
										1780	Development of early fashion magazines in Paris, London and Berlin		
						1783	Prince of Wales encourages swimming at seaside destination in England					1783	American War of Independence
						1785	First swimming school established on the River Seine Paris						
				1788	Captain Arthur Phillip founds a penal settlement at Sydney								
												1789	French Revolution
												1792	French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars
						1794	First German sea-bath installed at Doberan by Dr. Vogel						
				1804	Hobart Town is established in Van Diemens Land					1804	Louis Hyppolite Leroy provides costumes for Napoleon's court		
				1809	Bondi Beach land grant made								
		1810	Governor Macquarie protests the practice of the 'natatorial art'										
												1811	John Nash's Regent Street, London, built
						1812	Women depicted in a print as swimming nude at Margate, England						
												1815	Napoleonic Wars end
										1822	Charles Macintosh invents waterproof garment		
										1825	Birth of Charles Frederick Worth		
		1828	A swimming enclosure was constructed next to the Domain in Woolloomooloo, Sydney										
				1829	Colony of Western Australia established at Perth by Captain James Stirling								
		1830s	Foray into recreational swimming by Sydney middle class women	1830	First beach concert in Western Australia							1830	Charles Darwin embarks on The Beagle
		1833	Daylight bathing ban, New South Wales	1833	Port Arthur opens as a penal settlement in Tasmania							1833	Abolition of slavery in British territories
		1834	18th February: <i>Sydney Gazette</i> announced bathing is now a favoured recreation in Sydney			1834	Cannes on the Cote d'Azur is founded by British statesman Lord Brougham						

Timeline

Date	Annette Kellerman	Date	Australian Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Australian Events	Date	Global Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Textiles & Key Developments	Date	Breward 2003: Fashion	Date	Breward 2003: Events
												1835	Henry Fox Talbot takes first negative photo
				1837	South Australia established with Adelaide as the capital	1837	England held first organised men's swimming meet in the Western world					1837	Ascension of Queen Victoria
		1838	Ban on swimming between 6am and 7pm - overturned							1838	Worth apprenticed to Swan & Edgar		
		1840	Sandridge (now Port Melbourne, Victoria) promoted as a resort					1840s	Linen and wool fabrics - navy and blue most popular colours				
		1841	Public baths operating in Melbourne's Yarra River										
						1844	Native Americans - Flying Gull and Tobacco compete in London displaying a new swimming stroke that has a windmill motion with up and down kicking.						
										1845	Worth moves to Paris		
		1846	First all-male swimming championships at the Robinson's Baths in the Domain			1846	James Arlington Bennet published an instruction book on swimming for both sexes — first original work by an American			1846	Sewing machine patented by Elias Howe		
		1847	Bathing Association of Hobart Town established										
												1848	Karl Marx and Federich Engels publish <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>
		1850	Bathing boxes built on beach at Brighton, Victoria			1850s	Bathing became recreational with an appointed time, place and proper costume			1850	Manufacturers including Levi Strauss start to make and promote denim work trousers for American cattle-drivers and gold prospectors		
										1852	<i>The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine</i> launched with the instruction and patterns for home dressmaking	1852	Coronation of Napoleon III, rebuilding of Paris
		1855	Bond's new owner opens it to the public			1855	E.D. Johnson invented the stopwatch						
			Summer residents at Queensland resorts need police protection from angry aboriginals										
						1856	Bathing costume was mainly a bifurcated garment with a long overdress			1856	William Perkin discovers aniline dye	1856	Celluloid first synthesized by Alexander Parkes
										1858	Worth establishes a business with Otto Bobergh	1858	Japan opened to foreign trade
												1859	Isabella Beeton's <i>Book of Household Management</i> published
						1860s	Widespread health movement that gave momentum to physical exercise						
				1861	First Melbourne Cup Race							1861	Start of American Civil War
												1862	International Exhibition, South Kensington, London
		1863	First swimming races recorded in Adelaide									1863	Baudelaire publishes <i>Peintre de la vie moderne</i>
										1864	Worth and Bobergh supply Empress Eugénie's wardrobe		
												1865	Abolition of slavery in USA

Timeline

Date	Annette Kellerman	Date	Australian Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Australian Events	Date	Global Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Textiles & Key Developments	Date	Breward 2003: Fashion	Date	Breward 2003: Events
												1866	Atlantic telegraph cable laid
												1867	Universal Exposition, Paris
				1868	Last convicts transported to Australia					1868	Precursor of the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne founded	1868	Typewriter patented in USA
													Opening of Suez Cannel
		1870s	Ready to wear 'sea side' costumes available for women Cotton non-skirted short legged costumes worn for competitive swimming for women and men			1870s	United States establishes a distinction between bathing/cleansing & swimming/sport/recreation	1870s	Serge a twill weave wool was used most frequently for swimwear, Cloaks worn to conceal the figure when wet. Bathing shoes or slippers generally worn			1870	Franco Prussian War
							Bathhouses with segregated swimming for men and women was popular especially for those who could not afford to go to seaside resorts						
										1871	Worth reopens after temporary closure during Franco-Prussian War		
						1873	Harper's Bazaar , August 9, announced that Union Adams & Co of New York had bathing dresses for sale. It is noteworthy as both the ready-to-wear clothing industry and advertising were in their infancy					1873	World Exposition, Vienna
							John Trudgen learned the front crawl swimming stroke from Native Americans						
						1875	Captain Matthew Webb was the first person to swim the English Channel						
		1876	Glennelg, South Australia, baths open	1876	The last full blooded Tasmanian aboriginal, Truanting dies								
		1877	Melbourne's first official swimming carnival - all male									1877	Phonograph invented by Thomas Edison
			Bondi Beach's owner threatens to close it to the public because of rowdyism										
		1878	Building of a giant pier proposed for ocean beach at Manly, New South Wales									1878	Introduction of electric light
				1880	Madame Weigel showed her paper dress patterns at the Exhibition of Melbourne								
				1881	Women were admitted to study full degrees at Sydney University								
				1882	Britain and Australia begin the cricket tests - The Ashes								
										1883	Coco Chanel born		
				1884	Weigel's Journal of Fashion first published							1884	Art Workers Guild launched, UK
		1885	Australian bathing machines appear on beaches							1885	Marshall Field's department store built in Chicago	1885	Safety bicycle and internal combustion engine developed
1886	Annette Kellerman born											1886	Erection of Statue of Liberty. New York
										1887	Gustavo Jaeger's <i>Essays on Health Culture</i> published in English		
1888	Diagnosed with rickets - her legs are strapped in irons	1888	First non-tidal pool the Natatorial was built in Pitt Street, Sydney										
			Beatrice Kerr born										

Timeline

Date	Annette Kellerman	Date	Australian Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Australian Events	Date	Global Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Textiles & Key Developments	Date	Breward 2003: Fashion	Date	Breward 2003: Events
		1889	Fanny Durack born			1889	Herminie Cadolle invented the bra	1889	Artificial silk launched for commercial production in France			1889	World Exposition, Paris
		1889	Waverley By-Law No.145 "Any person who, except in a public bath and proper bathing dress, shall bathe near or within view of any inhabited house, reserve, or place of public resort, between the hours of 8 o'clock in the morning and 8 o'clock in the evening, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds nor less than five shillings."										
						1890	Jenny Fletcher born	1890s	Flannel replaced serge as the textile of choice as it was not heavy when wet.				
		1891	Mina Wylie born			1890s	Growing interest in spectator and individual sports		Stockinet, a knitted material was gaining popularity				
			Queenslanders enjoy body surfing						Black bathing suits are a matter of choice not merely by those dressing in mourning. Black no longer had this exclusive significance when bathing.				
		1892	Natorium indoor pool in Pitt St Sydney held races for both sexes NSW Amateur Swimming Association was formed			1892	First national women's swimming championship was held in Scotland			1892	Vogue USA launched		
							First public life guards in the United States						
1893	Kellerman leg braces are removed and she learns to swim												
						mid 1890s	Knitted cotton tights were sometimes worn in place of bloomers			1895	Worth dies Cristobal Balenciaga born		
										1896	Paul Poiret works for Jacques Doucette		
												1897	Foundation of the Sezession group in Vienna
												1898	Opening Paris Metro
		1900	Public baths in all states offer swimming lessons									1900	World Exposition, Paris
													Sigmund Freud publishes <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i>
				1901	The Commonwealth of Australia becomes a reality					1901	Poiret employed by Gaston Worth	1901	Death of Queen Victoria
1902	Won 2-mile NSW championship	1902	William Gocher breaks daylight bathing ban at Manly, New South Wales and is not arrested	1902	A Tasmanian newspaper suggests Australians enjoy holidays too much								
			Richard Cavill invented the Australian Crawl swimming stroke First NSW State Ladies Swimming Carnival in the presence of men										
		1903	Mixed bathing allowed at Manly Beach in summer during daylight hours. Beatrice Kerr won the Australasian Amateur Championship for swimming							1903	Poiret establishes his own couture house	1903	First Flight by the Wright Brothers
			Surf lifesaving squad formed at Bronte, New South Wales										

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1904	Swam the Yarra River 2 1/2 miles swam 10 miles the longest official swim by a woman Performed in <i>Breaking of Drought</i> at the Royal Theatre Melbourne in a sunken pool	1904	Jetty built at Cottesloe, Western Australia			1904	Men's diving inaugurated as an Olympic event					1904	Wiener Werkstätte launched
1905	Swam the Thames River from Putney Bridge to Blackwall – 17 miles					1905	Bathing dress bloomer-less and sleeveless						
	Swam 7 miles along the Seine in Paris - she was the only woman and 17 men - placed 3rd												
1905	Sponsored by the London Daily Mirror to do a series of distant swims along the coastal beaches of England												
	The first woman to attempt to swim the English Channel. The men were allowed to swim naked but Kellerman had to wear a swimsuit												
	Performed for the Duke & Duchess of Connaught at the Bath Club												
	<i>The Match</i> Paris sponsored a 24 mile swim along the Seine under the 7 bridges of Paris. and AK competed against 17 men and came equal third with Thomas Burgess who became the second person to swim the English Channel												
1906	Season at London Hippodrome Won a 22 mile race down the Danube against Baroness Isa Cescu Second unsuccessful attempt to swim the English Channel After her third attempt and a few more races Kellerman retired from long-distance swimming	1906	Surf Life Saving clubs established at Bondi and Bronte	1906	<i>The Story of the Kelly Gang</i> - the world's first feature length film								
	Opened in a show at the White City Amusement Park in Chicago. There was a specially- built tank 14 feet long and 5 1/2 feet deep. AK performed 55 shows per week												
1907	Father left for Paris - James Sullivan her official manager Arrested at Revere Beach, Boston for indecency in one-piece bathing suit <i>Miss Kellerman's Diving Feats</i> (film) Attributed with creating the one-piece bathing suit	1907	Bondi Burlesque' Waverley Council in Sydney decided that both men and women should wear a Guernsey with sleeves reaching the elbow, trouser legs to the bend in the knees with a skirt covering the figure below the hips. Laws forbade sunbathing and fines of up to 10 pounds were set in place. Protests with men wearing ladies petticoats, ballet skirts or sarongs ensued. A compromise was agreed upon - the Canadian costume a pair of knickers reaching to the knee covered by a sleeveless guernsey. Made from cotton or light stockinette.							1907	Poiret's tubular 'Josephine' model introduced		

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1908	Kellerman declared 'The Perfect Woman' by Dr Dudley Sergeant. He was the first to research physical fitness in women and measuring 10,000 participants	1908	Metropolitan Ladies Swimming Club formed	1908	Alice Buckridge: Miss Australia	1908	The Federation International de Natation Amateur (FINA) swimming's governing organisation is founded	1908		1908	Paul Iribe illustrates <i>Les Robes de Paul Poiret</i>	1908	Henry Ford launches 'Model T'
													Adolf Loo's <i>Ornament and Crime</i> published
1909	AK Queen of the Auto Carnival, New York- the first modern automobile parade down 5th Avenue. Buick built a huge sea shell with mermaids and a throne for their Queen.	1909	Frank Beaurepaire wins at Olympic Games										
	<i>The Gift of Youth</i> (film) <i>The Bride of Lammermoor</i> (film) <i>Jepthah's Daughter</i> (film) <i>Entombed Alive</i> (film) <i>Miss Annette Kellerman</i> (film) Appeared on American Vaudeville Circuit		The suntan was popular for Sydneysiders			1909	Adeline Trapp was the first woman to swim the East River in New York in a one-piece knitted grey cotton swimsuit			1909	Selfridges store opens in London	1909	Cubism coined as term
	United States Circuit Court ruled against AK in the Morris/Keith theatrical case												
	Made short films featuring her diving skills that were shown on Kinescope machines. <i>The Art of Diving</i>												
	Published a series of articles in the newspaper on how to swim												
1910	<i>The Perfectly Formed Woman</i> (film)					1910	Jantzen Swimsuit company launched	1910	Commercial production of rayon in the United States	1910	Chanel opens her first shop in Paris	1910	Futurist manifesto published
													Diaghilev premieres <i>Scheherazade</i> and <i>The Firebird</i>
													New York garment district established itself around Penn Station
1911	<i>Siren of the South Sea</i> (film) <i>The Mermaid</i> (film)	1911	The first Australian Venus Competition for women wearing fitted swimsuits. Possibly first beauty pageant.							1911	George Lapape illustrates <i>Les Choses de Paul Poiret</i> . Poiret hosts his 'Thousand and Second Night party, establishes the Atelier Martine, House of Rosine, Colin Workshop and the Petite Usine.		
			The Australian Surf Costume was made a regulation shape and buttons on the shoulder and was thick enough to be worn without V trunks.										
1912	Self published her first book <i>The Body Beautiful</i> - sold by mail order (lost) ?	1912	Women's first allowed to compete in swimming events in Olympic Games in Stockholm. Fanny Durack won first place in the 100m freestyle race in a world record time of 1 min 19.8 secs			1912	Duke Kahanamoku wears sleek swimsuit with lighter, bikini-like under drawers - Wins the 100m swimming event at the Olympics			1912	Poiret tours Europe and the United States	1912	Titanic sinks
	Lecture series to capacity audiences in a number of cities in America and Germany		Men wearing two-piece Canadian suit which was a modified version of the neck to knee				Mabel Normand <i>The Keystone Girl</i> wears a unitard in <i>Water Nymph</i>				Madeleine Vionnet opens a fashion house in Paris		
	Married James Raymond Louis (Jimmy) Sullivan		Idea of riding surfboards arrives from Hawaii										
	Date unsure hats and bathing suits designed by Kellerman		Life saving carnival at Manly, New South Wales										
						1913	Chanel opens a boutique in Deauville	1913	Jantzen, a sweater company, "made a swimsuit out of a wool sweater cuff and created the first elasticized swimsuit"			1913	Marcel Proust publisher <i>A la recherche du temps perdu</i>

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						1913	Carl Jantzen begin marketing skirtless one-piece bathing suits influenced by Kellerman's daring ideas					1913	The Armory Show of Modern Art held in New York
1914	<i>Neptune's Daughter</i> (film) Herbert Brenon - director - made on location in Bermuda- first film set underwater Brennon did some underwater stunts with AK <i>The Universal Boy</i> (film)	1914	Speedo launched by Scottish immigrant Alexander MacRae, originally called MacRae Knitting Mills	1914	Australian troops fight in WW1					1914	Poiret founds Le Syndicat de Défense de la Grande Couture Française	1914	Start of the First World War
1915	<i>The Model Girl</i> touring musical comedy - well received	1915	Duke Kahanamoku introduces surfing to Australia							1915	Barrett Street Trade School (later London College of Fashion) founded		
			First woman - Isabel Letham rides a board										
1916	<i>Daughter of the Gods</i> (film) first million dollar movie - shot on location in Jamaica - included a dive into a crocodile infested lagoon					1916	First annual Bathing Suit Day in Madison Square Gardens Sears, Roebuck and Co offered a one-piece or "California-style" knitted worsted bathing suits with the underpiece sewn to the skirt			1916	British <i>Vogue</i> launched	1916	Foundation of the Dada movement
	Designed shirt dresses in wool jersey, long sleeved shirts - extended to the ankle - forerunner of the 1920s styles												
	Performed 1916-17 at the New York Hippodrome												
1917	<i>Coney Island</i> (film) <i>National Red Cross Pageant</i> (film)												
	Impersonation of Pavlova's 'Swan Dance' at the Metropolitan Opera House in a War Fund Benefit	1917	Melbourne beach enthusiasts had to wait until January 18 of this year for freedom of swimming and sunbathing			1917	Women's Swimming Association of New York formed	1917	<i>Vogue</i> reports there are two styles of creations, silk taffeta or 'surf satin' or the majority made of mohair wool jersey or worsted cotton			1917	Russian Revolution
	First person to dive from a moving aeroplane at 40 feet												
1918	<i>Physical Beauty: How to Keep it</i> published <i>How to Swim</i> published <i>Queen of the Sea</i> (film)											1918	End of the First World War
1918	Kellerman recommended that serious swimmers wear close-fitting swimming tights or the two-piece suits commonly worn by men												
										1919	Balenciaga opens first couture house in San Sebastian	1919	Foundation of the Bauhaus
1920	<i>What Women Love</i> (film) <i>The Art of Diving</i> (film)* Annette Kellerman Bathing Attire is distinguished by an incomparable, daring beauty of fit that always remained refined. * Harper's Bazar (June 1920), vol. 55, no. 6, p. 138	1920	Frank & Lillian Beaurepaire win at Olympic Games	1920	Qantas is formed as local airline	1920	All Sears, Roebuck and Co bathing costumes were a more abbreviated and functional type			1920	French <i>Vogue</i> launched	1920	Women's suffrage approved in USA
						1920	Jantzen creates the first rib knit, elasticised one-piece swimsuit						
						1920s	Couturier shops sell sportswear at Cannes, Biarritz & Deauville						
							Chanel embraces sun baking, and starts a trend for the tanned outdoor look						

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1921	Returned to Australia and performed at the Tivoli, Sydney					1921	Jantzen launches a national advertising campaign for knit swimsuits using the red-suited 'diving girl'						
									Jantzen launched one-piece 'elastic' suit				
1922	Vaudeville tour of New Zealand	1922	One of first recorded shark fatalities, Sydney							1922	Elsa Schiaparelli starts a career in knitwear design	1922	Fascists take over Italian Government
1923	Returned to US - opened a health food shop in San Diego	1923	James Cavill builds a hotel at Elston (later Surfers Paradise, QLD)	1923	Vegetemite is first produced								
1924	Venus of the South Seas (film)	1924	Boy Charlton beats Swedish champion Arne Borg			1924	Jean Patou opened haute fashion swim & sportswear boutique in Deauville	1924	Acetate commercially produced in USA	1924	Rayon selected as generic term for artificial silk (in development from the 1880s)	1924	André Breton publishes <i>Manifesto of Surrealism</i>
	Returned to the US Vaudeville circuit						Johnny Weissmuller wins three gold medals in Olympic swimming events						
1925	Annette Kellerman Performing Water Ballet (film)	1925	Western Australian Surf Life Saving Centre Formed			1925	Women adopted the man's bathing suit					1925	<i>Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels</i> , Paris
	AK returned to the England and performed at the London Coliseum												
	Published "Fairy Tales of the South Seas" - children's stories			1926	Beryl Mills: Miss Australia	1926	Gertrude Ederle is the first woman to swim the English Channel			1926	Chanel launches her little black dress		
1925-26	Performed at the Scala in Berlin & Copenhagen. Toured in Sweden, Norway, Holland - 8 years in Europe...performances in native languages			1927	The first Federal parliament is held in Canberra								
		1928	Speedo name coined from staff competition: <i>Speed on in your Speedos</i>			1928	Benz Knitting Mills becomes Catalina			1928	Chanel opens her house on the rue Cambon		
			Speedo swimwear made from wool with silk & cotton for racing events Racer-back costume prototype development				Johnny Weissmuller wins five gold medals in Olympic swimming events				Muriel Pemberton established a diploma in fashion at the Royal College of Art, London		
			Boy Charlton wins at Olympic Games				The term 'maillot', first used to describe tight-fitting one-piece jersey suits, enters the English Dictionary						
		1928	Australian gives board riding demonstration in England										
		1929	Racer- Back style designed and launched by Speedo			1929	B.V.D. begins manufacturing swimsuits			1929	Schiaparelli opens a Paris boutique and shows first collection	1929	Great Depression
			D.W. Murray patented the 'Challenge Racer' design crossed back strap								School of the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture founded in Paris		
		1929	Sydney's Bondi Pavilion opens & Bondi Icebergs Club formed										
		1930	Country Life cork-tipped cigarettes were promoted as 'the firm favourite of Sydney's stalwart sun bakers'.			1930	Fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli patents a backless swimsuit with a built-in bra to promote strap-free tanning						
			Queensland Surf Life Saving centre formed				Women eagerly sought a suntan						
								1931	Lastex commercially modified rubber used in swimsuits	1931	Apparel Arts (precursor of GQ magazine) launched (UK)		
											Chanel employed by Samuel Goldwyn in Hollywood		
				1932	Sydney Harbour Bridge opens	1932	Madeleine Vionnet introduces a bare midriff evening dress. The following summer shorts, pants and skirts combined with midriff tops a la sunsuit styles for semi-public wearing.			1932	<i>Letty Lynton</i> (film) released		

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						1932	Johnny Weissmuller is hired to model bathing suits by B.V.D.. That same year he makes his film debut in Tarzan, the Ape Man						
1933	Annette Kellerman Returns to Australia (film)	1933	Elston, Queensland, is renamed Surfers Paradise	1933	Western Australian produces a referendum for secession from England but it is rejected by Parliament	1933	Dolores del Rio wore first 2 piece in a film <i>Flying Down to Rio</i>					1933	Hitler becomes Chancellor in Germany
			The Australian surf ski is patented				Jantzen launched the men's topper- top zipped off						
							<i>The Modern Mermaids</i> — an entertainment at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago introduces synchronised swimming						
		1934	Lastex used in Australian made swimsuits			1934	A National Recreation Association study on the use of leisure time found swimming second only to movies in popularity. Jantzen introduced the Topper model, a 2 piece men's costume with a zip with which the top could be removed						
		1935	Black Lance detachable top men's swimsuit 'Buccaneer'			1935	Topless men's suits worn for first time in USA	1935	Mabs of Hollywood manufactured swimwear in Lastex – stain finish elastic and silk				
			Men start wearing trunks without tops to the beach				<i>Vogue</i> featured a two-piece for the first time		B.V.D. developed sea-satin-Lastex/rayon/acetate woven satin fabric				
			Spooner's beach fashion laws, New South Wales				American designer Claire McCardell creates a cut-out maillot that's seen as the forerunner of the bikini; her 'diaper' swimsuit is first introduced in this decade						
		1936	Advertisements start appearing for sun tanning oils			1936	Dorothy Lamour dons a sarong in <i>The Jungle Princess</i>			1936	Yves Saint Laurent born in Algiers	1936	First regular television broadcasts by BBC
						1936	Margit Fellegi, the Hollywood costume designer, begins collaborating with Cole of California, producing glamorous swimwear for the stars			1936	<i>Chambre Syndicale de la Couture</i> reorganized into its modern form in response to industrial unrest		
1937	Returned to United States	1937	Surfers Paradise Hotel opens			1937	Billy Rose produced first aquacade in Cleveland introducing swimming stars Esther Williams and Johnny Weissmuller			1937	Balenciaga moves his business to Paris		
		1938	February 6 — Black Sunday rogue wave — 250-300 swimmers rescued - 5 died					1938	DuPont launch nylon	1938	DuPont launch nylon		
			Long boards appear at Australian beaches										Launch of Schiaparelli's 'Shocking' perfume
													Christian Dior secures a position at Piguet

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1950s	Opened a health food shop at Long Beach	1951	Speedo Knitting Mills was incorporated and publicly traded			1951	First Miss World contest – UK – originally a festival of bikinis - now banned from the contest following the crowing of Miss Sweden in a bikini			1951	Villa Torregiani fashion show in Florence promotes Italian design to the world	1951	Festival of Britain
							Billy Rose produced first aquacade in Cleveland introducing swimming stars Esther Williams and Johnny Weissmuller						
			First bikinis appeared on Bondi Beach				Herbert Nigetson: Metric Products designed a seamless moulded bra cup-Curvelle				Christian Lacroix born		
							Florence Chadwick becomes the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways; repeats this feat in 1953 and 1955						
1952	<i>Million Dollar Movie</i> (film) tribute to Annette Kellerman starring Esther Williams	1952	Paula Stafford's bikini business is boosted by a beach inspector commenting that the Stafford bikini was too brief Nylon tricot tested for racing swimwear	1952	Victa Lawnmower was developed by Mervyn Victor Richardson	1952	First Miss Universe contest – sponsored by Catalina swimwear company			1952	Jean Paul Gaultier born	1952	Independent Group formed in London
			South Australian branch of Surf Life Savers formed										
			Watersun bathing suits appear										
		1953	Stafford makes the first reversible bikini, but doesn't take out a patent			1953	Body Glove & O'Neill begin experimenting with neoprene in wetsuits and swimwear	1953	Polyester commercially produced in the United States				
						1954	American <i>Vogue</i> extols the virtue of the one piece swimsuit			1954	Schiaparelli closes her business		
											Chanel reopens on the rue Cambon		
											Vince menswear shop opens near Carnaby Street, London		
											Giorgio Armani employed as a buyer at La Rinascente, Milan		
		1955	Avril Roberts named the first Miss Bikini at the Trocadero in Sydney, the prize if a Stafford bikini and a trip to the Gold Coast			1955	Dior designs his one and only swimwear collection for Cole of California			1955	Mary Quant opens Bazaar, King's Road, London Invention of Velcro	1955	Opening of Disneyland and first McDonald's Restaurant in the USA
							Diana Dors wears a mink bikini at the Venice Film Festival						First nude centrefold in Playboy
													Elvis Presley contracted by RCA
													James Dean stars in <i>Rebel with a Cause</i>
1956	Returned to Australia	1956	Speedo supplied swimmers at the Melbourne Olympic Games and receives international recognition. Swimwear made of silk/cotton Stafford organises the first bikini parade	1956	Melbourne hosts the Olympics	1956	Brigitte Bardot appears in a gingham two-piece in the film <i>And God Created Woman</i> , kick-starting a fad for the fabric						
			International Carnivals held at Torquay to coincide with the Melbourne Olympics. International Council of Life Saving was formed.										
			Paula Stafford's Sydney bikini parade to promote Gold Coast										
			Dawn Fraser wins gold medals for swimming at Olympic games in Melbourne										

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		1957	Speedo incorporates nylon/tricot to textile mix. Swimmers Lorraine Crap and Dawn Fraser work on the development of a new competitive swimsuit for Speedo Stafford designs a backless bikini	1957	Permanent Crease Trousers was developed by Dr Arthur Farnworth					1957	Dior dies	1957	Launch of Sputnik	
			Men's swimsuits are skirtless and briefer to aid swimmers in their quest for speed								Saint Laurent takes over as chief designer at Dior and launches his first collection under Dior the following year		Race riots in USA	
											Department of Dress established at St Martin's School of Art, London, by Muriel Pemberton		Treaty of Rome – launch of Common Market	
		1958	Queensland officially names the 'Gold Coast'							1958	Claire McCardell dies	1958	First commercial transatlantic flights	
													Simone de Beauvoir publishes <i>The Second Sex</i>	
1959	<i>Vogue</i> Australia launched	1959	Speedo Exports to the United States, New Zealand, Japan and South Africa	1959		1959	Cole of California produced its first mass produced bikinis for the American market	1959	Lykra and Spandex commercially produced in the United States	1959	Lykra introduced by DuPont	1959	Launch of the Barbie doll	
			Speedo invests in a British company to expand into Western Europe								Pierre Cardin expelled from the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture for launching a ready-to-wear collection			
		1960	First terry towelling bikini Speedo design a 1/4 front skirt for men Australian team wear navy nylon/tricot for the Olympics American Olympic team wear Speedo for first time			1960	By 1960, swim suits had become big business with mass distribution and mass markets				1960	Saint Laurent sues Dior for replacing him with Marc Bohan	1960	Introduction of the contraceptive pill
			Dawn Fraser wins gold medal for swimming at Olympic Games in Rome				Brian Hyland's Itsy-Bitsy Teenie-Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini climbs the record charts					1961	'Young Contemporaries' exhibition, London	
													Construction of the Berlin Wall	
						1962	<i>Dr No</i> launches the bikini-clad Bond girls			1962	First Yves Saint Laurent collection			
							Elvis Presley stars in <i>Blue Hawaii</i> , the first of his tropical films				Foundation of the Council of Fashion Designers of America			
											Quant designs for the American market			
						1963	Japanese invent an unsinkable bikini with a special plastic lining - 'Life-bikini'			1963	Issey Miyake graduates from Tama Art University, Tokyo	1963	Betty Friedan publishes <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>	
							NLSLA formed in the United States				<i>Cosmopolitan</i> Magazine launched (UK)		Assassination of John F. Kennedy	
						1963	Beach Party is the first film to pair Annette Funicello & Frankie Avalon			1963	Diana Vreeland appointed editor-in-chief US <i>Vogue</i>	1963	The Beatles World Tour	
		1964	Speedo (Europe) established in London	1964		1964	Rudi Gernreich designs the Monokini Racquel Welch stars in <i>One Million Years BC</i> (film) in a fur bikini			1964	Menswear course introduced at the Royal College of Art, London			
			Manly, New South Wales, becomes first Australian beach to host international board riding championships				<i>Sports Illustrated</i> launches its annual swimsuit issue							
			First recorded sighting of a topless swimsuit at Mona Vale Beach, Sydney											
			Dawn Fraser wins gold medal for swimming at Olympic Games in Tokyo											

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		1965	Leopard print the first textile design to be made in a nylon/Tricot racing range by Speedo	1965	Australian troops sent to Vietnam War	1965	Margit Feligi for Cole of California designed the 'scandal suits'			1965	Nova magazine launched in (UK)		
					Wine cask was invented by Thomas Angove						Costume Society formed in UK		
					Meter Maids introduced on Gold Coast						Saint Laurent 'Mondrian' collection		
		1966	Speedo granted a license to manufacture and distribute in Japan cross-back racing costume designed by Speedo - proves one of the most popular styles			1966	The film <i>The Endless Summer</i> , with Bruce Brown, narrates a surfer's quest for the perfect wave around the world			1966	Twiggy wins her first modelling contract	1966	The Cultural Revolution, China
											<i>Time Magazine</i> publishes 'Swinging London' article		
											Saint Laurent introduce 'Le Smoking' and launches Rive Gauche		
		1967	Speedo granted a license to manufacture and distribute in South Africa									1967	Summer of Love, San Francisco
			Rip Curl launched Stafford exports to the United States & UK										
1968	<i>The Great Stone Face</i> (film)	1968	Wattle design the first print to be worn at an Olympic Games in Mexico City designed by Speedo			1968	Yves Saint Laurent designs a garland bikini as a wedding outfit			1968	Balenciaga retires	1968	Student demonstrations
							Burt Lancaster stars in <i>The Swimmer</i> , a film based on the John Cheever short story of a man who confronts his life by swimming through his neighbours' suburban pools				Ralph Lauren launches Polo		
							The bikini is introduced - literally a three-piece set consisting of bottoms and separate stick-on bra cups				Fashion course receives degree status at Royal College of Art under Janey Ironside		
											Saint Laurent pioneers his 'Safari' look		
		1969	Brian Rochford collaborates with DuPont Australia and Heathcote Textiles to develop light weight Lycra fabrics for fashion swimwear							1969	Biba store opens in London	1969	First supersonic flight
			Rip Curl launched										First man on the moon
												1969	Stonewall gay riot, New York
												1969	Woodstock festival, USA
1970	Returned to Australia	1970	Quiksilver launched							1970	Issey Miyake designs uniforms for Osaka International Exposition and opens Tokyo design studio with Makiki Minagawa and Yadanori Yokoo	1970	Germaine Greer publishes <i>The Female Eunuch</i>
		1970s	Robin Garland label - regular editorial in <i>Vogue</i> and other glossies	1971	Neville Bonner becomes the first Aboriginal to be a Member of Parliament					1971	Saint Laurent poses naked for the launch of his men's fragrance		
			Brian Rochford designs profiled regularly in Australian fashion magazines								Chanel dies		
											Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood open the first incarnation of their shop Let It Rock, Chelsea, London		
											Mainbocher retires		

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Date	Annette Kellerman	Date	Australian Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Australian Events	Date	Global Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Textiles & Key Developments	Date	Breward 2003: Fashion	Date	Breward 2003: Events
		1972	Speedo is the first company to use T126 80% nylon/ 20% lycra in its swimwear			1972	East German swim team wear a 'Skin Suit' of fine knitted cotton which is transparent when wet at the Olympic games			1972	Balenciaga dies	1972	Alternative Miss World competition launched by Andrew Logan
							The Munich Olympic Games are launching pad for Lycra as a competitive swimwear fabric						
			Topless bathers appear on beaches				Mark Spitz winner of Olympic gold medals for swimming popularizes the 'grab' start						
		1973	DuPont Australia allocates Speedo exclusive rights for the newly developed nylon/Lycra T128 racing fabric	1973	Sydney Opera House opens	1973	Arena founded 1973 by Horst Dassler, son of the creator of Adidas			1973	Rei Kawakubo establishes Comme des Garçons	1973	US withdrawal from Vietnam
			Billabong launched								Costume Society of America launched		International oil crisis
1974	Honoured by the International Swimming Hall of Fame	1974	Speedo Canada established			1974	Rudi Gernreich launches the thong bathing suit			1974	Armani establishes his own label		
							Diane von Furstenburg re-engineered two triangles as a bandeau with central string halter				McClaren and Westwood relaunch their shop SEX		
							The string bikini arrives in the United States from Rio's Ipanema Beach						
1975	Kellerman dies	1975	Seafolly launched			1975	Christie Brinkley wears the first tanga designed by Giorgio di Sant'Angelo in Sports Illustrated			1975	Saint Laurent's tailored trouser suit for women photographed by Helmut Newton		
							The film <i>Jaws</i> tells of a 25 foot shark that bedevils a beach town						
		1976	Speedo is appointed official swimwear licensee for the Montreal Olympics Australian team wear the map print							1976	Miyake's 'Piece of Cloth'		
											Calvin Klein establishes his jeans label		
											McClaren and Westwood rename SEX as Seditonaries in tandem with the rise of punk		
		1977	Speedo moves in into Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe									1977	Opening of Studio 54 club, New York
													<i>Release of Never Mind the Bollocks</i> by the Sex Pistols
		1978	Speedo manufactures and distributes in Brazil Women allowed to wear a skirtless design suit							1978	Gaultier launches his first line		
			Churchgoers sign a petition to stop topless sunbakers at Bondi, no action was taken they were directed to use southern end of the beach.								Gianni Versace founds his own business		
												1979	Margaret Thatcher elected British Prime Minister
		1980	Speedo provides the Chinese team with training and equipment on their return to Olympic competition after absence of 40 years			1980s	Roll-style bathing suits			1980	<i>i-D</i> magazine launched (UK)	1980	Ronald Reagan elected President of the USA
			Thong suits and topless bathing on some beaches								<i>American Gigolo</i> (film) released with costume designs by Armani		

Timeline

Date	Annette Kellerman	Date	Australian Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Australian Events	Date	Global Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Textiles & Key Developments	Date	Breward 2003: Fashion	Date	Breward 2003: Events
		1980	Nude bathers arrested in Victoria										
				1981	Asian immigration increases			1981	<i>The Face</i> magazine launched (UK)				
											Westwood's first collection 'Pirate' launched		
		1982	Nude bathing allowed on some beaches			1982	Carol Alt models the v-kini for Sports Illustrated			1982	Kawakubo establishes herself in Paris		
			Surf Life Saving Association of Australia celebrates its 75th anniversary							1983	Gaultier introduces underwear as outerwear	1983	Apple Macintosh computer introduced
											Diana Vreeland's Saint Laurent Show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
				1984	<i>The Cooloongatta Gold</i> starring Grant Kenny filmed on location - Gold Coast	1984	The iconic image of the female bodybuilder Lisa Lyons in a Liza Bruce cut-away swimsuit, photographed by Robert Mapplethorpe is published			1984	John Galliano graduates from St Martin's School of Art, London	1984	Los Angeles Olympics
													Inauguration of the Turner Prize for innovative British art, Tate Gallery, London
						1985	Tyr Sports Inc launched			1985	Gaultier experiments with skirts for men	1985	Taboo Club, London
											Westwood introduces the 'mini-crini'		
											Donna Karan launches her first collection		
		1986	Speedo trademark protected in 112 countries	1986	<i>Time Magazine</i> dubbed Elle MacPherson 'the Body'	1986	Quiksilver INC in the US goes public						
		1987	Jets swimwear launched							1987	Lacroix opens his own couture house	1987	'Black Monday' economic crash
						late 1980s	J. Crew sold tops and bottoms separately - Dim and Huit in France				Westwood's 'Harris Tweed' collection launched		
				1988	Bicentenary: The new Parliament House opens in Canberra	1988	Poco Pano launched			1988	Miyake launches 'Pleats please'		
		1989	Jenny Kee collaborates with Speedo							1989	Armani launches his Emporio Armani line	1989	Demolition of Berlin Wall
		1990	Zimmermann swimwear launched			1990	Moschino designs the 'Turf Bikini' with actual lawn with its own irrigation system					1990	Introduction of the Internet
						1990	Cia Martima launched						
		1991	Speedo acquired by Pentland Group, UK			1990s	new freedom in the cuts of swimsuits...no restrictions recognised			1991	<i>Dazed and Confused</i> magazine is launched (UK)	1991	Gulf War
						1960s	tops & bottoms of bikinis can be different						
		1992	S2000 with microfibres and lycra elastomeric fibres launched, aimed to improve swimmers' performance by a further 15 per cent			1992	Barcelona Olympics 20 swimming teams wore Speedos			1992	Alexander McQueen graduates from Central St Martin's College of Art and Design, London	1992	EuroDisney opens near Paris
							Cole of California launches their Top Secret swimsuit, which inflates the breasts via a tiny air pump						
				1993	Underwater Computer – a world first - was developed by Bruce Macdonald for the Australian Institute					1993	Hussein Chalayan graduates from Central St Martin's College of Art and Design, London		
				1994	Sportswool was developed by CSIRO – a textile ideal for sportswear as it allows rapid dissipation of moisture								

Timeline

Date	Annette Kellerman	Date	Australian Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Australian Events	Date	Global Swimsuit and Swimming Events	Date	Textiles & Key Developments	Date	Breward 2003: Fashion	Date	Breward 2003: Events
										1995	Galliano appointed principal designer at Givenchy		
		1996	Speedo launches Aquablade -low friction drag fabric			1996	Eye Patch Bikini from Chanel			1996	Galliano moves to Dior		
							Michelle Smith - Irish won gold medal at Atlantic Olympics in Speedo Aquablade						
							Beach volleyball becomes an Olympic Sport: female athletes are officially required to wear two-pieces. Sports star Gabrielle Reece helps popularise the halterneck bikini				McQueen announced as Galliano's replacement at Givenchy		
										1997	Martin Margiela hired by Hermès	1997	Death of Princess Diana
											Versace murdered		Sensation exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London
											Fashion Theory (academic journal) first published, UK		Cloning of Dolly the Sheep
						1998	Rosa Cha launched						
							Quiksilver opens the largest surf shop in Europe on the Champs-Élysées in Paris						
		2000	Fastskin launched for Olympics - fabric mimics the dermal denticles of the shark	2000	Sydney hosts Olympics	2000	Galliano designs a punk bikini 'I'm yours boys'			2000	McQueen moves to Gucci		
			Ian Thorpe wins gold at Olympic games in Sydney				Arena develops Powerskin for swim competitors at the Olympic Games in Sydney - it absorbs 15% less water than regular swimwear and is super-light, it doesn't get significantly heavier in the pool				Armani exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum, New York		
		2001	Tigerlily launched									2001	Terrorist attack on World Trade Centre, New York
			aussieBum launched							2002	Saint Laurent retires	2002	Introduction of common European currency
		2004	Oscar & Elvis launched at Mercedes Australian Fashion Week										
			Ian Thorpe & Libby Lenton win gold medals for swimming at Olympic Games in Athens			2005	Rei Kawakubo collaborates with Speedo						
						2005	Rosa Cha creates a capsule collection for Speedo						
						2005	Gottex unveils the most expensive swimsuit to date - an \$18 million-dollar diamond design						
		2006	Anna & Boy launched at Mercedes Australian Fashion Week										
		2007	Tigerlily bought out by Billabong			2007	Daniel Craig as 007 emerges from the water in La Perla pale blue swimming trunks						
			Collette Dinnigan launches Cruise range with Australiana flora prints										
			1010 bikinis at Bondi Beach - Guinness World Record										
				2008	Perth swimmer Eamon Sullivan breaks Alex Popov's world record for the 50m freestyle in the LZR Racer by Speedo	2008	Speedo launches the LZR Racer						

3.4.3 Archive Study



3.4.3.1 Artefact Research

‘When garments survive, they add valuable information; after all clothing as we wear it cannot be an abstract concept. We cannot just look at clothes as rhetoric and metaphor, but must regard them in an intimate relationship with their wearers’ (Ribeiro 1998: 323).

To understand and discover the shape and direction that swimwear design has taken required an archival search of artefacts. The starting point was an individual, Annette Kellerman, and the living data: her vaudeville and competitive swimming costumes that are stored in the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. It provided an opportunity to connect with tangible evidence from the swimsuit’s formative years, dipping into memories that form a visual and tactile narrative, the first historical pattern piece.

According to Valerie Steele, ‘of all the methodologies used to study fashion history, one of the most valuable is the interpretation of objects’. She argues that ‘object-based research provides unique insights into the historic and aesthetic development of fashion’ (Steele 1998: 327). A model that has been a useful tool for analysis of the viewed artefacts was developed by E. McClung Fleming. It is a framework ‘oriented toward cultural history’, providing a formula for gathering significant facts about the artefact (Fleming 1973: 154), and involves classification of the object,; its history, material, construction, and design. Once information is collated the enquiry shifts to

an external evaluation of the relationship the artefact has to culture and interpretation of its cultural significance.

Operations	Information supplementing the artifact
4. Interpretation ←	Values of present culture
3. Cultural Analysis ←	Selected aspects of the artifact's culture
2. Evaluation (judgments) ←	Comparisons with other objects
1. Identification (factual description)	
The Artifact: History, Material, Construction, Design, and Function (Fleming 1973: 154)	

A preliminary visit to the Powerhouse Museum was undertaken in August 2005 to view a selection of Kellerman costumes. The museum also holds a number of historic and contemporary swimwear artefacts, both local and imported, including a significant collection of Speedo swimsuits. Glynis Jones, the assistant curator of decorative arts and design, supervised the examination of the general swimwear collection. The artefacts are stored in large pull drawers and the procedure was to view them without direct contact. When the artefacts required moving within the drawers, rubber gloves were worn to ensure no moisture or dirt was transferred. Although this preserves the garments from further deterioration, it reduces the amount of evidence that can be gathered about the construction of the garment. The swimsuits flattened on layers of tissue were only identifiable on a simplistic level. Photographs were not permitted, and a decision was made to make only minimal notes at this stage.

Many of the swimsuits are loosely dated and there is little information about their history due to the fact that ‘many manufacturers didn’t bother to sew on labels, relying on a swing tag to identify the brand’ (Cockington 2006). James Cockington suggests that a useful method of identification is through catalogues and magazines. Looking through the museum catalogues for design labels I had found in journals like *The Draper of Australasia* uncovered few examples, most likely a result of the perishable textile. Early swimsuits were generally made in wool, which, especially in Australia, meant they were likely to be eaten by moths, and swimsuits from the 1930s-1960s constructed with rubber yarns were susceptible to rot when exposed to salt and pool water.



Figure 3-8
Kellerman body stocking neck finishes



Figure 3-9
Kellerman bikini top: inside detail

The Annette Kellerman collection is stored in another section of the museum and Kimberley Webber, a senior curator, arranged for the relevant drawers to be brought out for viewing. Unlike the earlier examination, photographs were permitted, so digital images of a number of the artefacts were taken to create a sample database that illustrates the quality and style of Kellerman’s costumes. The catalogued information about these garments was vague and non-specific, identifying spans of time such as 1909-1940 or 1920s-1950s. The quality of manufacture was surprisingly basic, often

roughly hand-stitched and amateurish. The finish on the neck of the body stocking (Figure 3-8) has a crude large hook and eye closure on the collar. Figure 3-9, the inside of the bikini top from a performance outfit, circa 1940, is lined in cheap calico, the shoulder straps have been carelessly stitched in place, and the finishes are consistently poor. These garments have not been finely crafted and it is possible that Kellerman had attempted to maintain and repair them herself. This observation is speculative and fits with the possibility that the type of swimsuit Kellerman wore was not mass manufactured, but rather the result of an individual, creating hand-made or adapted garments.

There are two other Sydney museums that house substantial swimwear collections: the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) and the Manly Art Gallery and Museum. The Manly AGM has collected a diverse range of swimsuits from the 1920s through to the present and Sarah Johnson, curator/programs manager, organised a viewing of a cross-section of their collection. An interesting aspect was the sizing. There were a number of swimsuits that would have been worn by physically large wearers and some that were exceptionally small, almost child sizes. Seeing these garments and visualising both the wearer and where the swimsuit might have been worn shifted the focus to an external examination of the 'relationship of the artefact to its culture' (Steele 1998: 331). Many of these swimsuits were donated by locals who live around Sydney's northern beaches and the size variations reflect a willingness of Australians to embrace beach culture whether blessed with an ideal body or not.

The ANMM proved to have the most extensive collection of swimwear from the early 1900s to the present. A museum that is associated with big ships and seafaring

accoutrements is also a rich source of artefacts used for beach and leisure pursuits. A small cross-section of swimsuits was viewed and a print-out received with digitised images of each object: its dimensions; date label; description; and maker if known. Together, the museum collections build a picture of the type of swimsuits being worn by Australians in the past.

In the museum collections there are very few bathing suits produced before 1920. An exception is an Edwardian woman's swimming costume circa 1900, which is held at the ANMM. As it is fragile, it was not available for viewing. There are a number of Canadian-style two-piece bathing suits and one-piece styles from the 1910s through to the 1930s, which are predominantly wool in dark navy or black. A number of these artefacts revealed some modifications to the basic swimsuit form with shortened or lengthened straps. There is a swimsuit in the Powerhouse collection that appeared to be hand-knitted, which was, according to Speedo designer Gloria Mortimer-Dunn, common practice in the 1930s.



A number of advertisements for Patons Crocus wool were found in *The Home* quarterly issues (1930s), promoting the idea that 'seaside fashion' could be 'hand-worked' and, as the 'products of busy fingers, will be your pride during the season at

the beaches' (Crocus Knitting Wool 1930). It suggests that a number of participants were active producers of their beach attire.

A knitted bathing suit pattern 'with suntan back' found in a 1932 *Australian Home Journal* was knitted up with the intention of making a first-hand report of how it performed in the surf. As the originals were not available due to conservation issues, the reproduction could be used to demonstrate how an original woollen swimsuit would have performed when wet. The pattern was for a bust of size 32 inches and the completed swimsuit was by today's standards a petite, size 4-6. Owing to time constraints and the difficulties in finding a model of such proportions, the experiment was not undertaken. As a basic knitter, I can attest to the difficulty of knitting a swimsuit, a task that proved beyond my technical skills. It is thanks to my mother for patiently working her way through the cryptic instructions that a replica 1932 swimsuit was produced and is a potential sample for future experiments. A search for other hand-knitted swimsuit patterns led to vintage pattern websites and eBay where it is possible to purchase them.





Figure 3-12
Sample hand-knitted swimsuit from 1932
pattern *Australian Home Journal*

There are a variety of designs and patterns still available, which is evidence that it was popular for beach participants to hand knit their own bathing suits in the 1920s to the 1940s. A man's knitted costume circa 1920, a woman's one-piece halter neck style from 1948, and a sportswear knitting book (Figures 3-13, 3-14 and 3-15) have been added to a growing collection of hand-knitted swimsuit patterns and may possibly contribute to a future swimsuit exhibition.

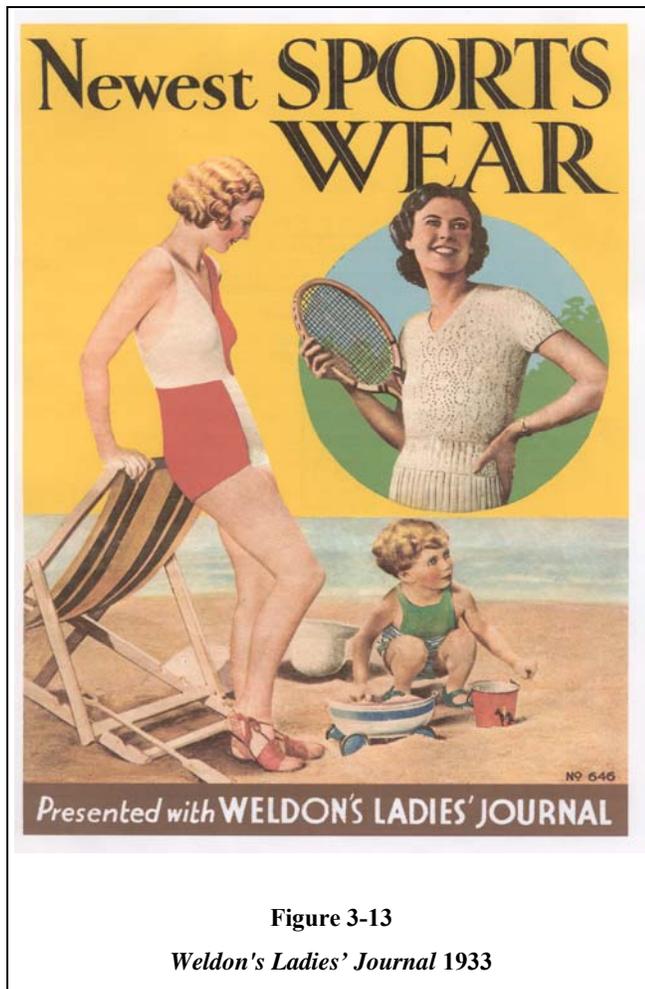


Figure 3-13
Weldon's Ladies' Journal 1933

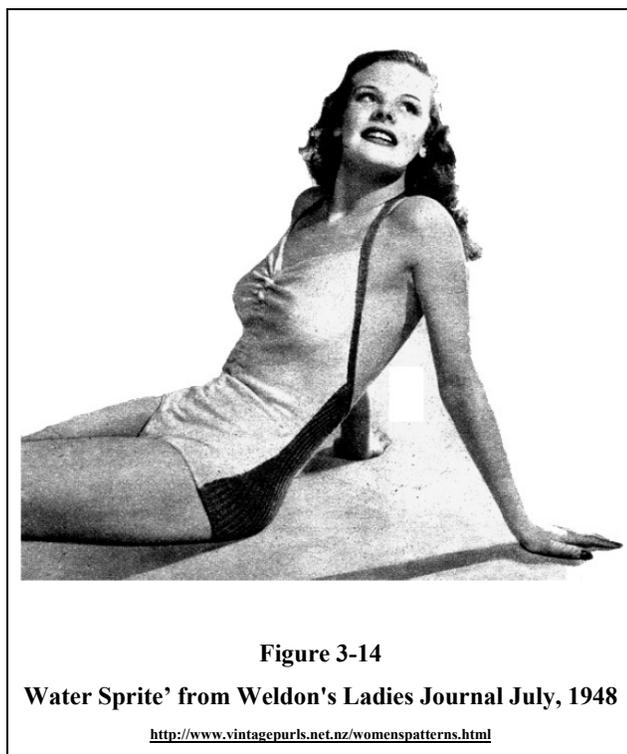


Figure 3-14
 'Water Sprite' from *Weldon's Ladies Journal* July, 1948
<http://www.vintagepurls.net.nz/womenspatterns.html>

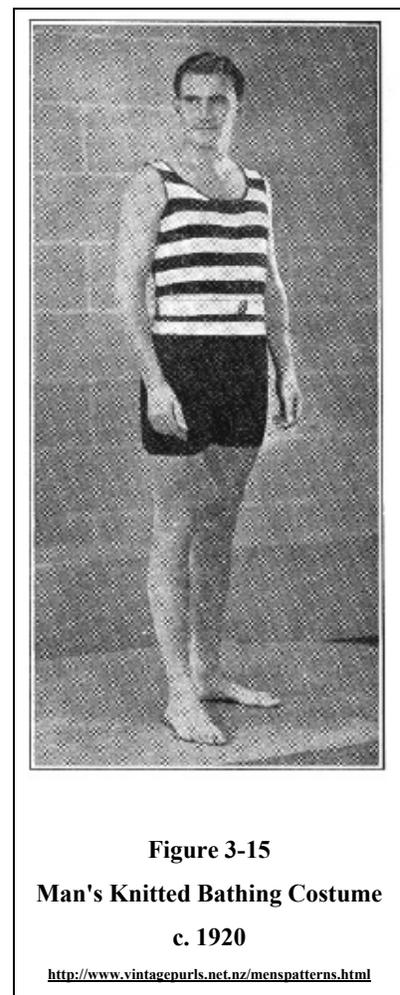


Figure 3-15
 Man's Knitted Bathing Costume
 c. 1920
<http://www.vintagepurls.net.nz/menspatterns.html>

Most of the museum artefacts were commercially produced; however, as there is little information about Australian manufacturing from 1900 to 1960, and even less about swimsuit manufacture, what was of interest was establishing whether the garments held in the collections were made in Australia and, if so, did they represent an Australian style. The Speedo objects were predominantly swimsuits that would have been worn for competitive swimming, with the company's March Past costumes for surf lifesaving being the more interesting pieces from a design perspective. To establish who the manufacturer was a list was compiled from swimsuit advertisements from *The Draper of Australasia* and used as a guideline (Appendix 3). In the museum collections, most of the swimsuits are Australian made, including the Jantzen swimsuits that were manufactured in Australia from the late 1920s. Although there is evidence of a robust local swimsuit industry in the 1930s and 1940s, there are few examples of their swimsuits in the collections.

There were few differences in the quality of make of the swimsuits viewed from these early decades. Many of the swimsuits appeared to have been well-worn, suggesting the wearers engaged in an active outdoor lifestyle or aquatic sports. As the search continued through the decades, artefacts produced by the designers were researched, including Paula Stafford, Watersun, and contemporary designers Zimmermann and Mambo. The process of sighting historical garments that were either connected to Kellerman or to specific decades of the 20th century has given textural and visual substance to this study and led to searches for archival images and text to assist in both the identification of artefacts and to build a comprehensive picture of an Australian style.



3.4.3.2 Archival Study – Visual and Literary Sources

According to Lou Taylor: ‘Dress historians have always drawn on literary sources to lend accuracy and historical “feel” to their work’ (Taylor 2002: 90). A lack of accompanying information relating to production in catalogued swimwear artefacts raised the question: Who were and are the manufacturers? What are the identifiable stylistic components of Australian swimsuits?

It led to sourcing information in journals, newspapers, and magazines. The Powerhouse Museum research library contains a comprehensive collection of *The Draper of Australasia* from 1902-1963. These trade journals provide a source of information about clothing and fashion that was available from import businesses and local manufacturers during this period and the process has been to search all volumes sequentially for any information about swimwear. The earliest entries were found in the 1909 journals, but there were no accompanying images prior to 1913. By the mid 1920s, the number of swimwear advertisements started to increase, and by 1930 there were special editions featuring swimwear. Australia’s oldest department store, David Jones, opened in 1838 and by the 1890s offered their customers the opportunity to purchase goods via mail-order catalogues. A cross-section of swimwear images was obtained from the company’s archival department and, combined with the images and information from *The Draper of Australasia* journals represent building blocks for creating a database of images and text that has informed this research project. A

distilled volume of images, 1905–1980, from Sears, a popular American mail-order catalogue, has been obtained and used for comparison purposes. *The Home*, an Australian quarterly magazine from 1920-1942 is a source of articles about Australian beach life, fashionable swimsuits, and features on beach culture in Europe. Fashion magazines including: Australian, English and American *Vogue*, *Harpers Bazaar*, *Mode*, and *Marie Claire* are a source of images and accompanying text that describe the work of Australian and international swimwear designers and companies.

The text in catalogues and trade journals supplied detailed information about the types of textiles and trims that were used in the production of swimsuits and included the design attributes that were important to a garment's saleability, in particular the fit and potential resistance to sagging or shrinking. The advertisements proved a useful tool for dating when Lastex was available to Australian manufacturers and styles such as the two-piece swimsuit and men's swimsuits with detachable tops were marketed locally. Captions promoted the charm and value of the merchandise with advertisements referencing 'surfing days' and featuring endorsements by enthusiastic swimmers alluding to a lifestyle that was distinctly Australian. Buyers' notes and editorial from overseas and local correspondents flesh out the picture supporting the notion of an Australian style. In addition to quite detailed manufacturing information, magazines like *The Home* provide a social snapshot of carefree participants at beach hotspots, with sea and sand as the equalising backdrop. The swimsuits were the standard variety worn by all; however, the captions suggest the young ladies and matrons captured were from good families, informing the reader of their connections, in case there was any uncertainty about their lineage: 'Miss Alison Fenner, daughter

of Mr and Mrs Norman Fenner, niece of Mrs Percy Chirnside'. The inclusion of articles by writers like Jean Curlewis, mentioned in the contextual review, demonstrate an interest magazine readers had in outdoor leisure pursuits and, combined with the feature pages of locals at play, expressed the character and social attitudes of Australian beach culture.

In part, due to the demise of trade journals and less detailed department store catalogues since the 1960s, fashion magazines have added another layer of material to the database. 1959 was the inaugural year of Australian *Vogue*, and marks a starting point for establishing what type of swimsuits were included in fashion editorials: who they were produced by; how they were photographed; and whether or not there was evidence of an Australian style or influence.



Figure 3-16
Miss Alison Fenner
***The Home* February 1st,**
1926

Existing copies of Kellerman's silent movies were an opportunity to view the exotic costumes she wore in the underwater sequences, some of which may have been in the Powerhouse collection. The films illustrated how she negotiated the underwater ballet sequences and maintained a natural, relaxed demeanour, smiling and laughing as though she were on the surface breathing freely. The glittering costumes shimmer in the water, creating a magical quality, and Kellerman is an enchanting mermaid, playfully gazing with delight at her reflection in a hand mirror. Compared to the Esther Williams' aquacades, the costumes and routines are quite primitive, and the use of motley goldfish to create Kellerman's underwater world is more aquarium than

Neptune's kingdom. Unlike the Kellerman movies, which have been lost or destroyed, most of Williams' movies can and have been accessed for this study. It would seem there are two Williams' camps: one that believes she had limited acting ability and was only a star when wet; and one comprising of diehard fans who believe she was a great Hollywood talent. Either way, MGM did create a sub-genre to cater for her unique swimming, diving, and water ballet skills, building on a form of fantasy film Kellerman had created 40 years earlier. The movies provide examples of their on-screen mermaid personas and excellent examples of the type of costumes they wore.

Two documentaries, *The Original Mermaid* (2004) and *Nothing to Hide* (1996) have archival footage of early beach life in Australia, with *Nothing to Hide* splitting the swimsuit into bite-size segments including: the early days; beauty; competitive swimming; surfing; and the future. As mentioned in the literature review, although the footage was at times confusing due to the mix of American and Australian film clips, it did however, 'give "life" to static objects' (Taylor 2002: 188) unlike the artefacts that had already been viewed at the Sydney museums. All of these visual and literary sources represent a broad spectrum of data acquisition, resulting in an extensive historical knowledge-base about Australian and global swimwear design, and, as with the timeline, is constantly being updated and added to as new material is accessed and collected.

Gray and Malins comment: 'Any kind of formal research is worthless if aspects of it are not disseminated in the public domain in some way' (Gray and Malins 2004: 177). The body of data that has been collated reveals rich sources of historical artefacts and ephemera related to the evolution of the swimsuit and its development in Australia.

From discussions with curators, there have only been two major swimsuit exhibitions in the last 20 years, both at the Manly Art Gallery and Museum. They were:

- ‘Necks to Nothing’ in 1985-86, a hemline history of the development of the swimsuit in the 20th century;
- ‘Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny – A Brief History of the Bikini’ in 2004, tracking the social and cultural developments associated with the bikini in the 20th century;

The ANMM and the Powerhouse Museum have extensive swimwear collections, including the Annette Kellerman collection, yet neither have to date had an exhibition focusing exclusively on the swimsuit. The Powerhouse has included swimwear in larger exhibits:

- Inspired: Style Across Time;
- Style: Decorative Arts and Design;
- Australian Innovation;
- Fashion of the Year;
- Sport: More Heroes and Legends;
- Australian Fashion: the Contemporary Art;

The ANMM exhibits a selection of Kellerman and general swimwear artefacts from time to time, and has a permanent beach and surf culture exhibition. Globally, searches have shown that there have been a number of swimwear exhibitions at regional galleries and museums and, in 1990, there was a major exhibition at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, ‘Splash: A History of Swim Wear’, curated by Richard Martin and Harold Koda. According to Roberta Smith, not only pictures but objects tell a story, ‘especially when similar ones are grouped in orderly

profusion’, as they were in this particular exhibition. Smith describes the pleasures of viewing ‘a faux swimming pool, a haunting simulation of beach and boardwalk inhabited by swimsuit-clad torsos that suggest fallen caryatids washed less by saltwater than by the sands of time’. Following this poetic description, Smith comments that the exhibition broaches ‘many esthetic issues, including truth to materials, the relationship of form to function, the difference between style and fashion, touching on the intertwining histories of taste, propriety and design’ (Smith 1990). An intended outcome of this study is to contribute to a swimsuit exhibition, an antipodean update in the noughties to an apparently outstanding Fashion Institute of Technology, New York display that interpreted American and European swimwear in the 1990s. It is an opportunity to knit together the swimsuit historically and through contemporary fashion practice, in the process inserting Australia into the big picture and carving a niche for an Australian style.



3.4.3.3 Oral History and Interviews

Archival study is interwoven with recollections from retired swimsuit designers, providing an opportunity for producers to share their knowledge about Australian swimwear and the developments in the industry over the last 70 years. Initially, the intention was to undertake semi-formal interviews shaped by a series of questions, but on meeting the interviewees and attempting this format, I discovered they were determined to divulge their life stories, deviating quickly from any questions I asked. Gloria Mortimer-Dunn, Speedo designer 1962-1991, Paula Stafford, and Brian Rochford were the primary sources of information about Australian designers’

stylistic contributions from the 1940s to 1990s. A key motivation for conducting these interviews was to access any editorial they may have received during their careers that can add details to the Australian Style working pattern. It was also an opportunity to view additional archival artefacts and samples that have not been collected by the museums. Maxwell clarifies how to develop good interview questions, explaining that, unlike the research questions that represent the researcher's understanding of the study, interview questions should elicit information from the interviewees that will contribute to answering the research questions (Maxwell 1996: 74). Using this as a guideline, the questions were formulated around finding out about the interviewees: their design education and early practice; methods of design and manufacture; textiles used and possible contributions to textile development; and their opinion of Australian swimsuit design versus European and American swimsuit design.

Reviewing the transcripts from the recorded conversations with Mortimer-Dunn and Stafford, they represented more oral histories than interviews, fitting with Taylor's description of the 'essence of oral history', where 'it can catch hold of people's memories through their own voices' (Taylor 2002: 241). It did reveal relevant information about their design practice, experiences as producers, approach to manufacturing and choice of textiles, who they believed their direct competitors were, and what they thought was important about Australian swimsuit design.

In Stafford's case, her early career was driven partially by economic hardships incurred from a less than successful jointly-owned business she ran with her husband. She had studied design in Melbourne prior to moving to the Gold Coast and understood the basic principles of pattern construction, which she applied to

developing patterns that could be adjusted for individual wearers. She commented that, 'I just made them up as I went along, and I made blocks straight away for my best sellers'. Discussing the fabrics she used, she recalled meeting salesmen who came over from Switzerland, representing the best fabric houses that mainly produced fine cottons. She had some knowledge of their fabrics and had purchased their merchandise at retail in the early years when her production numbers were small. We discussed Nylon Tricot and Lycra, textiles she never used, even though she had access to them in the 1960 and '70s. Stafford knew that they would replace the cottons and silks that were part of her signature style, but she was reluctant to experiment with the new stretch fabrics that required specialised skills that neither she, nor her staff had. In the 1950s, her use of lightweight natural fibres contrasted with the American swimsuit imports, which were tightly structured and made in heavy synthetics. Reminiscing about a Cole of California two-piece swimsuit she had worn in the early 1940s, she commented that it was very conservative and inspired her to create a swimsuit style that was briefer and fun to wear. Stafford's swimsuit innovations included using textiles not traditionally used for swimsuit production by the larger manufacturers in the United States and Europe and creating styles that were exceptionally brief. Combined with her ability to attract regular publicity, the label represented an Australian approach to swimsuit design suited to a beach culture and a more relaxed attitude to public body exposure.

By comparison, Gloria Mortimer-Dunn's approach to swimsuit design was influenced by her early design career working in the UK for Horrockses Fashion Ltd, where she worked as a patternmaker for the head designer John Tullis, and later in Sydney for California Production Pty Ltd, who were licensed to manufacture both Horrockses

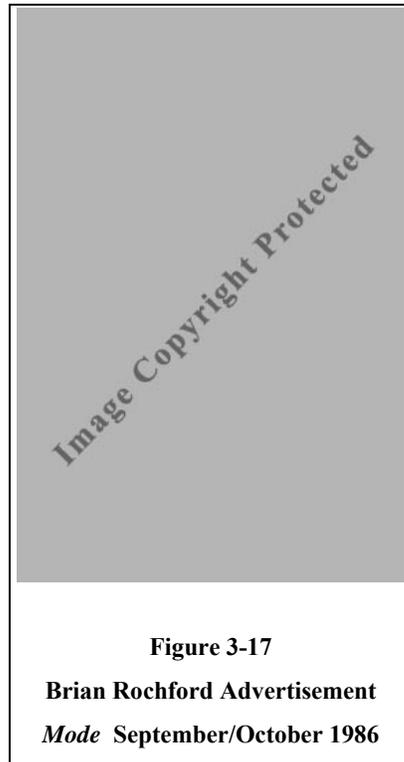
Fashions and Cole of California swimsuits. Mortimer-Dunn had access to international fabrics and established manufacturing systems. When she started working for Speedo in 1962, the company had established a reputation for its performance swimwear. She mentioned that when new textiles were developed, the salespeople from the textile companies would contact them to arrange a showing, commenting that 'we were a big company and did volume so we were well worthwhile'. Effectively, this freed Mortimer-Dunn to focus on experimenting with the cut of the swimsuit and print designs, many of which were received with mixed reviews. She worked closely with Australia's Olympian swimmers testing and revising according to their feedback, a working relationship which led to Speedo's reputation as 'the swimsuit for serious swimmers'.

Mortimer-Dunn's attitude was always that Speedo was a global player selling to swimmers everywhere and it is only in the noughties that the company, now British owned, has been tapping into its Australian heritage. In an interview with Speedo International, vice president of marketing, Paul Phedon, Joanna Doonar suggested that Speedo's Australian roots have played a limited role in selling the brand, with Phedon noting: 'Speedo is a global brand so people think it's created in their own market', continuing that, there was a rationale for reconnecting Speedo to Australia as 'Australian brands have a personality perfect for swimwear because Australia has a reputation for fantastic coastlines and poolside living. People trust iconic Australian brands to have excellent swimwear for to the extensive use' (Doonar 2005). Mortimer-Dunn's design approach was tied to collaborations with individual elite athletes, initially the Australian swimmers. It demonstrates how a company established and maintained a global presence using sport as its calling card.

An interesting aspect of Mortimer-Dunn's recollections was the omission of Peter Travis, Speedo's head designer from 1959 -1962, who became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in January 2008 for his work as a designer, sculptor, ceramicist, kite-maker, and teacher. It reveals a potential weakness in material gathered from interviewees who reconfigure the past to their own ends. I managed to track Travis down by telephone on January 14, 2008 to discuss his time at Speedo. Apparently Speedo had wanted him to copy a pair of swimming trunks with Hawaiian prints that had been bought back from an overseas trip by one of the company executives. Travis refused to comply, convinced that the real breakthrough would be to design briefer trunks that were more functional. The design intent was to create something 'you can swim in', focusing on the hip as the stable point of the male body as opposed to the waist. Travis experimented with the cut, optimising performances by shaping the pattern to account for leg movement. The trunks he designed were '98% of Speedo's image but just 2% of the sales' (Doonar 2005). In Travis' opinion, Australia was positioned to do something better than copy overseas designers' work. Inspired by his early childhood experiences growing up in Manly, Sydney, where he swam regularly in his cotton Speedo one-piece swimsuit, he determined to develop a uniquely Australian style, a style globally recognised as the standard in men's swimwear.

Brian Rochford was another primary source of historical information for this study and I conducted two telephone interviews with him and a day-long in-house interview discussing his experience as a fashion designer, as well as scouring boxes of editorial from the late 1960s to the mid-1990s. At his request, our discussion was not recorded.

Rochford started in the ragtrade working for his mother, who was a well-known Sydney milliner, before moving on to designing ‘trendy clothes for the youth market’ in the Carnaby Street days of the 1960s. His early labels were Splash Out and Dollywear by Brain Rochford and he recalled ‘the fabrics initially used were weird and wonderful and an incentive to start developing textiles with local mills’.



Rochford was particularly interested in swimwear design and started deconstructing the stiff and padded designs that were popular at this time. He realised that there was a need to introduce textiles that would fit the body snugly, leading to a three-year collaboration with DuPont and Heathcote Textiles in Melbourne to develop Lycra fabrics for fashion swimwear. Rochford was an innovator, introducing the concept of separates which allowed wearers to purchase different size bikini tops and bottoms,

effectively ensuring any girl/woman from a size 8-16 could be kitted out in a Rochford swimsuit. The ranges were in line with general fashion trends, offering a plethora of styles in both one-piece and two-piece designs and, according to Rochford, his design direction was influenced by the buyers and what was selling. The promotional campaigns for the seasonal ranges were fresh, fun and, in addition, early examples of the swimsuit designer raising his profile through personalised messages. Rochford believes that Australians were leaders in swimsuit design because it is a form of fashion where everything was emergent so there was nothing to copy. The best swimwear was our own, because it was built in a beach culture.

Interviews were sought with a number of established contemporary labels, including Zimmermann, Jets and Tigerlily; however, they chose not to respond. In order to establish another perspective on contemporary Australian swimsuit design, email interviews were conducted with Edwina McCann, fashion editor for *The Australian*, and Julia Utz, the buyer for David Jones women's swimwear. The questions covered the following concepts: local versus import; specific qualities of Australian swimsuit design; cutting edge brands; and future directions. Both interviewees reported that they felt Australian swimwear designers bridged the gap between function and fashion, going on to suggest that Tigerlily, Jets, Collette Dinnigan, Lover, and Anna & Boy were the most innovative. Utz confirmed a higher percentage of local to import in the buying mix, commenting that international swimwear was 'a little more fashion forward and glamorous due to the nature of the wearer', who wore their swimwear for shorter periods. In Utz's opinion, Australian swimwear designers had broken new ground by incorporating 'different "needs" from high fashion to performance

swimwear, and cannot be interpreted in one way', supporting the view that Australia has a unique approach to swimsuit design.

The significance of the material gathered from the respondents was to gain an understanding of Australian swimsuit producers from sources who have been involved in building the industry, an important pattern piece. Interviewing a contemporary buyer for a major department store and a fashion commentator contributed to an understanding of how intermediaries view Australian swimsuit design and, used in conjunction with material gathered from fashion magazines and newspapers, creates a more comprehensive picture of which swimsuit designers are the pick of the crop and why. The data then viewed in relationship to the archival data gathered from journals and catalogues, adds shape to the Australian contribution to the swimsuit's evolution.



3.4.4 Textual Analysis

The studio practice method of visualising concepts and using selective images to describe the relationship between the collective, the individual, and the swimsuit, leads to textual analysis as a method of revealing the layers contributing to its design evolution. Using images from sources including: fashion magazines; trade journals; store catalogues; specialty magazines (e.g. *Sports Illustrated*, *Alpha*); beach photography (Max and Rex Dupain); historical Australian magazines (the *Lone Hand*, *Walkabout*, and *The Home*); material from films, newspapers, and internet sites; produces a wide-ranging reading of the swimsuit. Plotting the roles of participants and participation sites through these mediums recognises the diverse influences on the fashion process and maps relationships, creating a community of meanings that is articulated through the included images. The process illustrates the swimsuit's journey from invention and design refinement, through modifications and tweaking, to its inclusion as a global fashion item.

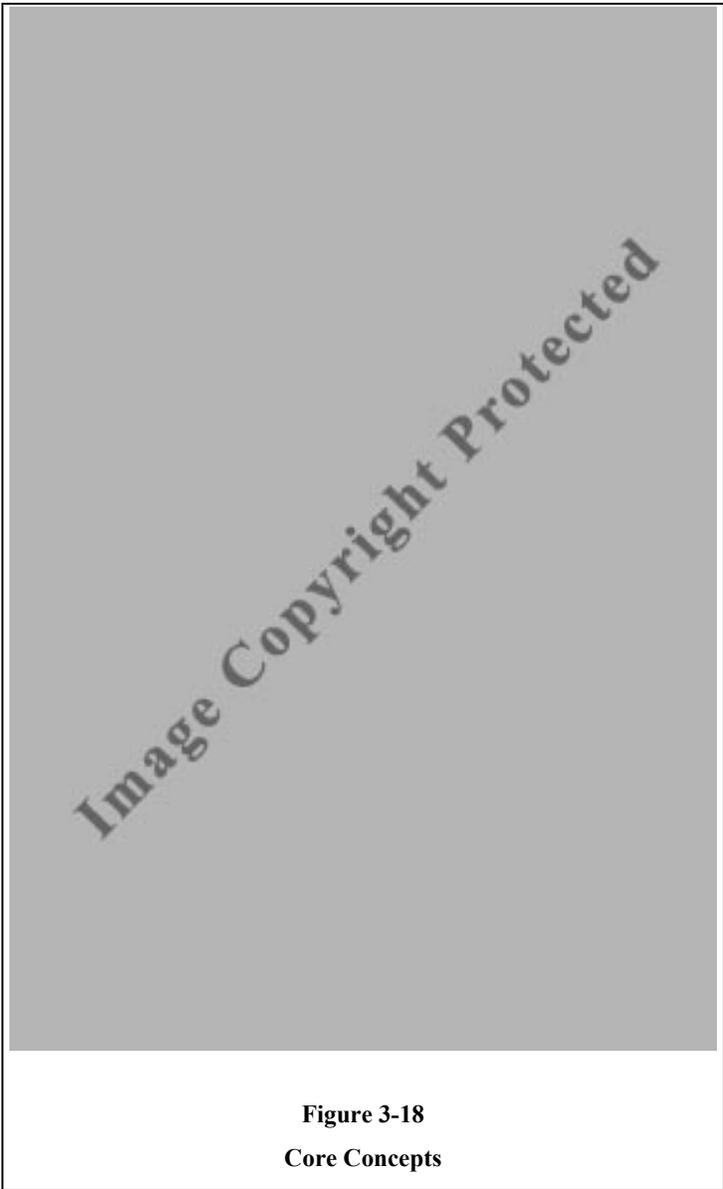


Figure 3-18
Core Concepts



The Fashion Model is used as a tool to identify and pinpoint where to look for potential material, and images are used as an anchor to visually articulate the participants and participation sites in this study. Historical and contemporary narratives are structured around the images, underpinned by the patternmaking method to articulate and build the picture, developing a pattern that includes the images on a pattern timeline in the form of a swimsuit maillot, (Figure 3-19). Creating

patterns and piecing them together structuring ideas that represent a significant part of the methodological approach to this study. Figure 3-18 is the result of formulating core concepts guided by the Venn diagram. These concepts are then used to develop a detailed analysis of the patterned images that materialise from the accumulated sources. The maillot pattern gathers the swimsuit into global fashion through a series of images from 1900–2008, producing a visual articulation of the process in the same way a patternmaker uses a design pattern to visualize the relationship between the finished pattern shapes and the completed garment (Armstrong 1987: 113).

The methodological structure and methods developed for this study are the result of a fashion researcher seeking to develop a research framework that places fashion at the centre of the analytical process and is a reflexive response to existing methods of fashion analysis. Constructing a holistic model that is inclusive rather than exclusive can lead to a less-prescriptive paradigm that does not discount the researcher's vision or intuition. The approach draws on existing methods of both object-centred and academic approaches that Taylor describes as the 'Great Divide', one which is slowly being replaced by a multi-disciplinary approach that encourages the development of creative and innovative approaches to fashion history, theory, and contemporary practice (Taylor 1998: 338-355).

4 Annette Kellerman: the Birth of the Modern Swimsuit

4.1 Introduction

Information gathered for this study about Kellerman's life and the events surrounding her career as a sportswoman and performer have been predominantly sourced from: the 2005 biography by Gibson and Firth and the SBS documentary, *Original Mermaid*, which her biographers contributed to. Firth met and interviewed Kellerman just before her death in 1975 and was given access to performance-related costumes and ephemera she had collected during her lifetime. Combined with Kellerman's publications on physical beauty and her 'how to swim' manual, the data and images sketch a picture of who she was and what her major achievements were. The Gibson, Firth biography and Kellerman's own work tend to read like fairy tales at times, with the inclusion of fictional dialogues and narratives that create an additional layer to the Kellerman mythology.

Piecing together existing material about Kellerman leads to the question: Who was this woman and why is she central to this study? To date, Kellerman has been connected with Australian contributions to sport, vaudeville, and film. In terms of fashion, she has been mentioned by costume historians as the inventor of the one-piece bathing suit as a result of her arrest at Revere Beach for indecent exposure; however, at this juncture there is no recorded evidence of such an arrest. Further, it would not be until the 1920s that the swimsuit would join the 'fashionable set', therefore arguably her contribution can not be directly related to fashion. Her movies,

most of which have been lost, are rarely mentioned by film historians, overlooked in favour of films like *Birth of a Nation* released the year before Kellerman's *Daughter of the Gods* in 1915. The Kellerman movies were shot on location using innovative cinematic techniques, including the first underwater film sequences to include actors and, it could be argued, led to the birth of the fantasy film genre.

Kellerman's achievements in the early 20th century suggest she was an aspirational individualistic woman who challenged traditional women's roles, navigating her way through industries that were known for their exploitation of women and, in the process, carving a niche as an expert on women's health, beauty, and physical fitness. She avoided a 'cheesecake' – siren persona and was lauded as the 'Perfect Woman'. According to Wilson, characteristics associated with feminism relate to the notion of women having the ability to make independent choices and, although we are 'socially determined ... we consistently search for the crevices in culture that open us moments of freedom' (Wilson 2003: 244). It suggests that Kellerman is a 'fit' with feminism, although her importance to the movement has not been acknowledged to date. She contributed directly: to fashion as an inventive individual patterning new swimsuit styles for women; to film by producing fantasy movies in exotic locales; to sport by showing a woman could take on the challenge of long distance swims and high dives and compete against men and win; and to women as a role model encouraging self-motivation and self-development.

Annette Kellerman is central to this study and the Venn diagram will be used as a guide to identify how she influenced the evolution of the modern swimsuit. The interconnecting fields between Australia, fashion, and the swimsuit are democratic modernity, sport, and active glamour, fusing into a central theme of bodily spectacle.

The intention is to explore Kellerman's contribution in a narrative form, drawing out how and why she is integral to the understanding of the swimsuit's inclusion as a fashionable garment.

4.2 The Modern Woman

Two terms arose in the late 1800s – one European-American, and one distinctly Australian – to describe the rise of a new class of women who were actively changing and challenging traditional notions of femininity: the New Woman and the Australian Girl. Roberts suggests that the 'new woman' was a popular term invented in 1894 by Sarah Grand, a British journalist, to describe a rise of a new class of women who were actively changing and challenging traditional notions of femininity. These women chose participation sites such as the theatre and newspapers for creating cultural visibility and a source of financial independence. They were seen to originate from England and America, 'in the context of feminist activism but also in conjunction with bohemian artistic circles and the rise of women's colleges' and most likely belonged to an elite social group (Roberts 2002: 21).

During this period, Australia was still struggling for cultural independence and a national identity that was distinct from its image as one of Britain's colonial outposts. 'The Bushman' had come to embody the 'real Australian' and created a connectedness with bush life and non-urban values (Maynard 1994: 175-6), and by Federation in 1901 a female counterpart had emerged in the form of 'the Australian Girl'. She was wholesome, sporty, and fearless and 'she boldly stood for modernity and independence' (Woollacott 2001: 155). This image of the Australian Girl

captured the imagination of Australian society to the point where Ethel Castilla saw fit to write a poem summing her up:

Her frank, clear eyes bespeak a mind
Old-world traditions fail to bind,
She is not shy
Or bold, but simply self-possessed.
Her independence adds a zest
Unto her speech, her piquant jest,
Her quaint reply.

An Australian Girl, by Ethel Castilla, 1900
(cited by Woollacott 2001: 157-8)

Australian girls were travellers and Britain was a popular destination as Australia was still culturally and socially knitted to the idea of the Motherland, a land where civilizing values and higher arts could be learnt and achieved. Dame Nellie Melba is an example, having flourished in England before triumphantly returning as an internationally renowned opera singer. London was a thriving metropolis, a symbol of modernity and progressiveness, and for Kellerman it was an opportunity to ‘swim back the family fortune’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 21). Like many other women leaving Australia, it was the first step to emancipation and self-development; stepping away from the context of national familiarity gave them the freedom for self-construction, invention, and reinvention.

There are similarities between the Australian Girl and the New Woman, including the key characteristics of self-possession and the ability to combine both tradition and novelty to negotiate a balance between personal freedom and social acceptance. Susan Shapiro finds evidence of the existence of the ‘New Woman’ from as early as the 1300s, arguing that she ‘was never “new” merely ‘ridiculed as a phenomenon of the moment, wholly unknown to ages past’. These women were likely to be from the aristocratic or upper-middle classes and, a position of privilege that gave them the

freedom to strive for equality and non-traditional roles (Shapiro 1991: 510). Thus, the concept of ‘new woman’ was not original, but rather emerged cyclically with every era leading to a re-evaluation of progressive women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Roberts contends that the ‘new woman’ of the fin-de siècle segued into the ‘modern woman’ of the 1920s who would continue to extend the terrain; however, the key difference is that anyone and everyone *could* be a modern woman – ‘modernity’ was a mass phenomenon (Roberts 2002: 249).

The transformation was far from seamless, as it required the breakdown of class distinctions and social hierarchies often reinforced by strong cultural markers such as: fashion; education; taste; and social/familial standing. By international standards, Annette Kellerman was not a member of an elite social group, rather she was an ambitious Australian woman determined to make her mark on an international stage. Leaving Australia became the first step to emancipation and self-development for the modern woman and stepping away from the context of national familiarity gave her the freedom for self-construction. It is possible to regard Kellerman as a predecessor of feminism in equating women with men, especially through taking on the masculine roles as a saviour in her films (*Venus of the South Seas* and *Daughter of the Gods*). She was no simpering heroine awaiting rescue by a strong and dominant male; she determined to be both heroine and hero. Kellerman expressed her independence and self-possession in daring swimsuits styled on the existing swimsuit design for men; a modern woman adoptive, adaptive, and shaped for speed. The significance of fashion to the self-construction of a modern woman like Kellerman can be explored through display, production, and consumption. Mary Louise Roberts’ study of fashion between 1917 and 1927 argues that it is not merely mirroring the social and political

changes of the period, but is a visual articulation of how women were redefining female identity – expressing the conflict between traditional feminine roles and the shift towards personal development (Roberts 2003: 67-9, 85). Kellerman played a role in the evolution of the modern swimsuit and the style of designs that emerged.



Figure 4-1

**‘La Femme Moderne.... in control, self-assured,
capable...adventurous, independent.’**

Chadwick and Latimer, 2003: 3

In Figure 4-1 she communicates the freedom of expression experienced through a body unencumbered by the unwieldy and billowing bathing costumes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, creating instead a sense of well-being and joie de vivre. Standing on the rocks with waves lapping at her feet she is empowered, challenging

the ocean and a society that assumes a woman incapable of the athleticism required to tackle long distance swimming or daring dives.

Kellerman and the bathing suit represent an early prototype of the modern woman and a simplified modern contemporary style. The bathing suits and costumes Kellerman created for performance promoted the idea of the modern woman as active, liberated, and glamorous, contributing to the perception of the swimsuit as fashionable and desirable. She embodied a new aesthetic for the 20th century, ushering in the philosophy that ‘the fundamental basis for feminine beauty is the body as a whole – the figure’ (Kellerman 1918: 21). That is, the body as a site of fashionable construct. She used her Australian-ness as a promotional tool in her early performances in London, tapping into the vibrancy of the ‘Australian girl’, projecting an image of a self-assured, independent, youthful adventuress. She was the Coo-ee girl and champion lady diver who was encouraging women around the world to throw away their corsets and embrace a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

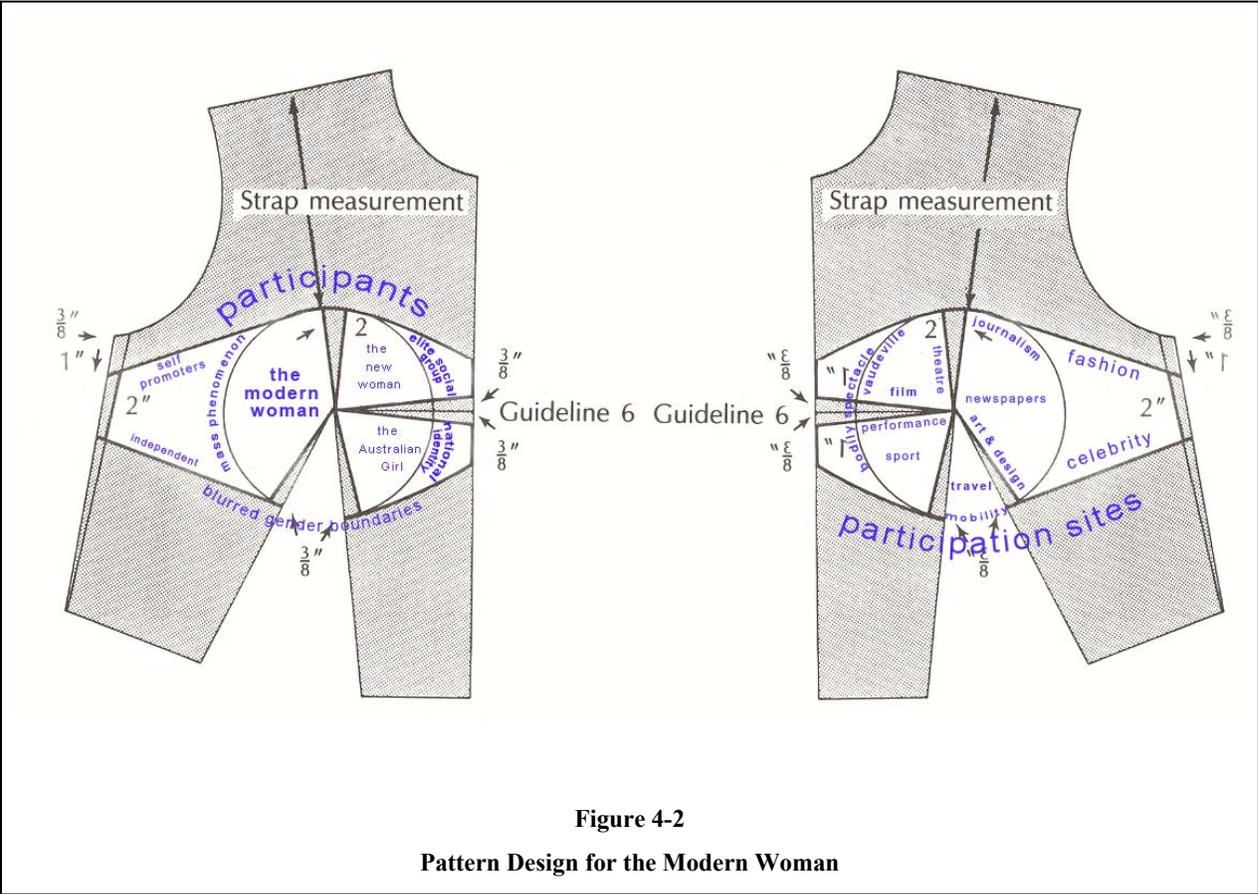


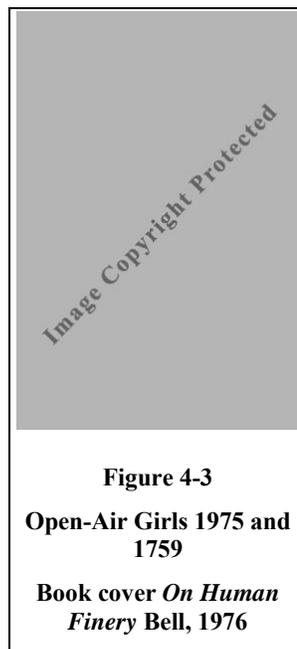
Figure 4-2
Pattern Design for the Modern Woman

The recurring key terms and concepts describing the new and modern woman and the Australian girl have been plotted onto a pattern design to create a visual understanding of who these women may have been and what participation sites were used in their ambitious pursuit of self-development and freedom from gender and cultural stereotypes (Chadwick and Latimer 2003; Roberts 2002, 2003; Maynard 1994; Woollacott 2001). The design details that emerged suggest that the transformation into the modern woman reflects a democratising process taken up by women who are not bound by class or nation, women who participate in modern activities connected to mass consumption, travel, sport and leisure pursuits, performance. In the vanguard were Australian women who rather than being ‘new women’, were modern women

from all classes, travelling abroad to work and play. They included: Christina Stead; Pamela Travers; Margaret Preston; Thea Proctor; Pansy Montague (La Milo); Beatrice Kerr. Among them Kellerman shone brightly, segueing from elite athlete to vaudeville performer to silent movie actress and author of self-help books and fairy tales. Clearly it is being lodged between these global spaces and their national context that Kellerman's individual articulation, self-construction, and performance was negotiated and reconstituted into her identity as a modern woman, consequently producing fashion for the global rather than the national and thereby embodying a form of democratic modernity.

4.3 Arbiters of Style

‘The manner in which women’s clothes have been adapted not simply to sport but to the open-air is suggested by the colour plates’ (Bell 1976: 166).



Quentin Bell provides an intriguing and tantalising window into the development of outdoor fashion for women in the form of the colour plates in an historical and theoretical study of fashion. Bell suggests that the adaptation of women’s clothing to sport and the open-air reflects the evolution of a new ‘theatre of fashionable operations’ that triggered the development of a specific style of clothing design (Bell 1976: 165-6). Figure 4-3 describes very different periods in history. Open-Air Girl, 1759, is distinctly European and aristocratic. Her clothing is opulent, decorative and,

although she may have moved to a garden setting, is not particularly suited to outdoor pursuits.

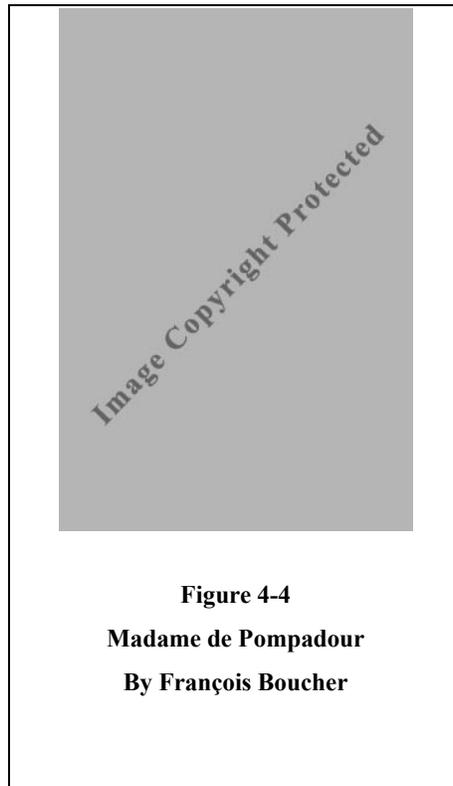


Figure 4-4 is a portrait of Madame de Pompadour by François Boucher, mistress to Louis XV and a woman who influenced court fashion through her unique and ‘extraordinary taste’. She was not of noble birth and it was her beauty and stylish fashion sense that helped her ensnare the king and guaranteed her an elevated position at the court of Versailles (Batterberry and Batterberry 1977: 161-2). Pale and delicate, encased in elaborate and voluminous gowns, it is difficult to imagine her engaging in anything more strenuous than collecting flowers from the gardens of the palace when outdoors. No aristocrat was exempt from the formality and rigid etiquette of French court fashion and the king’s mistresses were an exception, with Weber suggesting that these women displayed their ‘unrivalled influence on the crown by spending a king’s ransom on gowns and jewels’ and that ‘dress functioned as a compelling and efficient

vehicle of communicating political power’ (Weber 2006: 5). Madame de Pompadour, whose lower middle class origins were not exposed in Boucher’s portrait, was beautiful and glamorous and represented a new direction in fashion, airing ideas and styles that did not originate with her rival bluebloods. Her beauty and style ennobled her to reinvent herself as arbiter of taste, influencing what was fashionable.

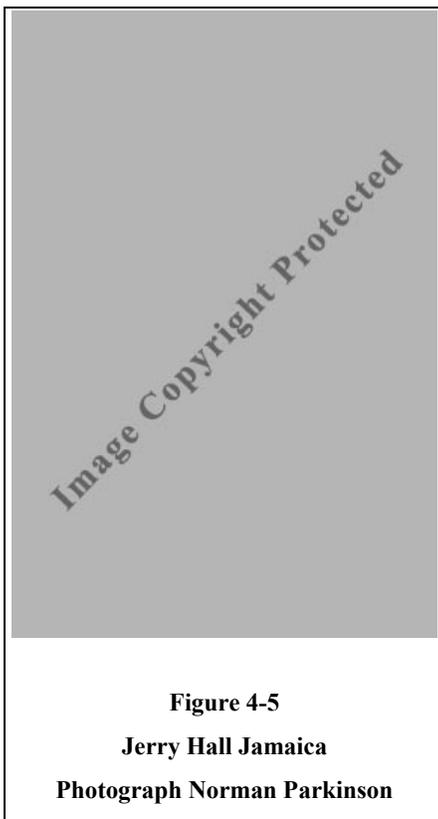


Figure 4-5
Jerry Hall Jamaica
Photograph Norman Parkinson

Open-Air Girl, 1975 shows the progress in the ‘theatre of fashionable operations’ in 200 years. Her location by the sea broadens the traditional European fashionscape to include geographic locations that can be associated with, for example, a western outpost: Australia. She is modern and global, communicating a contemporary ideal of physical beauty in a garment for the modern world: the swimsuit. Jerry Hall was born into a poor, working-class Texan family, and at six feet tall, leggy, with waist length blonde hair, she was ideal fashion model material in the 1970s. When Hall was 16

years old she left for Paris and carved out a stellar modelling career, working with the best fashion photographers and for the major fashion houses in Europe. She is globally renowned both as a supermodel and for her celebrity marriage to Rolling Stones legend, Mick Jagger. In Figure 4-5, Hall, wearing a bikini with high gold evening shoes and a velvety robe, is holding a telephone (where does it plug in – her leg?), supports Bell’s assertion that clothes had been adapted to the open-air as much

as to sport. The bikini is not a swimsuit suited to competitive swimming, diving, or rough surf at the beach and worn in this manner with bedroom and evening style accessories describes a glamour associated with leisure and privilege. Madame de Pompadour and Jerry Hall are stylish and beautiful but not sporty, and their clothes were designed for form not function. As NOCD's (Not Our Class Dear), their renown has been interwoven by their connection to powerful men: royalty in the 18th century, the king of France; and royalty in the 20th century; a rock star. The thread tying Pompadour and Hall together is their ambition, independence, and pursuit of reinvention, articulated through fashion, as a muse and a model respectively, who played a significant role in shaping a popular beauty and stylistic aesthetic for others to aspire to and imitate.

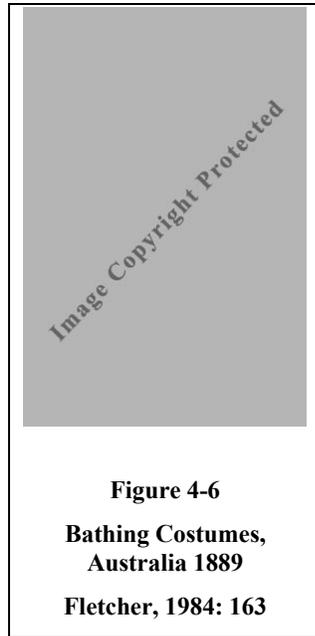
4.4 Sporting Fashion

To understand the role of the modern woman in the evolution of the swimsuit and draw in central concepts between fashion and the swimsuit leads to analysis of a woman whose celebrity was not anchored to refined beauty, glamorous leisure, or men, but initially to a career as a sportswoman.

The swimsuit that Kellerman wore for swimming and diving was a man's one-piece swimming costume and, according to Hollander, 'there was nothing modern about modern women's clothes until the female imitation of the modern male scheme' (Hollander 1994: 9). Kellerman's priority was a functional garment to perform death-defying dives and long-distance races in, and a man's streamlined swimsuit was the natural choice. The adoption by women of masculine clothing for sports, especially horse riding, was not new and dates back to the 16th century. The costume women

wore for this sport was masculinised only for the upper torso and was worn with a voluminous skirt, compelling riders to ride side saddle. Laver suggests it would have been more practical 'to masculinize the nether limbs,' an idea that was inconceivable for women prior to the reform movement in the mid to late 1800s (Laver, Tucker, and De La Haye 2002: 172). A woman who did transgress the restrictive clothing expected of women horse riders was Marie Antoinette, Louis XVI's wife in 1770. According to French literature and cultural historian Caroline Weber, Marie Antoinette donned slim breeches and rejected side saddle riding as a form of 'sartorial rebellion', signifying an assertion of individuality. For Marie Antoinette as a foreign royal struggling for acceptance and political leverage in a court where factions vied for the king's favour and endeavoured to undermine her position, it was a means to establishing a strong public image associated with sporting prowess that correlated to royal authority (Weber 2006: 81-84). Unlike her chief adversary, Madame du Barry, the mistress of Louis XV (post Madame de Pompadour), who was a glamorous femme fatale with a penchant for opulent gowns and exotic jewels, Marie Antoinette initially chose participation in a sport and masculine attire to construct and invent a self-image that set her apart from her competitors.

Horse riding and associated sports such as fox hunting and polo continue to be practised by elite and wealthy social groups, and it was not until the late 1800s and early 1900s that sports were democratised and available to the broader community. Arguably the most democratic of all was swimming. It required little more than an enthusiasm for the water, access to a beach or public swimming baths, and a humble woollen costume – for men styled on their underwear and a bathing dress and bloomers for women.



From the 1880s, it was possible for Australian women to purchase paper patterns from Madame Weigel's catalogue of fashions published in Richmond, Melbourne. They 'were encouraged by Madame ... that they were simple to make'(Fletcher 1984: 162-3), situating the participants active producers. Both men and women could attire themselves for little expense and in Australia with its temperate climate, swimming became a popular sport for all.

Kellerman started swimming lessons in 1891 when she was seven years old. Hartley reports that, 'she began to break records in her midteens' and that 'it was her swimming prowess that opened up the possibility of a career as a professional swimmer' (Hartley 2006: 421). It was common then for Australian women to voyage to London to fulfil their ambitions (Woollacott 2001: 7), and in 1905, chaperoned by her father, Kellerman travelled to London to seek fame and fortune as a long-distance

swimmer and diver. She had many nicknames, including the 'Diving Venus' and her extraordinary swimming and diving feats challenged traditional notions of gender difference and promoted athleticism, sport, and the one-piece bathing suit as being liberating and suitably fashionable for a modern woman.

Kellerman's performance for British royalty exposed an elitist resistance to what was deemed an immodest costume. Although similar performances for commoners had been received with enthusiasm, Kellerman had no choice but to alter her swimsuit by attaching stockings to protect their noble sensibilities – the body was covered but it would still have shown all her curves. Marie Antoinette, a royal who chose to engage in a sport wearing male attire was tolerated because of her social position; over 130 years later in a men's swimsuit, Kellerman charmed audiences of all classes, paving the way for a new hierarchical social structure celebrating individuals with unique creative talents and skills. Unlike Open-Air Girls Madame de Pompadour and Jerry Hall, Kellerman was actively glamorous. With a body shaped and fashioned by sport, she was able to produce an exciting and exotic theatre of 'fashionable operations', leading the way for a generation of open-air girls in the 1920s and '30s. An article in *Women of All Lands* from 1938, describes the modern open-air girl who emerged after a short revolution in the 1920s, when ugly bathing costumes were deposed of in favour of 'the modern swimming suit moulded to the form and giving free access to air and sun' (Forbes 1938: 16-7). Women were now situated to engage in serious sporting activities that had once been consigned to the privileged few, and Kellerman had been integral in naturalising the notion of a sporty modern woman.

4.5 Beauty and Its Measure

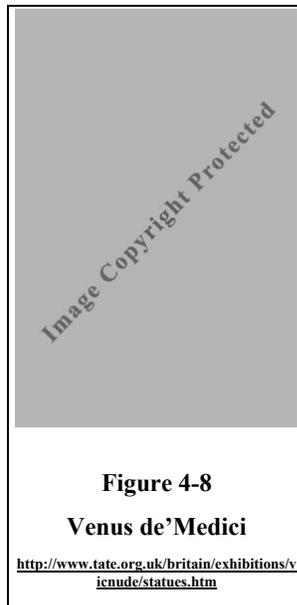
There can be no fairer spectacle than that of a man who combines the possession of moral beauty in his soul with outward beauty of form ... because the same great pattern enters into both. Plato (cited in Batterberry and Batterberry, 1977: 37)



Figure 4-7
Red-figure vase painting
c. 510 B.C.
Batterberry and
Batterberry, 1977: 37)

The ancient Greeks encouraged an ethos of masculine beauty that valued youthful, muscled, athletic bodies and recognised that such beauty may be achieved through prolonged exercise in the gymnasia. The organic beauty of the body was captured in sculptures and paintings adhering to a proportional canon that ‘embodies all the rules of correct proportion among the parts’ (Eco and McEwan 2005: 72-5). The naked male body represented an idealised form of Greek beauty and dress historian Anne Hollander notes that, ‘Among Greeks, modesty was an appropriate function of clothes for women but not for the men’. She continues that drapery was worn for effect and to heighten the beauty of the male body (Hollander 1993: 6). It was Grecian sculptures and paintings depicted in Mrs Roger Watts’ book *The Renaissance of the Greek Ideal* that would inspire Kellerman and provide guidelines for an ideal feminine form – Venus and Diana – and to embark on masculine exercises similar to those that may have been practised in a gymnasia to achieve it. Kellerman asks the questions: ‘What is the ideal form?’ – Has any one a truly perfect figure? She contends that the Venus de Milo who was popularly considered the ideal, ‘if realised in the flesh, would be a rather fat and loosely built type of woman’. She tells her readers that all marble

records are the product of human makers and, 'like all things human are imperfect', and as such 'only a graven image of one man's ideas of feminine beauty' from 2000 years ago. Rather than perfection, she believed in the classical model, suggesting the Venus de' Medici most closely resembled the contemporary feminine ideal 'with a more firmly knit and muscular body'. Kellerman's own bodily measurements, which had been compared to those of the Venus de Milo represented 'a fully developed modern woman' that the average woman could also achieve through a series of daily exercises (Kellerman 1918: 47-9).



Through the use of a measurement table which mathematically calculates the degree of femininity through the addition and division of various body measurements, which was developed by Mr Hastings for the *Physical Culture Magazine*, she convincingly showed that modern women are more feminine than the women of ancient Greece, in that the waist to hip ratio is greater. She concluded that physical exercise and the

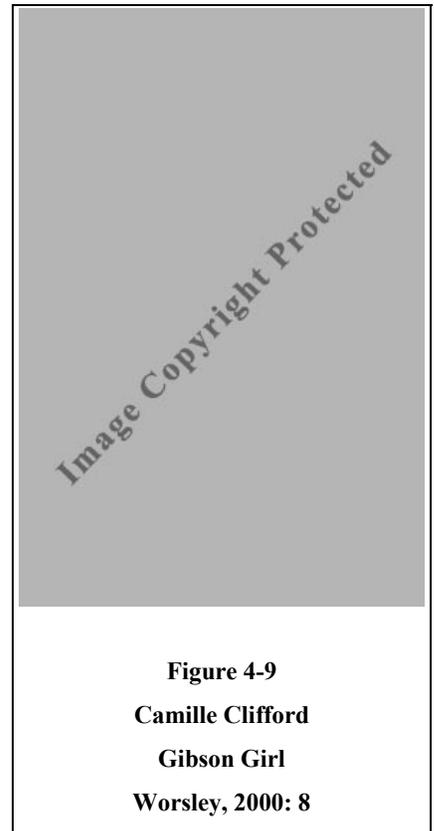
resulting muscular development does not make women more masculine and provides the modern woman with a method of creating ‘a form more charmingly feminine than the classic Venuses’ (Kellerman 1918: 51-2).

The first chapter in Kellerman’s book, *Physical Beauty: How to Keep It* is called *The Right to be Beautiful* and focuses on the importance of rigorously cultivating bodily beauty. In essence, a woman’s intellect may be admired, but it certainly will not stop her husband from straying:

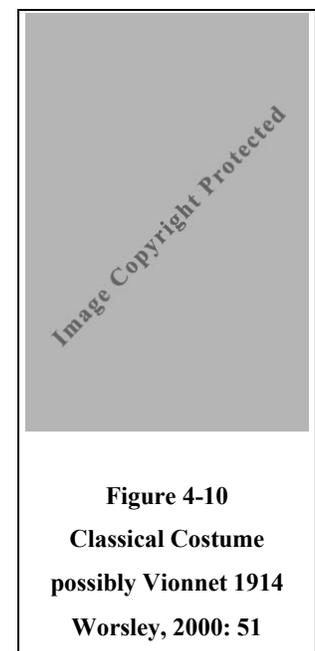
Man’s love must have feminine beauty as a flower must have water; and if women will insist on becoming ugly, men will instinctively turn again and yet again to the fleeting beauty of youth – beauty that fades and passes if it be neglected and uncared for (Kellerman 1918: 14).

These are harsh words but there remains an element of truth in this statement for women in the 21st century. What Kellerman offered in her book were ways that they could attain and maintain fitness optimising their natural assets in their own homes. In addition to the desired outcome of keeping your man, there was the vitality and enthusiasm for life a healthful woman may enjoy with muscular development and a sensible diet; a democratised beauty that was attainable by all.

The Belle Époque, 1901-1914, saw a change in silhouette from the ‘S-bend’ shape, which was carefully moulded with a metal and whalebone corset and additional padding on the hips and under the arms to emphasise the smallness of the waist to a classical styling reminiscent of the Directoire period, which was influenced by the ideals of ancient Greece (Worsley 2000: 8-51). Always ahead of her time, Kellerman rejected the corset in the early 1900s, adamant that lacing, padding, and squeezing the body into a desired shape was immoral and a form of ‘enslavement and degradation’; a woman should aspire to ‘genuine physical beauty’ and unlock their potential to enjoy life (Kellerman 1918: 21-4).



Bodily development required discipline, daily practise and a solid dose of self-involvement. Kellerman provided women with an opportunity to focus on themselves and to seek to achieve personal goals that would serve to reinvent them as modern women built for speed with an ideal body for the one-piece bathing suit. Roberts suggests that ‘new women sought and created independent lives without necessarily understanding their quest in the feminist terms of their day’ (Roberts 2002: 8): and although there is an emphasis in Kellerman’s books on the importance of the men in women’s



lives, she was a living example of what a woman could do with drive, ambition, and athleticism, personally pursuing challenges that showed that ‘girls can do anything’. Gibson and Firth claim Kellerman designed the ‘first modern bathing suit’ that combined a men’s one-piece swimsuit with a tight-fitting jersey skirt overlay creating ‘an early form of the modesty panel’, a design feature that continued into the 1960s (Gibson and Firth 2005: 60). She recognised the need to produce designs that could enhance a woman’s natural assets and conceal bodily imperfections, which was and is a serious challenge in a garment that leaves little to the imagination. She was an inventive individual who had the ability to turn a creative idea into a saleable commodity by developing her own Kellerman bathing suits for an eager public – a modern woman as opposed to a new woman. For the mass market, she produced beauty tips, suggestions, and lifestyle choices that women could use to achieve their female bodily ideal.



Figure 4-11

**‘O, girl, your form makes all artists stare,
O, girl of curves that please the cultured eye.’**

A Midsummer Rhapsody to Annette Kellerman, New York Star,
1909

cited by Erdman, 2004: 93

4.6 Vaudeville and the Performative Body

The stars should be your pearls on a string,
The world a ruby for your finger.
And you should have the sun and moon to wear if I were King.

From Annette Kellerman's *Autograph Book* written by Sir George Alexander
(Gibson and Firth 2005: 45)

Kellerman's career in London progressed from publicity swims along the English coastline to an attempt to swim the English Channel – a feat she would never accomplish – to diving demonstrations at indoor pools all over London. Gibson and Firth report that diving was new to England and a novelty for audiences who were captivated by Kellerman's skill as a diver and incredulous at how she 'could fly through the air so gracefully' (Gibson and Firth 2005: 42). She was a fearless and spectacular diver and Figure 4-12 shows a purity of form and style in her diving technique – a disciplined body that could transcend human boundaries. In her analysis of Leni Riefenstahl's use of divers for her film *Olympia*, Crombie suggests that it represented 'the transcendent presence of an elite athlete', describing their bodies 'as supra natural, the modern-day gods and goddesses of a classical Greek lineage who draw their power and harmony from the universal forces of nature' (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 81).



As the ‘Diving Venus’, Kellerman’s body was captured soaring through the air or standing on rocks gazing out to sea and was often documented in the form of full-page photographs by the *Daily Mirror* with perhaps less mythic symbolism than Riefenstahl’s Olympians. In 1905, her image graced the front page of the *Daily Mirror* for eight consecutive weeks, becoming ‘the first female athlete to benefit from this kind of publicity’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 27-30). She was, in effect, an accessible goddess who represented an active glamour.

Kellerman was a natural self-promoter who used the press coverage she received to secure a contract at the London Hippodrome, a venue that provided variety-style entertainment, including aquatic acts. The stage was built in the form of a circus ring that could be raised and lowered by hydraulic pistons to reveal a large water tank. The roof slid open for divers to leap into the tank from approximately 60 feet to where the audience was seated on three sides (Longman 2002). The acts were aimed at families

and in particular, women. It offered ‘clean’ entertainment, as opposed to the burlesque and music hall tradition that primarily catered to a male audience. Kellerman’s act during this period was essentially a series of dives and a demonstration of swimming strokes with her athletic body packaged in a one-piece bathing suit creating bodily spectacle. It appealed to women and children who found her natural, unaffected Australian-ness charming, while the Coo-ee girl’s charms did not go unnoticed by men.



Figure 4-13

New York Hippodrome Publicity Poster

As Kellerman’s star rose, America and the vaudeville circuit beckoned. Vaudeville in the early 1900s was a popular, early form of mass urban entertainment that included a variety of acts to cater to audiences with diverse tastes. The acts ‘had to be simple, cheap, and easy to understand, designed to delight men as they represented the

majority of the audience' (Fields 2006: 1). Erdman claims that vaudeville contributed to the development of American popular culture by knitting together audiences to create 'a modern audience of national proportions' (Erdman 2004: 51). These audiences 'were not passive observers' and could make or break an act, thus contributing as active participants in what fare they were offered by the booking managers (Kenrick 2003). Kellerman's act was a headliner and was a huge success brokered by regular editorial in newspapers and magazines, ensuring her image remained in the public eye. Erdman reports that, 'according to the *Philadelphia North American*, her main appeal was her bathing suit-clad body' (Erdman 2004: 93). There is no doubt that the bathing-suit angle was a huge drawcard for audiences and represented novelty and spectacle; however, Kellerman had more to offer and, as Kenrick notes; headliners 'had tons of personality and extraordinary stamina' as they often had to perform five shows a day (Kenrick 2003). She was a skilled performer who engaged and enchanted the audience, coo-eeing before dives and entertaining with a varied and challenging routine; she was 'vaudeville's first aquatic glamour girl'(Fields 2006: 254). There were a number of female vaudevillians who wore skimpy costumes or bathing suits and, although this was part of Kellerman's allure, her act genuinely required this style of clothing, thereby legitimising active swimwear by making it socially acceptable outside its usual theatre setting.

Kaplan and Stowell's exploration of the relationship between fashion and theatre in the late 1800s and early 1900s reveals an alternative source of inspiration to the Parisian ateliers in the form of West End theatre actresses and their stage wardrobes. They suggest that the stage costume was 'not merely reflecting but anticipating and creating fashion' (Kaplan and Stowell 1994: 8-9). Breward supports this notion in his

analysis of four London actresses who performed at the Strand's Gaiety Theatre: Kitty Lord; Constance Collier; Marie Tempest; and Mary Moore. Through events such as the Ascot Races and promotional posters and picture postcards, these actresses represented a form of 'accessible glamour' that influenced both theatre goers and the more general public (Breward 2005: 107-8). It was a new 'theatre of fashionable operations' where actresses were created and groomed for stardom and celebrity. The women most influenced were 'the shopgirls, milliners, dressmakers, typists, stenographers' (Breward 2005: 117) who, as Nead argues, were 'not simply a list of female types', but working women in modern jobs with disposable incomes to spend on leisure activities like the theatre. Another form of leisure consumption available were tabloid newspapers and magazines where images of actresses created a 'transitional medium between the stage through which fashion and celebrity were apotheosised' (Nead 2005: 123). Actresses worked hard to invent a public image that cast them in a flattering light, manufacturing a persona which 'was part and parcel of who they were or who they had become' (Tapert 1998: 13). How they dressed was integral to fashioning the notion that they were beautiful and glamorous.

The costumes Kellerman wore for her performances could not be worn to the races or to afternoon tea, but they could be worn for a picnic at the beach or lake and, unlike the West End actresses, her public image was centred on her being a wholesome, unaffected beauty; an outdoor girl. While Erdman suggests that her skills 'were eclipsed by her appearance' (Erdman 2004: 93), I contend that Kellerman's skills, her body, and the bathing suits she wore were an integrated package heralding the cult of physical fitness, healthy leisure pursuits, and personal achievement for all; a democratic modernity that shopgirls, telephonists and milliners could identify with. If

an Australian girl could reinvent herself as the ‘Perfect Woman’ and ‘Queen of the Mermaids’ for an international audience and survive on the vaudeville circuit for over 20 years, others could reinvent their lives by focusing on their personal goals and development. Kellerman was an active, earthy celebrity who believed that if girls can do anything, we can all realise our dreams and live happily ever after.

4.7 A Modern Mermaid and Fashion

‘Only a cripple can understand the intense joy that I experienced when little by little I found my legs were growing stronger and taking on the normal shape ...’
Annette Kellerman (Gibson and Firth 2005: 8-9)

Once upon a time, there was a little Australian girl whose legs were imprisoned in heavy iron braces who dreamed of growing up to be a physically active, daring, bold, and beautiful heroine. Annette Kellerman was diagnosed with rickets when she was two years old and for the next five years wore braces to correct the problem. Gibson and Firth report that in a photo from this period she appeared ‘as a serious and rather plain, pale young girl seated next to her much healthier and prettier sister’. Much of her time was spent reading fairy tales, daydreaming about being a beautiful princess rather than an ugly duckling as well as casting herself as the ‘daring Prince Charming’ rescuing the princess (Gibson and Firth 2005: 5-8). She escaped the pain of her crippled body in a self-contained, imaginary world where she was both hero and heroine, ignoring the traditional and clearly defined feminine and masculine roles of fairy tale characters. When she was seven years old, Kellerman’s leg braces were removed leaving her legs weak, and a doctor recommended swimming as a cure. She did not take naturally to the water and she admitted to having to be dragged ‘kicking and screaming to lessons’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 8). She determined to learn to swim and found a freedom in the water that she had not experienced on land and, by

the time she was 16, was winning long-distance races and regularly competing against men and winning.

It was about this time that her family suffered financial difficulties and moved to Melbourne in search of work. Kellerman continued her swimming training with the intention of earning a living from it. There was an aquarium with tropical fish at the Melbourne Exhibition Hall and, on a dare from her sister, Kellerman dived in creating a spectacular splash which led to regular weekend performances ‘swimming around with eels and seals’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 18). Combining her diving skills with those she had learnt from early ballet lessons, she developed her first water ballet sequences and her mermaid persona was born. Perhaps Kellerman believed she had become a mythical mermaid, given her extraordinary ability to hold her breath for extended periods and her weekend performances with tropical fish in an aquarium. Empowered by self-belief, Kellerman was ready for new adventures.

According to Woollacott, the Australian girl was drawn to London by ideas of ‘romance, the distance and the promise of adventure ... and was therefore a way to express or act on her ambition’ (Woollacott 2001: 6). The Kellerman’s had extremely limited funds and, having to stay in cheap lodgings with Spartan food, it seemed their journey had been foolhardy. Living like this far away from sunny Australia and family on dwindling finances would not have been romantic, taking courage, determination. When all seemed lost in the battle to garner public interest in Kellerman’s swimming skills, a rather grimy last chance surfaced in the form of a 26 mile swim from Putney to Blackwell through industrial waste and sewage. The publicity surrounding her successful completion of the Thames swim led to diving

demonstrations at indoor pools all over London. Kellerman's act during this period was essentially a series of dives and a demonstration of swimming strokes, many of which were dangerous to perform due to shallow tanks or pools and primitive springboards. During one of her acts she split open her head floating to the surface bloodied and unconscious. Undeterred, she was back performing within six weeks, only to have the wound turn septic, leaving a permanent scar that she would conceal with hair, scarves, and hats for the rest of her life.

Kellerman was not one to be complacent and realised that her act could translate well to the new medium of silent movies, giving her the opportunity to realise her dream of creating magical, fantasy films with mermaids and sirens. Her first major movie, *Neptune's Daughter*, was shot on location in Bermuda with a large glass tank built to shoot the underwater scenes. The specifications were modified and the glass was not the required thickness; however, it was not until a scene with Kellerman and Herbert Brenon, (director and actor) was being filmed that it was discovered. The glass cracked, creating a hole which sucked both the stars and fish out onto the set. Although Kellerman and Brenon survived, both required hospitalization, and Kellerman's foot was badly injured and scarred. Hollywood at this time was a dangerous place, where actors usually performed challenging stunts that quite often resulted in injury. While this was not to be Kellerman's only injury, she remained unfazed, learning tight-rope walking and horse-riding from which she later sustained spinal injury.

There is a recurring theme of suffering and pain in Kellerman's life balanced by her transformation from cripple to 'Queen of the Mermaids', and there are similarities

between her life journey and Hans Christian Andersen's *Little Mermaid's* transition from fishy siren to the 'loveliest little human being they have seen'. Identifying this connection may create an understanding of the mermaid narrative and how it was woven into Kellerman's persona to create a fictional layer that glamorised her body and ensured her celebrity (Appendix 4 – *The Little Mermaid Synopsis*).

Patterning the Mermaid Binary

The approach to determining what it is about Kellerman and the *Little Mermaid* that shaped their mermaid personas entails drawing together similarities that have emerged through their stories and plotting them onto a flat pattern for a maillot swimsuit, thereby describing and defining the key characteristics.

Both of these amphibian beauties came from pristine worlds of aquatic innocence to the bright lights of the bustling metropolis in search of their dreams. Fairy tale scholar Mary Tatar refers to the *Little Mermaid's* world as 'a benign paradise, something of a parallel

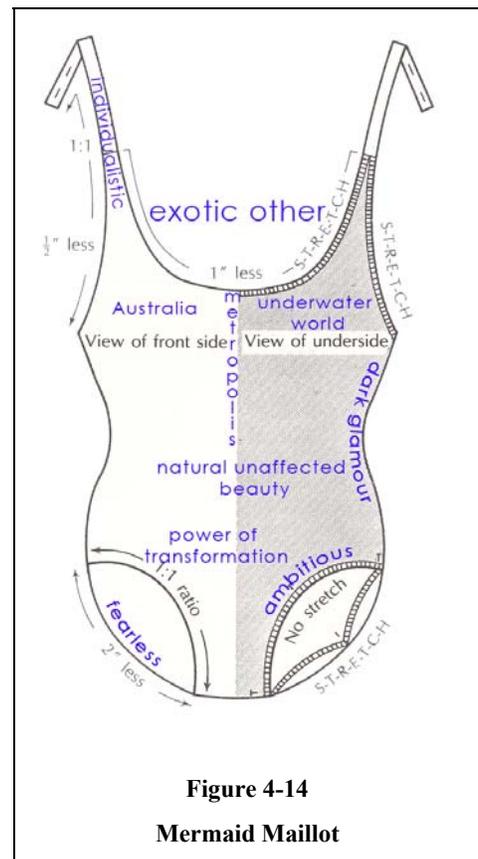


Figure 4-14
Mermaid Maillot

universe, but with more leisure and natural beauty' (Tatar 2002: 303). For Kellerman, it was a country at the periphery of the West, a utopian paradise surrounded by beautiful coastlines with a temperate climate, a nation of swimmers with an enthusiasm for sport and the beach (The Original Mermaid 2004). Australia and the underwater kingdom exist outside of the cosmopolitan hubs and although Kellerman and the *Little Mermaid* loved their homes and countries and their paradisaical

qualities, they longed for big cities ‘with lights twinkling like a hundred stars’ (Ash and Higton 1992). Where the *Little Mermaid* sought an immortal soul, Kellerman sought immortality through a stellar career as a swimmer and actress. Assisted by their status as romanticised outsiders both worked actively and independently towards their goals, seeking liberation and self-fulfilment. The *Little Mermaid* was no shrinking violet, and unlike many fairy tale heroines was capable of strength and determination to tackle challenging tasks. These included: leaving the comfort and support of her family; the painful transformation from mermaid to human; and the courage to live among others without her voice – an integral part of who she was. Similarly, the trajectory for Kellerman’s success on the world stage resulted in division of the family unit with her father accompanying her to Britain and her mother remaining behind in Australia with her brother and sister. She had overcome her early physical deformity and was working towards becoming the best Australian swimmer, diver, and aquatic performer of the period. She dedicated long hours to training, fearlessly diving from heights never attempted by a woman before. Not content with being a world champion swimmer and diver, she charted new territory as an actress, creating fantasy movies on location in Bermuda and Jamaica and undertaking her own stunts, which included jumping into alligator-infested pools and tight-rope walking in windy conditions, 70 feet above shallow water with sharp rocks just below the surface. Their transformative powers were connected to their desire to change and move from the worlds they belonged to, actively taking control of their destinies and channelling their self-expression through their bodies.

Kellerman and the *Little Mermaid* were on personal quests that required their reinvention and assimilation into different worlds. Although there is an emphasis in

Kellerman's films and the *Little Mermaid* fairy tale on the importance of men in women's lives, they were examples of women who had drive, ambition, and individuality. They sought challenges that transcended traditional notions of femininity. Tatar suggests that the *Little Mermaid* was spirited and adventurous and, although she suffered for her ambitions and transformation to human form, she was no burning martyr, instead embracing masculine clothing and horse riding to 'explore forbidden territory ... transgressing gender boundaries in unprecedented ways' (Tatar 2002: 302). Kellerman, who successfully competed against men, was the first woman



Figure 4-15

Kellerman still from *Neptune's Daughter*

to attempt to swim the English Channel. While the men were permitted to swim without clothes Kellerman had to undertake the gruelling task with the added restrictions of a bathing suit that caused severe chaffing under her arms. Kellerman was referred to as a 'half woman, half fish' (*The New Pictures* 1952), while the *Little Mermaid* was a mythical sea creature who metamorphosed into a human. In effect,

they both transgressed the boundaries between human and non-human form, thereby diminishing the significance of the transgression across gender boundaries.

The *Little Mermaid* and Kellerman represent the exotic ‘Other’; individuals from different worlds who did not conform to conventional notions of feminine beauty, relying instead on their physical talents, personality, and a mysterious exoticism to gain social acceptance. They were glamorous individuals who were different; shaped by their mermaid personas and affinity with water. Elizabeth Wilson suggests that, historically, glamour had early magical associations with the occult and wizardry, evolving into a quality connected with charismatic individuals or outsiders whose glamour was expressed through dark emotions including ‘desire, fear, loss and an acknowledgement of death’; a glamour achieved through suffering that was cleverly concealed through work and effort (Wilson 2007: 97-101). The *Little Mermaid’s* tongue had been cruelly cut out with a knife, snatching one of her essential assets, and her fish tail, part of her mermaid beauty, split to create those ‘two clumsy supports that they call legs, in order to be beautiful’ in the human world. Although she would dance elegantly, every step was like ‘treading on a knife so sharp that it will bring blood’ (Ash and Higton 1992: 78-81). This excruciating metamorphosis was irreversible – she could never take mermaid shape again. These hardships were never known by the prince or his courtiers as she silently danced so gracefully in royally fine silks and muslins. By comparison, Kellerman’s suffering was less dramatic; however, her body was shaped through arduous physical exercise and sport and she never forgot the pain and discomfort from the leg irons she wore as a child. Her transformation to glamorous mermaid was fraught with personal hardships including the loss of her family and the requirements of a life dedicated to public performances

that left no room for the more traditional role of being a mother. Later, when she was forgotten, discarded for a new generation of performers, she retired to the Gold Coast in Queensland and living out her days in virtual poverty. They both represent a form of dark glamour, patterned by their ambitions to succeed in the metropolis, skirting an alien world, and risking all for their dreams. Drawing on mermaidery and the magic of fairy tales, Kellerman created a charismatic persona clothed in a swimsuit that allowed the wearer to move between land and water.

4.8 Stardom and Silent Movies

‘~ ~ as quick as ~ ~ by telephone ~ the message is delivered.’
(Sullivan 1924)

Kellerman was a swimmer who wanted to be an actress and star in fantasy films about mermaids and sirens in beautiful water scenes. According to Gibson and Firth, the initial reaction from the major Hollywood studios was unpromising. The response of Carl Lemmle, head of Universal Studios was: ‘What! A woman fish on screen!’ Jimmy Sullivan, her husband and manager, was undaunted and managed to convince Lemmle that Kellerman’s notoriety as the woman ‘who had given the world the one-piece bathing suit’ and lectured to thousands of women around the country about physical beauty was made for movies (Gibson and Firth 2005: 116-7). Not only was it an ideal vehicle for adding another layer to her mermaid persona, but the novelty of seeing Kellerman performing in aquatic scenes in glittering costumes would ensure capacity houses and public support for this new and spectacular form of film.

Kellerman’s first mermaid movie was called *Neptune’s Daughter* and, while it is primarily a tale of revenge, it shares some of the same ideas as Andersen’s *Little*

Mermaid such as the transformation to human form by a sea witch and falling in love with a human king. Kellerman is Neptune's daughter, Annette, whose younger sister has been captured in a fisherman's net and died. Seeking the help of a sea witch, she takes human form in order to kill the land king whom she holds responsible. She falls in love with him while he is disguised as a peasant and on discovering his true identity, is unable to follow through with her plan, returning to her underwater world. When she pines for her lost love, her father, King Neptune, takes pity and sends her back to the human world and the land king.

Kellerman had realised her dream to star in an underwater fantasy film, especially one that opened to rave reviews all over America. Unlike many of the early silent movies that were shot on studio sets, *Neptune's Daughter* was filmed on location in Bermuda, enchanting audiences who saw 'real mermaids and diving in exotic locations' (Gibson and Firth 2005: 124). She challenged the boundaries between the self and the world by exposing her natural form. She peeled back the clothing to reveal a natural, unadorned physical beauty, adding a mystical layer to her persona. Audiences had not seen underwater film sequences before and the novelty of viewing a scantily-clad mermaid was integral in making Kellerman a star. Her performances were centred on her body and tailored to her water skills. Fairy tale stories romanticised and filtered her natural form through a fictional layer, neutralising any suggestion of indecency.

Kellerman's next movie, *Daughter of the Gods*, was the first production to cost a million dollars and was considered a masterpiece at the time due to the creative and artistic cinematography and the daring, exotic costumes. The publicity surrounding its release included cardboard cut-outs of Kellerman in the theatre foyers with details of her physical measurements. All female patrons were supplied with a paper tape

measure and encouraged to ‘compare their vital statistics with those of the Perfect Woman’. Figure 4-16 shows Kellerman, presumably in a body stocking, essentially unclothed and, as one reviewer commented, ‘Clothes may make the man but they don’t make a daughter of the gods, at least not the sort Annette depicts’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 146-8). Kellerman was maintaining a focus on her body and the movie-going public was happy to gaze.



Figure 4-16
Still from *Daughter of the Gods* 1916

Her next film, *Queen of the Sea*, followed similar themes, exotic mermaid seeking romance with handsome prince or king while avenging some wrong done to a family member. At some stage, in a reverse of the *Little Mermaid's* metamorphosis, she would be transformed from human to mermaid form, and there would be exotic underwater scenes with Kellerman performing graceful and creative aquatic ballets. Like many movies of this period that were created on fragile nitrate film, nearly all

Kellerman's movies have been lost except for the last full length movie, *Venus of the South Seas* (1924).



Figure 4-17
Still from *Queen of the Sea* 1918

These films were the vehicle that drove Kellerman's rising star and according to Richard Dyer, author of *Stars*, an integral part of constructing a star is the concept of audiences accepting them as 'truly being what they appear to be', legitimising and authenticating this quality through a belief that their performances reflect the real person in a spontaneous and believable way (Dyer 1991: 132-9). It is hard to imagine the silent movies produced in the early years before the Hollywood star system of the 1930s and '40s developed, producing this response. The primitive techniques and the stylised actions actors employed to compensate for the lack of dialogue combined

with the overriding novelty of watching moving images did not project authenticity. Nonetheless, Kellerman played herself energising the screen with her natural vitality and charisma. Without the benefit of stunt doubles or sophisticated special effects, she performed dramatic dives, underwater fight sequences, and magical mermaid scenes, fabricating characters that expressed who she was: the ‘Australian Mermaid’ and ‘Diving Venus’, a woman with a unique star quality tapping into the concept of an exotic ‘Other’. Lipovetsky reinforces this notion of stars revealing characteristics and communicating an on-screen personality that audiences come to associate with the actor: the ‘little-changing individuality that the public encounters over and over in all his or her films’ (Lipovetsky 1994: 182). Kellerman’s movies were thematic, centring on fairy tales and mermaids who wore little clothing – acceptable in their exotic underwater habitats, if not in the real world. By the time she made her last movie in 1924, most women were wearing pared down one-piece bathing suits similar to those worn by Kellerman in the early 1900s. She had naturalised the body and the bathing suit creating a physical model for women to identify with.

The costumes that Kellerman wore in these movies were fantasy pieces that complemented and revealed her natural form and did not resemble the fashion of the period. Identifying how this influenced the design evolution of the swimsuit is associated with the media connected with her movies. Innumerable articles and photographs were published in attempts to satiate the appetites of fans who, according to Gibson and Firth, were eager to know as much as possible about Kellerman; what she thought, ‘what she wore and what she ate’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 153). Her fame was not confined to America and Europe reaching the remote town of Takata, New Zealand. Composer Juliet Palmer, whose grandmother accompanied silent

movies on the piano at the local theatre, told of her memories of ‘the underwater world of Australian silent film star, Annette Kellerman’ (*Flotsam & Jetsam* 2002). Kellerman had become a global identity who communicated ideals associated with physical beauty and the one-piece bathing suit through the magic of the moving picture.

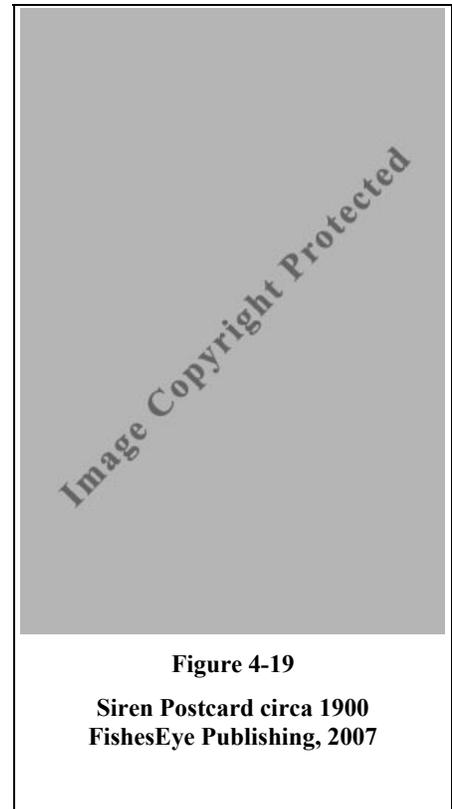
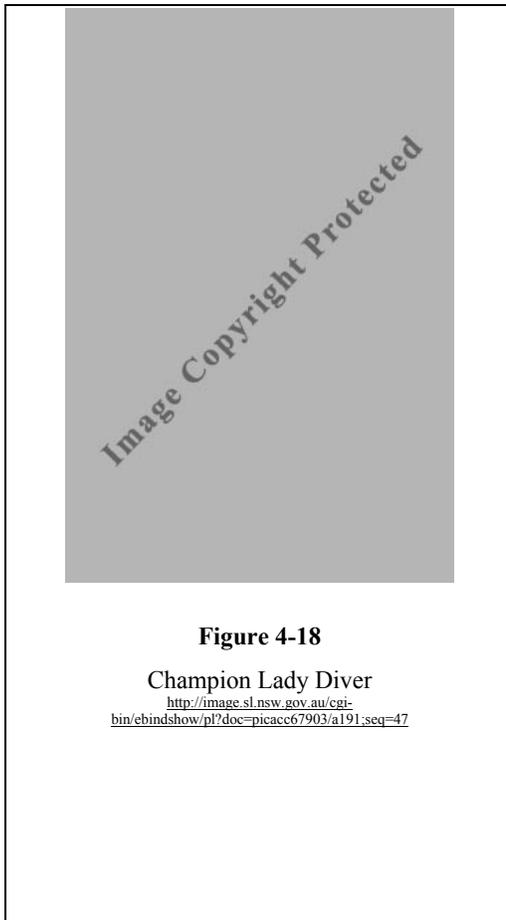
After her film career ended, Kellerman continued to perform on the vaudeville circuit and then in specialty charity events well into her 50s; however it would be ‘America’s swimming sweetheart’ Esther Williams who would revive an interest in Kellerman, mermaids, and the invention of the one-piece bathing suit in the 1952 Busby Berkeley aquatic spectacular about Kellerman’s life, *Million Dollar Mermaid*. Williams was a champion swimmer who had learnt to swim when she was young ‘in exchange for hiring towels out at a local swimming pool’ and ‘she learned from an early age to survive as best she could on her looks’(Gibson and Firth 2005: 207). She was a Hollywood glamour girl, the ‘undisputed princess of pool’ for whom ‘an entire sub-genre’, the aquatic musical, had been invented. Her career as a movie star took off in the 1940s and she is remembered for ‘her pearly white smile, gold lamé swimsuits and standing for all-American glamour and good times’ (Morton 2003: 88). *Million Dollar Mermaid* was more a splashy, colourful aquacade than Kellerman’s life story, with kitsch references to her Australian origins, including a boxing kangaroo, and steamy scenes with Victor Mature, an unlikely choice for the role of Jimmy Sullivan, her husband and manager. Kellerman was disappointed in the outcome and with Esther Williams’s interpretation of her life; however, Gibson and Firth suggest that ‘she secretly enjoyed choreographer Busby Berkley’s vision of her *Big Show* at the Hippodrome’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 210). Williams’ movies did not directly

reference mermaids or fairy tales. Her characters were more about girls who swam their way through aquatic spectacles on their way to romance and success. MGM's *Million Dollar Mermaid* was a sparkling beauty from a modern fairy tale of Hollywood glamour and the swimsuit entered a new era as part of the fashion circle.

4.9 Bodily Spectacle

Kellerman's adoption of a man's one-piece bathing suit represents the birth of the modern swimsuit for women. There were initially no modifications made to the original masculine design, no structuring to the contours of a woman's body, in particular the breast area. It would not be until the 1930s that designers would feminise the swimsuit, enhancing fit and performance using new textile technology. Kellerman's innovation was revealing the female body, which had been concealed for centuries beneath layers of clothes and corsets, in the public arena. She was not a typical 'Bathing Beauty' of the early 1900s, imaged in postcards for illicit viewing by

seedy men. She proved that women ‘had equally functional legs and feet’ and ‘active motion’ (Hollander 1994: 147).



Comparing Figures 4-18 and 4-19, Kellerman looks into the distance stabilised by a sturdy rock, in an unflattering, basic, one-piece bathing suit. She is unadorned, uncorseted, and barefoot. In contrast, the Siren enticingly peeps at the viewer through raised arms framing her face and décolletage in a bathing costume festooned with flowers and bows, drawing the eye to strategic parts of her body. Her body sculpted by a corset, accessorised with hat, stockings, and shoes looks more suited to the boudoir than the painterly seascape background. Kellerman is looking to a future where women engage in active sports and recreational pursuits; modern women who will follow her lead. Her bathing suit may not have been decorative, but her aquatic

displays favoured the viewer with ‘her costume wet and clinging, affecting “the bald heads [in the audience]” that ‘grew pink with emotion’ (Daley 2003: 124) and, unlike the postcard Siren, Kellerman could be watched with your wife and children in tow. Having initially appropriated the male bathing suit, Kellerman naturalised social acceptance of the revealed female body and fashioned a democratised style of clothing.

Sport played an important role in fashioning a new body aesthetic, requiring clothing that would work with the body and enhance the performance of the wearer. Lipovetsky suggests that ‘sports lent dignity to the natural body’, freeing it from the constraints of ‘excessive armature and trappings of dress’ (Lipovetsky 1994: 62). In particular, swimming required a garment that’s primary function was practical and, according to Warner, the bathing costume ‘forced thinking—and clothing—in new directions’ (Warner 2006: 61).

4.10 Fashioning the Body

Lee Barron’s article, *The Habitus of Elizabeth Hurley: Celebrity, Fashion, and Identity Branding*, explores the connections between: celebrity, the body, and brand identity through the clothing range, Elizabeth Hurley Beach that Elizabeth Hurley launched in 2005. For the purpose of illustrating how Annette Kellerman was an essential thread in the fabric that weaves celebrity and fashion around the modern body and the swimsuit, an analysis of Barron’s paper is included.

Central to Barron’s argument is Elizabeth Hurley’s building of a brand identity based on her ‘fashionable body’ and celebrity lifestyle that has led to the production of a

fashion range which repositioned Hurley, extending her career beyond that of fashion model, actress, and trophy girlfriend/wife. According to Barron, as her 'chief asset' is her body, 'beachwear is the ideal fashion product to market because such a strategy brings maximum promotion for her clothing range and herself'. Hurley is cited as an example of the blurring boundaries between fashion and celebrity and, in Barron's opinion, celebrities like Hurley 'may well prove to be the primary agents to influence the fashion choices people make' (Barron 2007: 457). Examining the manufactured Hurley reveals a fixed entity that has not undergone a series of postmodern reinventions like those associated with Madonna and Kylie Minogue, effectively producing a traditional and stable identity that is, for the most part, modernist. The essence of the Hurley image is a number of recognisable characteristics that are a foundation block or working pattern used to create more complex design details. These include: "the quintessential English rose", "utterly English", "slightly naughty head girl", "the eternal sixth-former" (Barron 2007: 449). They build a picture of who Elizabeth Hurley may be and, combined with media reports on what she wears, how she maintains her body and her style advice, in addition to the titbits divulged by gossip magazines with or without her consent, produce a pattern for others to replicate.

Hurley's beautiful body has been fashioned through exercise and dieting with a partial re-design via cosmetic surgery. Playing its part in her image is the swimsuit, an ideal garment for revealing the celebrity body. Kellerman was also aided by the swimsuit, and many of the qualities that have created Elizabeth Hurley's public and brand identity can be attributed to Kellerman 100 years earlier. The Hurley article does illustrate that part of the celebrity blueprint is connected to a social type or nation, just

as Kellerman's Australian-ness and elite swimmer status were promotional tools in building a public following. Before Hurley, the similarly aged Elle MacPherson traded on her body to create a lingerie range with New Zealand company Bendon. She has produced fitness programs and proved capable of maintaining and preserving her bodily beauty as she moves into her 40s. MacPherson consolidated an Australian tradition of producing celebrity bodies with nous, making a seamless transition from fashion model to entrepreneur in the 1990s. Australia, the swimsuit, and fashion are inextricably linked through a form of bodily spectacle that has contributed to the contemporary celebrity body, connections which have translated into a global trend.

The modern body has been empowered through self-discipline whether from strenuous physical exercise and a healthy diet, or more extreme methods such as Hurley's adherence to a dinner of 'a slice of toast and marmite and an apple' for a week to flatten her stomach (Barron 2007: 453). For astute fashion and swimsuit models, film, television, and sports celebrities, the combination of a fashioned body adorned in a sleek swimsuit represents opportunities to optimise potential economic outcomes. A beautiful woman in a swimsuit has been updated to also include the idea of a beautiful man clad in figure hugging swim trunks, epitomised by Weber's Calvin Klein advertisements in the 1980s and, fine-tuned by Daniel Craig's portrayal of James Bond as muscled and swimsuit ready, unlike his predecessors who by comparison had soft bodies. The body is a focus for celebration at its ability to shape up to the swimsuit ideal, challenging the notion of exploitation, in favour of a self-determined, motivated participant intent on shaping their own destiny. Like Kellerman, Hurley's career path has benefited from creating a bodily ideal for others to emulate.

4.11 Wrapping Up

This study has established that Australia was an early adopter of aquatic pursuits and Kellerman was in the vanguard of raising public awareness of the benefits of swimming for health and physical beauty. She understood that freeing the body from the corset was problematic as women would have to rely on their abdominal muscles to create a muscular corset and ‘a firmness and shapeliness’ in keeping with ‘the most superior forms of human bodies’ (Kellerman 1918: 164). Her ability to communicate these ideas, both through her performances and public lectures, paved the way for fashioning the body and the development of the unencumbered swimsuit 15 years before ‘haute couture plunged into the sportswear sector’ in the early 1920s (Lipovetsky 1994: 62). She was an ideal role model encouraging women to focus on self-development, to engage in sport, dance, swimming, and daily home exercise programs.

Kellerman was glamorous, exotic, and from a distant locale. She was a mermaid capable of amazing aquatic feats with unique personality and chutzpah, unlike the manufactured and formulaic glamour of Hollywood actresses of the 1930s and ’40s. It was an alternative to the glamour of luxury and leisure – it was dark, magical, and unconventional, transgressing boundaries and materialising as an active glamour for modern women. Kellerman and the one-piece bathing suit created a powerful image that generated a kind of glamour Wilson describes as ‘daring departures from the conventionally well-dressed with an aura of defiance’ (Wilson 2007: 98). It signalled an evolution in the direction of fashion and bodily ideals in the 20th century and is the foundation for developing an understanding of how participants can influence the design direction of a garment. Kellerman is central to this process as an inventive

individual, a maverick intent on fashioning a career on a global scale, which resulted in acceptance and popularisation of the one-piece bathing suit and its inclusion in the fashion system.

The themes explored in this chapter illustrate how Kellerman was a modern woman, engaging in participation sites including vaudeville, cinema, sport, and publishing, which led to an early form of celebrity status that allowed her to move beyond the traditional roles of women. She was an exotic ‘Other’, a wild colonial girl with the transformative powers to conquer the metropolis through spectacular public performances. Travelling with her was the swimsuit, a garment that allows the wearer to move between land and water. Often dismissed or overlooked as a fashion garment, it is, however, newsworthy, garnering regular, well-positioned editorial due to its intimate and revealing association with the wearer. Kellerman and her personal style is interwoven with the swimsuit, fabricating a modern look that other women could imitate at a time when the ground rules for fashion were changing.

5 Plunging in: Australian Style

5.1 Introduction

Kellerman and the one-piece bathing suit from the early 1900s represented an early individual contribution to the stylistic development of swimsuit design for women. The literature review unearthed a rich history that established a broader national contribution from her country of origin, Australia:

- Australians were early adopters of swimming for sport and leisure with many women wearing functional one-piece bathing suits from as early as the 1870s;
- Speedo was a leader in the development of practical and stylish swimsuits for both men and women from the late 1920s;
- There were a number of knitting mills from the 1930s and 1940s producing innovative swimsuits;
- Local labels including, Speedo, Paula Stafford, Brian Rochford, Seafolly, Robin Garland and Zimmerman created innovative designs that have reached and continue to reach an international market;
- In the 1940s, Paula Stafford pioneered the design of a daring bikini in Surfers Paradise, its 'spiritual home' (Edwards 2006) ;
- Australian swimsuits are designed and built in a beach culture for participants across all socio-cultural groups;
- Australians adopted surfing and surf culture with gusto and 'made it their own' (Rymer 1996), with key surfwear companies, Ripcurl, Quiksilver, and Billabong evolving in response to the needs of early participants for surfwear that was both functional and fashionable;

This chapter will explore what the Australian style is, focusing on the approach to swimsuit design since the early 1900s. The intention is to establish: how Australian designers and their designs contributed to global fashion; how different it is from European and American swimsuit design; how, collectively, it builds an understanding of a garment; and how the swimsuit became part of the fashion system.

In his treatise *The Fashion System*, Roland Barthes developed a method to differentiate clothing signs. This method will form the basis of a 'corpus of study' that will endeavour to reframe the development of the swimsuit to include Australian fashion designers and manufacturers. Central to his theoretical stance is analysing and establishing the process of how the written signs accompanying images in two fashion magazines over a year produce a 'language of fashion'. Barthes suggests that systematically limiting the study is fundamental to developing a structural system whereby fashion is communicated through its written form. It centres the process on weaving together descriptors of a garment that will unveil its structure and how wearers read it as a fashionable form of clothing (Barthes 1990: 9-16).

Tracking the swimsuit's trajectory from functional modesty-covering for water activities to fashion item through images and text includes a sociological perspective on how the swimsuit evolved through different ethnographic groups. In the historical contextual review (page 90), an analysis of two images from two different sources was undertaken. Figure 2-19 was an illustration of a Jean Patou swimsuit from *British Vogue*, 1927 and Figure 2-20 was from an advertisement for an Australian swimsuit manufacturer's product called 'Challenge' from the same year. The illustrated

garments were essentially the same cut trimmed with a similar decorative stripe; however, the Jean Patou design, worn by a chic model with elegant pooh in tow, represents a very different locale from the 'Challenge' where the model is perched on the edge of a diving board, suggesting that a garment produces different meanings depending on where it is worn.

The idea of analysing both the visual and textual descriptors of the garment as represented in fashion magazines broadens the study to explore the interpretations from a broader range of sources. This fits with Carter's interpretive view of *The Fashion System* in *Fashion Classics From Carlyle to Barthes*, where he explores the idea that a garment develops differently in diverse geographic locations as opposed to attributing meaning and form as being 'cut from the same cloth' and stitched together through a social structure, for example, 'the upper classes of the countries of Western Europe'. He cites Maynard's historical investigation of colonial Australia and how garments acquired new meanings influenced by 'the Australian context' (Carter 2003: 156-7). As opposed to Barthes exclusion of the image, it is my intention to use both the image and the text to build an understanding of the characteristics of the swimsuit and to plot how it has been systemised. His 'corpus of study' was narrowed to two fashion magazines on the basis that literary descriptions were 'too fragmentary' and that 'department-store catalogues can be easily assimilated into the descriptions of fashion'. He does acknowledge that if the purpose of the study is establish ideological, aesthetic, or social differences then a broader cross section of magazines would be useful (Barthes 1990: 10-11). For this study I have chosen trade journals, department store catalogues, fashion magazines, and material gathered by European and American swimsuit historians, posters, and advertising material that use the swimsuit

as part of the design concept, historical photographs, contemporary fashion magazines, internet sites and publications, videos, and movies that reference or feature the swimsuit. From these diverse sources, compiled synchronically and then arranged diachronically, a comprehensive and rich understanding of how the swimsuit has evolved over the last 100 years will unfold.

Key sources are as follows:

- Images and text from existing research and publications specifically about the swimsuit and its history include: *Making Waves*, Lenček, L. & Bosker, G.; *Splash A History of Swimwear*, Martin, R. & Koda, H.; *Swimwear in Vogue*, Probert, C.; *The Bikini: a Cultural History*, Alac, P.; *The Bikini Book*, Killoren Bensimon, K.; *Bathing Beauties: The Amazing History of Female Swimwear*, Colmer, M.; *Women's Swimming and Bathing in the United States*, Kidwell, C.; *Les maillots de bain*, Olivier, S.. These accounts of the swimsuit focus on its stylistic development in Europe and the United States since the late 1800s through to the 1990s, reveal little about Australian swimwear or local design directions in the Antipodes, and are a representative source of secondary information about swimsuit history in the West. As there are no publications dedicated to the Australian swimsuit, images and text from alternate sources such as Joel's work on Australian fashion and its history as well as material from sources that reference swimwear including *Sunny Memories: Australians by the Seaside*, *Fashion: Australian Memories in Black & White*, *The Home Quarterly* 1920-1942 will be used in conjunction with material gathered from the following sources.

- A search and collation of advertisements and trend articles about swimsuits from *The Draper of Australasia* (1902-1963), which recorded details about importers, import goods, and local manufacturers is the next building block in understanding which brands and styles of swimsuits Australians were importing, producing, and wearing in this period.
- David Jones Ltd, Australia's oldest department store (1838-), initially sold imported and locally manufactured swimwear through its Sydney store in addition to through its mail-order catalogues. An important market were isolated rural communities who relied on the information contained in the catalogues to keep up to date with product development and fashion trends in urban centres. From 1914, David Jones operated a factory in Sydney's Surry Hills, producing over 100 different products, including their own brand of swimsuits for men, women, and children. Catalogues in their archive department dating from the early 1900s through to 1980 are sources that detail and illustrate which swimsuit brands Australia's first 'modern store' was selling (David Jones Ltd 1919).
- Sears, Roebuck & Co. was founded as a mail-order business in America in 1896 and, like David Jones Ltd, catered to 'people living in isolated hamlets, on far flung farms or in the less-affluent sections of the city'. Blum suggests that the fashion in these catalogues, while hardly couture, represented a broad brushstroke of styles including 'Sunday best, for going out, sports and leisure times and for everyday wear'(Blum and Sears Roebuck and Company 1981: 1). As stated in the literature review, the swimsuit in its early forms was

essentially utilitarian and analysis of images from store catalogues will build a visual record of popular, mass-produced swimsuits from its early days to the 1980s. In combination, the Sears and the David Jones catalogue images and accompanying text during this period provide an opportunity to analyse both their respective marketing strategies and the similarities and differences in approach between America and Australia.

- Prior to 1910, women's swimsuits were not considered 'fashionable essentials' and Probert notes that before World War 1, they received limited coverage. The 1920s was the decade when the beach was colonised by the fashionable set and French couturiers included swimwear in their collections (Probert 1981: 7-27). From this period, fashion magazines started tracking swimwear trends and for the purposes of this study *Vogue* magazine has been selected for review of these historical stylistic developments on the basis that, as Patrick Roessler reports, 'VOGUE qualifies as a classic example for the worldwide marketing of a successful magazine brand ... it represents one of the earliest globalized media outlets' (Roessler 2006: 43). In this study, the aforementioned sources do not cover the last 20-30 years, as by the 1980s and 1990s 'recognized designers began to incorporate the bikini into their collections, luxury versions of the bikini began to appear' (Killoren Bensimon 2006: 186), as did one-piece swimsuit designs. Therefore, it is my aim to use *Vogue* swimsuit editorials to contribute to the reconstruction of the swimsuit's evolution. The editions that have been used are the American, British, and Australian *Vogue* and, through analysis of swimsuit editorial in all three, national fashion magazines patterns will emerge about national and global

approaches to dissemination of fashion ideas and ideals in relation to the swimsuit.

- To extend an understanding of the swimsuit in the 21st century, online trend and analysis website *WGSN* will be used to track current swimsuit labels in conjunction with information gathered from interviews with designers both on this website, through Factiva, and their company websites.
- Sport is the intersecting field between Australia and the swimsuit in the Venn diagram, at times creating an intuitive and creative framework. I have used non-canonical sources including oral histories from retired practitioners and archival material including videos, films, and newspapers, in addition to ephemera from junk shops and eBay to build an understanding of how participants and participation sites can shape fashion. The inclusion of these resources has built connections between fashion, sport, and celebrity, illustrating different routes a garment may take to gaining inclusion as fashionable.

The selected material is collated synchronically in what Blum refers to as ‘easily digestible units of decades’ (Blum and Sears Roebuck and Company 1986), and key stylistic trends are placed on a single pattern piece containing design features plotted by decade, allowing a holistic view. Placed chronologically, a broader historical brushstroke of the 20th century emerges, creating a visual understanding of how the swimsuit developed stylistically over time, with patterns of development at a national and global level.

Sub-questions that have emerged relate to the idea of swimsuit design mirroring fashion trends and whether or not it may unfold that the swimsuit has at times influenced the direction of seasonal styles in other forms of fashion:

- Does swimsuit design mirror couture fashion trends or create its own fashion trends that at times influence couture fashion?

and, if so,

- Who are the influential swimsuit wearers? What type of swimsuit do they wear and where is it being worn? How do these wearers contribute to the swimsuit's fashionability?
- Does the swimsuit represent the democratisation of fashion and the weakening of fashion dictates from the fashion hubs of Europe and America?

5.2 Decent Exposure: Unisex Style

Prior to Kellerman's high profile exposure in a version of the existing men's one-piece bathing suit in the early 1900s, all sources refer to the type of costume worn by women as adapted forms of daywear with only a 'small number of progressive women' and 'expert swimmers' wearing a Kellerman bathing suit style for competitive swimming (Kidwell 1969: 18; Colmer 1977; Lencek and Bosker 1989). Swimsuit design polarised opinion and over the next 20 years it was possible for female participants to purchase either functional one-piece or the two-piece Canadian swimsuits in sensible knitted wool, cotton, or silk styles or 'natty little tunic suits in good black Italian' woven textiles (Buyers' Notes 1914). Early trade and mail-order catalogues gave limited space to the promotion of the swimsuit and it was not until around 1920 that the *bon ton* embraced beach culture, flocking to resorts to paddle and parade at the water's edge. During this period, Australians were challenging the conservative by-laws that denied citizens the right to bathe or wear costumes considered indecent in daylight hours. Populations were concentrated around beaches and, unlike European and American beachgoers who had to travel distances to resorts, most Australians were only a short tram or train journey away from some of 'the world's best beaches' (Wells 1982: 13). Combined with sub-tropical weather conditions beach life prospered with swimmers, surfers, paddlers, and promenaders taking to less cumbersome, practical swimwear.

As a result, by the early 1920s the whole family could be kitted out for a day at the beach in practical swimwear (Figure 5-1). The 'Daisy Bather' family have colonised a



Figure 5-1

Daisy Bathing Costumes 1923

The Draper of Australasia

new ‘theatre of operations’ and the young master gazes into the distance, foot firmly planted on his beach spade, surrounded by parents and siblings, waves crashing on the rocks behind, enjoying ‘the democracy of the seaside’ (Wells 1982: 13). Australians were not immune to trends and fashions from Europe and *The Draper of Australasia* provided information from their Parisian Correspondent. The October, 1924 communication tellingly reports that there are two ‘classes of people who go to the seaside’: the folk who go for the ‘sake of sea pleasures’; and those on a ‘snob expedition’. In effect, sensible clothes in purposeful textiles versus ‘the elegant bather’ who ‘wants to show off her clothes much more than her feats in the waves’. The article suggests that couturiers presented their ranges in Deauville a season ahead testing fashions which would be bought out during the following Autumn in Paris

(Parisian Shops Feature Holiday Wear 1924). The fashionable beach belle and Parisian on holiday were their target market.

Bosker and Lenček suggest that in the 1920s Parisian designers were creating glamour beachwear and American knitting mills were producing ‘affordable fashions to millions of bathers’. At the forefront of these companies was Jantzen Inc. who in the late teens developed an elastic rib stitch for bathing suits on the advice of a rower who wanted swimming trunks that would stay up without a drawstring: evidence of participants informing and shaping the design process. The company proved to be astute advertisers and promoters of their products and in 1920 launched the ‘red diving girl’ logo, ‘the consummate embodiment of intangible American ideals: youth, grace, sex appeal, and athletic prowess’ (Lencek and Bosker

1989: 48). Jantzen had tapped into the ‘modern girl’ zeitgeist that was sweeping the world and became leaders in the swimsuit market selling their products as ‘the suit that changed bathing into swimming’, saturating the market with ‘competitions and



Figure 5-2
A charming suit, whose waist looks very like a chemise... I daresay she will do well not to get under water....
Beach Fashions- Artist in Paris
The Draper of Australasia, 1924

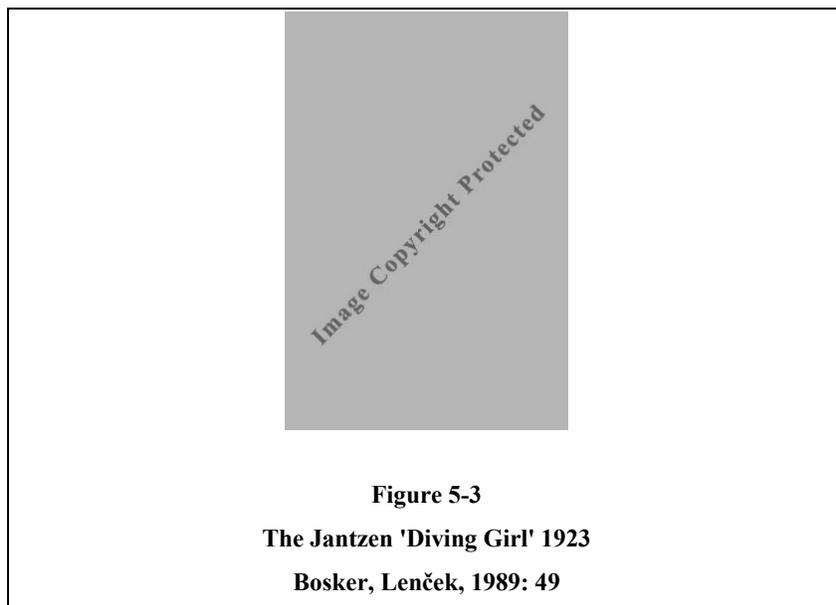
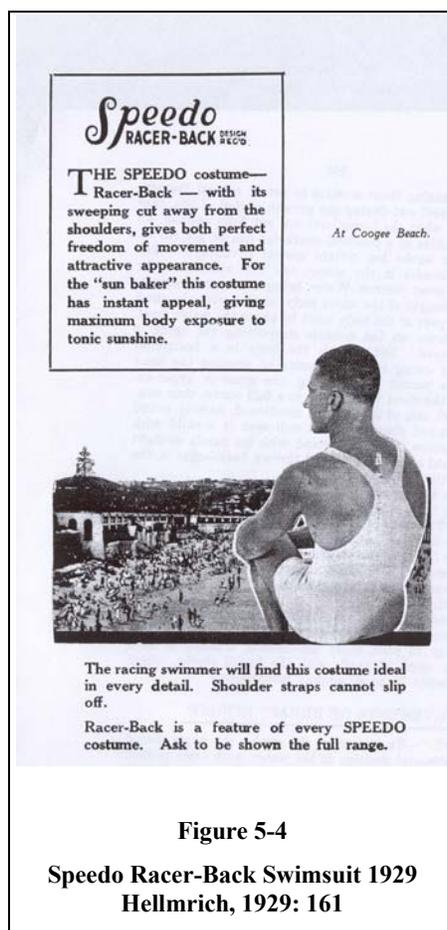


Figure 5-3
The Jantzen 'Diving Girl' 1923
Bosker, Lenček, 1989: 49

department store tie-ins' and instigating 'coast-to-coast "Learn-to-Swim-Week"' (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 44-52). The swimsuit had moved onto the fashion radar and was in tune with a democratised fashion for all, filtered through mass media sources, countering the centralised French control of what could be fashionable. Jantzen was ahead of its competitors accounting for 75% of swimsuit advertising in the United States, in magazines including: *Saturday Evening Post*; *Colliers*; *Cosmopolitan*; *Boy's Life*; *Photoplay*; *Shadowplay*; *Screenland*; *Silver Screen*; *Motion Picture* and *Movie Classic* ... and practically all billboard advertising'. They also realised the importance of a presence in fashion magazines and were the first swimsuit company to advertise in *Vogue* and *Harpers Bazaar* (Zehntbauer 1955).

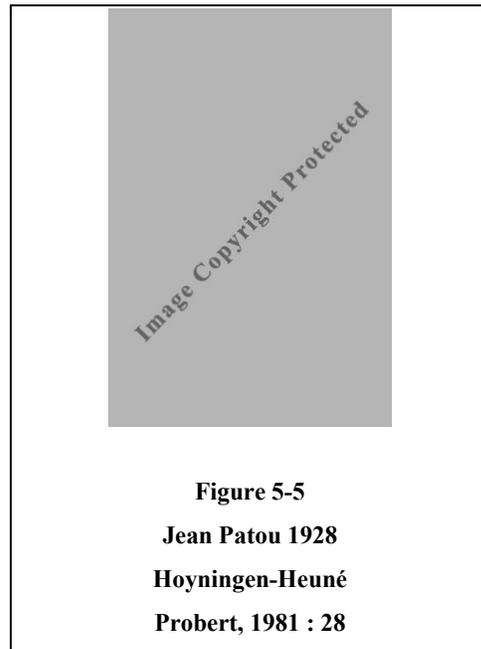
In 1955, the president of Jantzen J.A Zehntbauer wrote a report outlining the company's foray into global licensing. Due to high import duties aimed at protecting local textile and manufacturing industries, Jantzen developed licensee deals in the late 1920s, initially with Australia, Britain, and Canada (Zehntbauer 1955). Australia was of particular interest to Jantzen after an earlier report written in 1927 showed that while the population was small – around six million people – the inhabitants lived close to 'beautiful beaches' and due to 'summers ... long and hot ... the people take to the water like no other people on earth do'. Boasting that there was no company 'equipped for making a suit like a Jantzen suit', Zehntbauer reported that the population, 'with their swimming facilities and their long summers would be equal to one of 18 million people in any other country as far as the market for Jantzen swimming suits was concerned'. He continues that Australia had a number of 'great knitting mills', but the poorer quality and outmoded style provided a niche for the Jantzen product (Zehntbauer 1927).



As confident as this American company was about its market position and product, advertisements and articles in *The Draper of Australasia* in the 1920s indicate that Australia was designing and manufacturing innovative and stylish swimwear of a comparable standard and style. In 1929, MacCrae Knitting Mills launched the Speedo brand. With its revolutionary ‘Racer-Back swimsuit’, Speedo was serious competition for Jantzen swimsuits, which ‘churned out practical suits’ as opposed to ‘fashion suits’ targeting the athletic swimsuit wearer (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 51). As noted a large percentage of Australian swimmers and beach participants were a fit with this target group.

According to a report by industry swimwear analyst Malcolm Newbury, on the status of the current swimwear market, ‘Speedo is the number one swimwear brand in the world, and the brand for sports performance’, and ‘more Olympic gold medals have been gained by athletes wearing Speedo than any other brand’. By contrast Jantzen, now a subsidiary of the Perry Ellis stable is ‘about simplicity and form at a middle-of-the-road price’ (Newbury 2007). While Jantzen stagnated, Speedo flourished, demonstrating the staying power of the Australian style in the market place over an 80-year period.

As the 1920s drew to a close, unisex swimsuits that emphasised the desirability of a lean, boyish figure and an acceptance of the bared body in public emerged. There does not appear to be substantial variations in the quality or styling of swimsuits made by Parisian couturiers, American mass manufacturers, or Australian local manufacturers; however, the design intent is clear through how and where these images



are published. Fashion photographer Hoyningen-Heuné’s stark neo-classical images for designers Lanvin, Patou, and Schiaparelli appeared in French *Vogue* in the late 1920s. Models were placed off-centre in stylised poses with the space emptied of peripheral props. Figure 5-5 suggests an idealised woman: sophisticated; elegant; urbane; and glamorous, wearing a costume that would have been financially out of the reach of the average beach participant. Jantzen’s more accessible ‘National

Swimming Girl' (Figure 5-3) expressed youthful vitality and, as 'the most widely travelled lady in America', disseminated ideals of fitness and affordable fashion for swimmers and holiday makers everywhere. Australian manufacturers during the 1920s offered products such as Challenge, Golden Fleece, and Kookaburra, swimming suits that offered unshrinkable wools, brighter colours, and more freedom (*The Draper of Australasia*, 1927-29) in comparison to Speedo, which offered swimsuits with a 'lightness, which makes it suitable for baths swimming or surfing ... Speed, comfort and elegance' (Hellmrich 1929: 15). The Australian swimsuit expressed a stylistic freedom inspired by a nation's love of the beach and competitive swimming marketed to enthusiastic participants nationally.

5.3 Peepholes to the Future

1930 marked the beginning of Speedo's involvement with performance sportswear. The Amateur Swimming Association of Australia approved an exclusive patent to Speedo to produce swimsuits with half skirts for their regulation racing costumes. Combined with their ranges for regular swimmers and beach participants, Speedo's approach to the development of swimwear market reflects a central theme of this study which considers the fusion of sport and fashion in the 20th century and which was reflected in the approach to advertising and marketing of the swimsuit in Australia.

The Draper of Australasia and David Jones advertisements and catalogue item entries for swimwear in the early 1930s provide a snapshot of a healthy swimsuit industry. There were a number of brands with ‘the fit’ as a key marketing angle. Smart modern cuts and practical ‘Surf Suits’ were a must for Australian swimmers intent on enjoying the full potential of their beaches, aquatic sports, and leisure pastimes. Figure 5-6 shows a broad range of swimsuits available through David Jones in 1931, some manufactured in their own factory, others

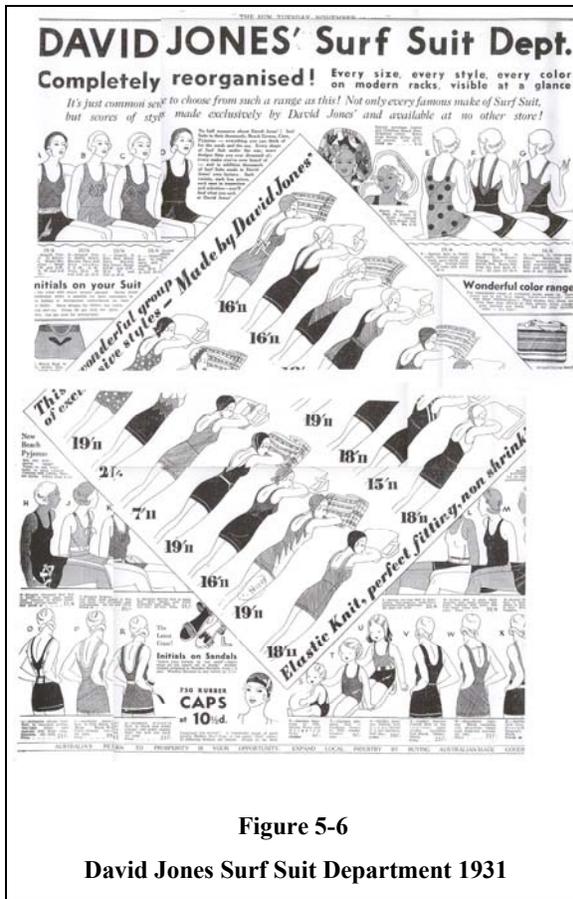


Figure 5-6
David Jones Surf Suit Department 1931

from a number of mostly local suppliers, except three from Jantzen, which was by this stage manufacturing in Sydney for the local market. There was no shortage of styles or design details, including options to individualise swimwear with monogrammed initials on swimsuits and sandals in order to ‘Leave your initials in the sand That’s what the smart set are doing!’ (David Jones' Surf Suit Dept Advertisement 1931). It was a decade where sun-worshipping reached boiling point and the beach experience, whether as bather, surfer, or surf lifesaver sporting surf suits called Sunspeed, Sprinter, Sunkist, Penguin and Seagull came to represent a dominant image of what it was to be Australian.

During the early part of the decade, cut-outs in the body of both men's and women's swimsuits were introduced, an innovation that presumably enhanced the benefits of sunbathing. Figure 5-7 shows a style called the 'gladiator' back, with the models ready to engage in strenuous physical activity while at the same time catching sunrays. An international trend and a key challenge in the 30s was for men to achieve full chest exposure, with Jantzen introducing the 'Topper', a zip-off top option, into the American market in 1932. Considered 'one of the earliest "emancipated" styles', it resulted in many arrests for indecent exposure (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 71).

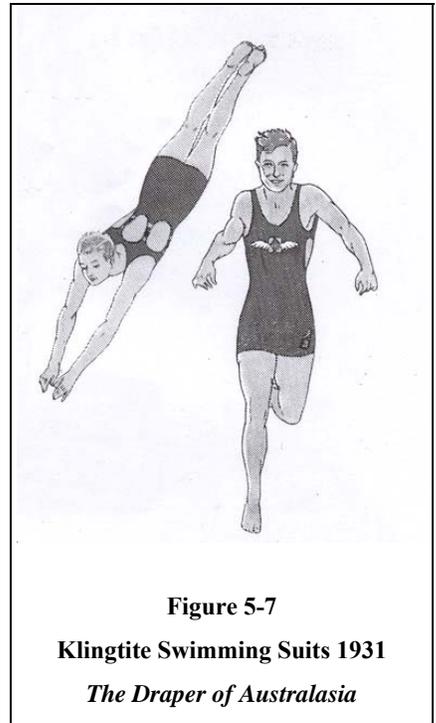


Figure 5-7
Klingtite Swimming Suits 1931
The Draper of Australasia

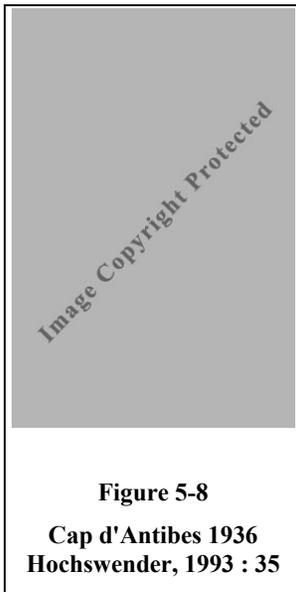


Figure 5-8
Cap d'Antibes 1936
Hochswender, 1993 : 35

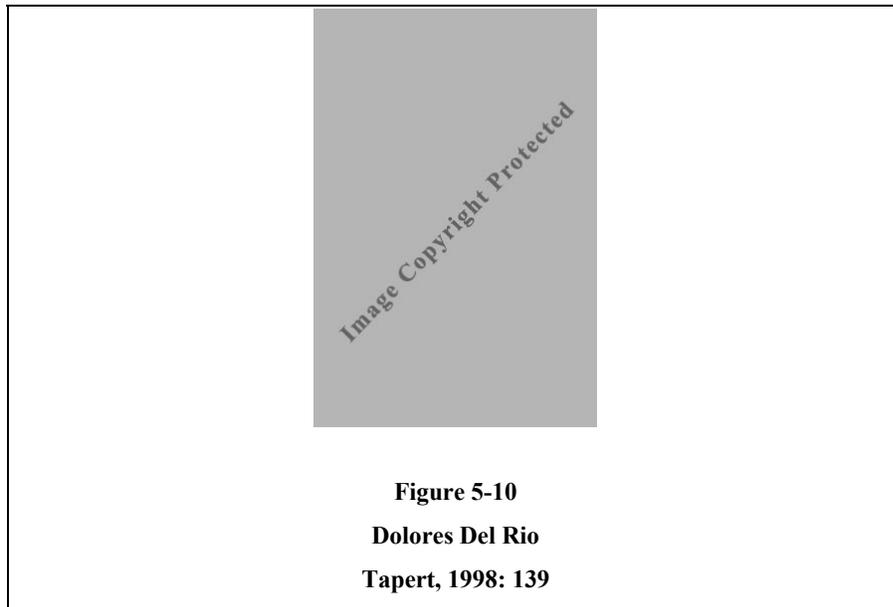
In Australia, local manufacturer Paterson, Laing & Bruce Limited introduced the 'Buccaneer' detachable top swimsuit in 1934 with the enticing slogan, 'As modern as the moment after midnight' (Black Lance 1934). On the French Riviera, Frenchmen wore ribbed swimming trunks with fishnet beach shirts that 'were a natural where shirtless

bathing' was still prohibited (Hochswender 1993: 35). By the late 1930s, the battle was won and men strode confidently surfside to battle the elements bare-chested.

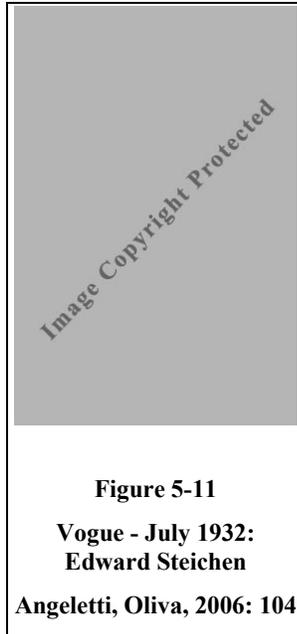


Figure 5-9
Black Lance 'Buccaneer'
Detachable Top 1934
The Draper of Australasia

For women, the fashion was evening gowns with plunging backs in clinging bias cuts, epitomised by the glamorous Jean Harlow dressed by Adrian in the 1933 film *Dinner at Eight*. To avoid suntan marks that would spoil the effect of the low back, the bathing suit fell into line. French swimwear and beachwear designer Jacques Heim, a contender for inventor of the bikini in the 1940s, is credited with inventing the two piece bathing suit around 1932, a modest design that revealed a few inches of midriff between the bodice and bottom pieces while the navel was securely concealed from view. It was popularised by Dolores Del Rio ‘who made fashion news by introducing the two-piece bathing suit’ in her screen appearance in *Flying Down to Rio* with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in 1933 (Tapert 1998: 144). During this period, Hollywood joined forces with the large American swimsuit companies, Catalina, Cole of California, and Jantzen to simultaneously spearhead studio publicity and promote manufacturers’ products endorsed by stars wearing their designs (Curtis 2003). The swimsuit was an ideal garment for showcasing an actor’s physical assets and broadly disseminating bodily ideals. The American style spilled into remote locales including Australia, with Speedo advertising their swimming trunks for men as ‘new “water shorts’ and as being “swell numbers” and, swimsuits ‘being worn by Betty Grable look-alikes’ (Wells 1982: 103).



The lifestyle promoted was poolside glamour, where lounging perfectly groomed and dry significantly influenced the direction of luxury fashion swimsuits in the decades to come. Perched on a diving board with feet in stylish sandals parallel to the water, in Figure 5-10 Del Rio's gaze is beyond the pool and its potential watery pleasures. New textiles, in particular Lastex, a rubber yarn that could be interwoven with wool, cotton, silk, or artificial silk-rayon, moulded to the contours of the body, resisting gravity, and sag. By 1934, Lastex was available in Australia, advertised by the importers Dunlop Perdriau Rubber Co. as a textile that 'makes things fit' (The Miracle Yarn 1934).



In the Antipodes, the populace was not immune to the notion of glamour and leisure, but there were arguably more pressing issues such as nation building and population growth. Women needed to be healthy and successfully procreate for their country. Engaging in healthy outdoor activities, in particular swimming at the pool and beach, was the patriotic thing to do (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 49-51). Like Open-Air Girls around the world, Australian women in their swimsuits were engaging in healthful pursuits that toned and tuned their bodies daily, often in public view. When Kellerman was allegedly arrested in 1907 for indecency, it would have seemed improbable that in less than 30 years morality and fashion would have changed so radically that it would be endorsing her approach to physical beauty and well-being. It was not, however, a new trend and had been filtering through fashion

intermediaries, in particular magazines like *Vogue*, for some years. Significantly, the first photographic cover to be produced for the July 1932 issue of British *Vogue* was an image of a model in a swimsuit: tanned and athletic, she sits cross-legged with beach ball ready, a geometric balance of red and white, a symbol of the modern woman in a modern garment captured by a modern medium.

By the late 1930s, the notion of being Australian was associated with participants like surfers, swimmers, and sunbakers parading at the ‘national’ participation site, the beach. Crombie observes that tourist brochures in this decade focused on the ‘beach girl’ and women surfers to promote Australia as an ideal destination for travellers, suggesting that they ‘joined the retinue of archetypal images’ and were ‘a tribute to the powers of nature in shaping the bodies of the nation’ (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 187). Figure 5-12 shows a confident woman in a fashionable swimsuit that, if worn poolside with designer sandals, would be glamorous and sophisticated; however, with a backdrop of blue sky and open space, the swimsuit denotes a lifestyle that embraces the natural elements and a sporty athleticism.

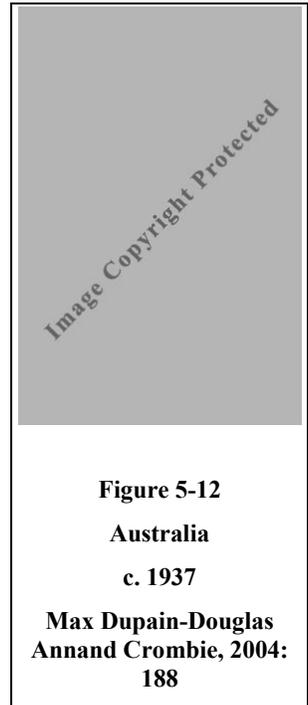




Figure 5-13
Antibes, Australia & Brighton Promotional Posters
Saillard, 1998: 51; Joel, 1998: 92; Kennedy, 2007: 34

Figure 5-13 shows examples of posters promoting: Antibes, a fashionable beach destination on the Côte d'Azur in France, popular with wealthy Europeans and Americans from the early 20th century; Australia's Bondi Beach in Sydney and; Brighton, a popular destination for local holidaymakers in Britain. Antibes is populated by a select number of beach participants, with Villas nestled amongst the lush vegetation overlooking the calm Mediterranean foreshore creating a sense of exclusivity, luxury, and privilege. The Brighton poster depicts an English seaside resort and, according to Kennedy, the image is occupied by 'the buildings and promenade' as opposed to the sea (Kennedy 2007: 35). By contrast, the 'Australia' poster depicts a dynamic combination of modern urban symbols: cars and densely-packed dwellings on the headland overlooking a crowded surf beach with rippling waves, suggesting that the boundaries between city and beach, work, and leisure have blurred. In Australia, because the resort and the city were one, Australians were already at the beach. In Europe, participants needed to travel to remote holiday destinations. As the 1930s ended, there were distinct national and geographic layers of

symbolism attached to the swimsuit: the Americans developed and promoted the glamorous Hollywood angle; the French a connection with luxury and resort fashion; and in Australia, it was interwoven with a lifestyle and national identity as a beach culture.

5.4 Strong Suits

Due to the Second World War, the 1940s began with a 'Make Do and Mend' mentality towards fashion, with an emphasis on functional utility clothing. The Nazis occupied Paris in June 1940, disconnecting the world from the influential Parisian couturiers and their seasonal offerings and, as a result, designers in other countries 'were able to develop their own indigenous styles of dress' (Steele and Fashion Institute of Technology (New York). Museum 1997: 6). British *Vogue's* June 1940 cover does not pay homage to French fashion or the war effort, but to the swimsuit, tantalising the reader with a further 50 bathing suits inside. When Horst P. Horst captured a series of images of Lisa Fonssagrives in gymnastic poses and formed them into the letters of *Vogue*, a less rarefied and realistic approach to fashion and fashion magazine design and layout was created. Swimsuit covers and how they were designed was a contemporary approach to fashion photography begun by Steichen's modernist 1932 cover for *Vogue*, (Figure 5-11), and continued here by Horst (Figure 5-14).



Image Copyright Protected

Figure 5-14
British *Vogue*
June, 1940 Horst P. Horst
Angeletti, Oliva, 2006: 104

According to Richard Martin, curator of the Costume Institute at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American style came into its own in the 1940s. Unlike French couture with its ‘grand style and the refinements of traditional fashion authority’, it was modern, practical, and in tune with ‘the lives of women of their era’ (Martin and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) 1998: 9). Claire McCardell, arguably one of the most influential of the new breed of American designers, created a number of innovative swimsuits in wool jerseys that were both functional and reflected ‘an honest delight in the body’ (Martin and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) 1998: 31).



Figure 5-15 emphasises the importance of the swimsuit’s relationship to the body, moving away from the Hollywood star in a bathing costume and ‘cheesecake glamour’, situating it as a fashion photograph that highlights the clever drapery techniques McCardell was known for. Although recognised by fashion historians for her contribution to American sportswear and the radical shift away from Parisian couture, her swimsuit designs had little influence on the large West Coast swimsuit manufacturers, which continued to produce garments that were created by Hollywood costume designers now working in fashion (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 93).



Figure 5-16
Scamp 1946
The Draper of Australasia

In order to aid the ‘boys over there’, domestic textile mills and clothing manufacturers concentrated on utilitarian items, with Speedo channelling 90 percent of its wartime production into the war effort. It wasn’t until 1946 that *The Draper of Australasia* again contained reports from their European and American correspondents, and local manufacturers returned to advertising their products again. A company called Turner Parachute Company started a label called Scamp in 1945, specifically targeting the younger market with a dazzling array of two-piece swimsuits that were ‘the post-war fruits of a company’ that had originally manufactured parachutes. They were described as ‘brief, gay, and youthful’ setting them apart from the American imports, which ‘retreat from the minimum suit to the new cover-up look’ (Beach and Sports Wear Preview 1947). Although Cole of California, Jantzen, and Rose Marie Reed were all sold in Australia during this period, it is evident from research that local designers like Ben Turner were producing more adventurous designs for a young market as seen in Figure 5-16.

While there were two-piece swimsuits available from the mid-1930s, 1946 marks the birth of the bikini as this was when Louis Réard and Jacques Heim presented their individual creations, the bikini and the Atome respectively. It was the bikini that would mark a new era in the swimsuit, briefer than any other swimsuit to date. High on the leg and exposing the navel, it ‘embodied fashion’s ideals to be more than just an item of clothing’ (Alac 2002: 29). The publicity surrounding its launch had similarities to Kellerman’s high profile introduction of the one-piece swimsuit 40 years earlier. Using a cabaret performer as opposed to a fashion model lent a vaudevillian quality to the bikini, which would not gain general acceptance until the 1960s. According to Alac, there was little media commentary with articles focusing on any swimsuit style other than the bikini (Alac 2002: 30). Bosker and Lenček report that ‘Americans were horrified by the spectacle of so much bared flesh’, rejecting this skimpy costume as naughty and French and un-American (Alac 2002: 30; Lencek and Bosker 1989: 92). From the mid-1940s, Paula Stafford, a young Queensland-based designer started creating a version of the bikini for herself and a few locals. The bikini bottoms could be reduced with a tie process depending on how daring the wearer was and before long tourists could buy a Stafford bikini as part of their holiday experience on the Gold Coast where ‘beach laws had long been elastic’ (Wells 1982: 26).

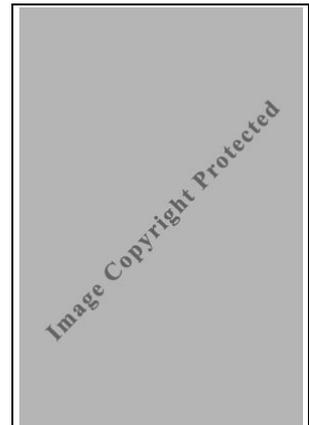


Figure 5-17
Stafford
Napkin Wrap Bikini 1950



Image Copyright Protected

Figure 5-18
Dovima - Toni Frissell
Harpers Bazaar May 1947 Plimpton, 1994: 20

Men's swimsuit styling during the 1940s remained stable with belted swimming trunks the standard in all countries. From the middle of the decade boxer style trunks with Hawaiian inspired prints and built-in athletic support appeared offering a decorative alternative with a trend in 1946 for couples to mix and match. Tanning continued to be popular in the 1940s and it is believed Réard's bikini design was a response to observing sunbathers at St Tropez who rolled down their two piece swimsuits in attempts to brown more of their bodies (Killoren Bensimon 2006: 18). In Figure 5-18 the model seems intent on absorbing as much sunlight as possible. Shot on location in Montego Bay, Jamaica, it was the 'first bikini to be seen away from France' (Plimpton 1994: 20). Frissell was known for her open-air images of women captured in casual snapshot poses as opposed to contrived fashion photographs. In this

image the wearer relaxes comfortably in her athletic sensuality, unashamedly baring her body in an exotic location.

5.5 Muscling in on the Action

By the 1950s, American swimsuits were considered ‘the world’s classic suit, exported everywhere and imitated around the globe’ (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 100). Joel and Wells report that the Australian market was dominated by the big American swimsuit manufacturers, Jantzen, Cole of California, and Rose Marie Reid (Joel 1998: 164; Wells 1982: 104). These companies had a huge impact on the style of swimsuits available in major fashion centres and, importantly, both Jantzen and Cole of California had factories in Australia. A 1952 review of the Jantzen range in *The Draper of Australasia* suggested that Jantzen designers and stylists looked at key trends on the continent and in America, concluding that: ‘the Australian beach girl has her own decided preferences. She looks for *practical* glamour or fashions that are swimmable’. The report continued to argue that Australian swimsuit ‘needs more than glamour ... the ability to “take it” is an essential so that, at the end of a long, active season, the garment will still retain its sparkle’ (Jantzen Review of Summer Fashions 1952). Fred Cole, president and founder of Cole of California, visited Australia in 1953 to inspect the operations of the local subsidiary, California Productions Limited, which had factories in Sydney and Bathurst in New South Wales. He commented that the standard of the Australian operation ‘equalled, if not exceeded, that of the main factory in the U.S.A.’, observing that Australian girls ‘look healthier and use less make-up than the American girls’ and that the beaches surpassed any in the world (Cole of California Visits Australia 1953). The American domination of the market was assisted and informed by Australians and their approach to beach culture,

responding to the specific needs of participants who required a practical, durable, yet fashionable swimsuit.

It seemed only natural that Australian designers would feel best equipped to supply the local market as well as export the antipodean beach vision to the rest of the world. In 1952, David Waters was working in a knitting factory during the day and cutting out garments for his mother's stall at Melbourne's Victoria Markets at night. He decided to experiment with a small swimwear line that was trialled at the markets. By 1959, Watersun was exporting to Singapore and Hong Kong and creating innovative swimsuits with striking prints that targeted a young, fashion-conscious wearer.

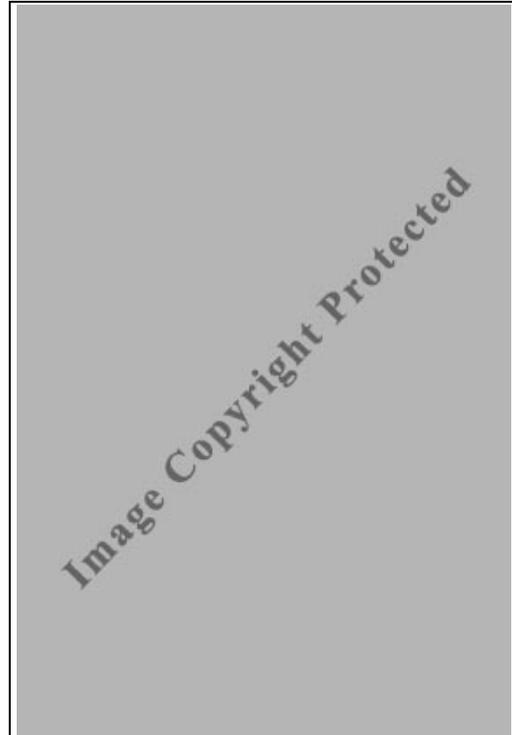
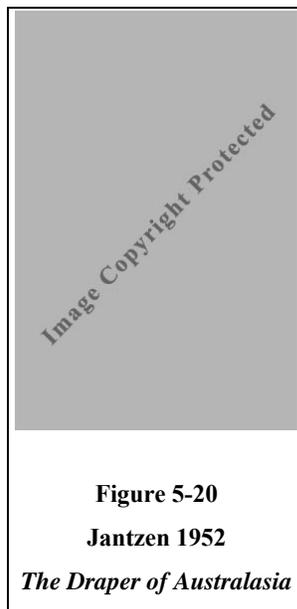


Figure 5-19
Watersun 1956-7 Range
The Draper of Australasia

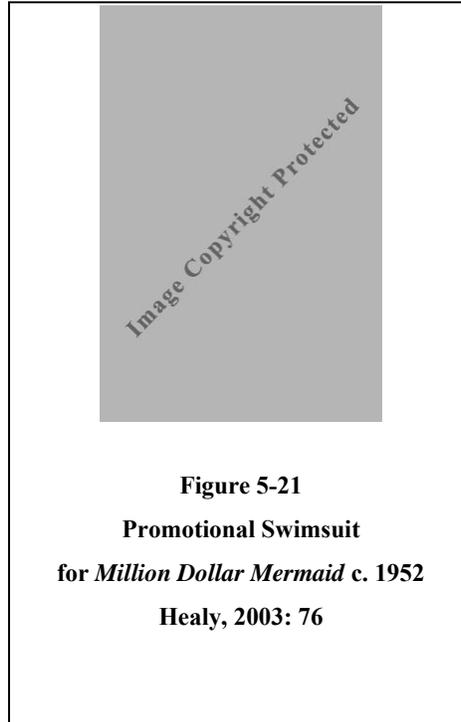
Meanwhile, in Queensland Paula Stafford began cutting out her two-piece and bikini designs on a flattened canvas secured in the sand at the windbreak hire business she ran with her husband. The pattern pieces, cut from tea towels and table cloths due to rationing and shortages, would then be made up at home on her kitchen table. In 1952, a model wearing one of her swimsuits was ordered off the beach by a male beach inspector for wearing a swimsuit that he deemed too brief. Stafford regrouped and, showing entrepreneurial skills, arranged for newspaper reporters, the mayor, and a priest to witness five girls on the beach the next day in similarly daring swimsuits. As

a result, the Gold Coast became the bikini capital of Australia, and a Stafford bikini ‘became a status symbol’, indicating that ‘you had “travelled” and done goodness knows what else’ (Wells 1982: 113). Stafford later created a ‘world first’ with the fully reversible bikini and organised the first Australian bikini parade at the Sydney Town Hall in 1956. Watersun and Paula Stafford represent a distinctly Australian approach to swimsuit design, through businesses started on kitchen tables made up by mums and home sewers, by visionary designers who saw a gap in the market and created designs that would compete with more traditional swimwear brands. In Figures 5-17 and 5-19, the youthful models and the innovative swimsuits lack the structured sophistication and finish of the Jantzen swimsuits in Figure 5-20.



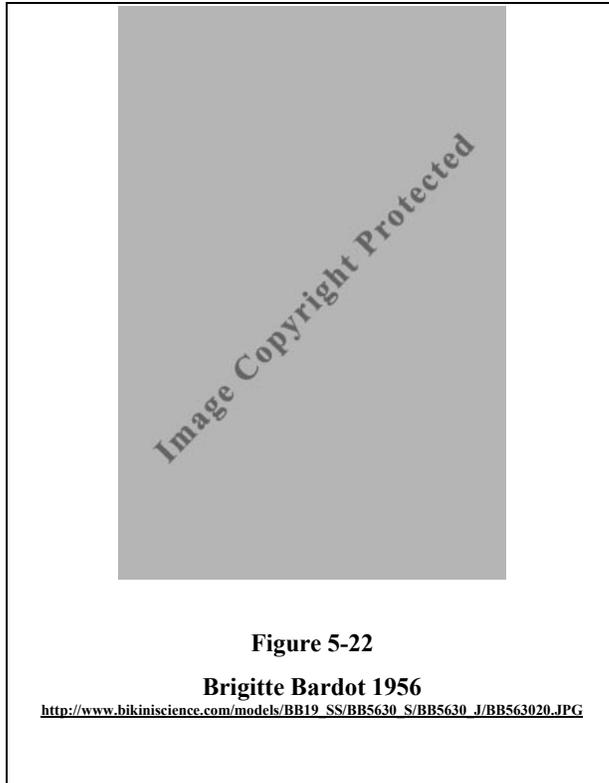
While Jantzen included fashion features, the bulk of their range was functional swimwear for the mass market. By comparison, Cole of California’s primary

objective was to create swimsuits ‘to look beautiful in’. Fred Cole had started his career as an actor with Universal Studios and continued his connection with Hollywood by designing swimsuits for a number of film stars, including Esther Williams (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 51).



Williams in a swimsuit was an opulent and glittering vision and her aquatic prowess did not diminish her glamour. It was an active glamour that was first espoused by Kellerman in her silent movies in the teens without the added bonus of Technicolour. A stage was built especially for Williams by MGM with a 25 feet-deep, 90-feet by 90-feet pool, with special effects for underwater filming that included fountains fireworks and a Botticelli-style Venus that amounted to \$250,000 worth of plumbing for MGM’s golden girl (Morton 2003). Hollywood directors used splashy, colourful aquacades to showcase Williams’ athletic body in glamorous swimsuits. She performed spectacular dives in complex water ballets with a cast of equally glamorous and glitteringly-swimsuited mermaids. More than any other movie star in the 1940s

and '50s, Williams contributed to fashioning the swimsuit with a sporty theatricality, continuing to communicate a bodily ideal that Kellerman had pioneered to a global audience. Hollywood glamour was interpreted by designers like Margit Fellegi for Cole of California, who created a figure-hugging jersey number in ritzy gold with panelling, back zipper, and padding to enhance the bust (Figure 5-21).



There was ‘an admiring public, who were keen to buy their own versions’ (Healy et al. 2003: 76) and, as Breward suggests, garments promoted by actresses reflected the emergence of a power shift from Paris to Hollywood. He mentions influential fashion films, including *And God Created Woman*, commenting that it promoted the bikini as ‘a sensual simplicity’ rather than Hollywood glamour (Breward 2003: 136-8): a diversification of ‘types’ or ‘models’. As opposed to the constricted Hollywood

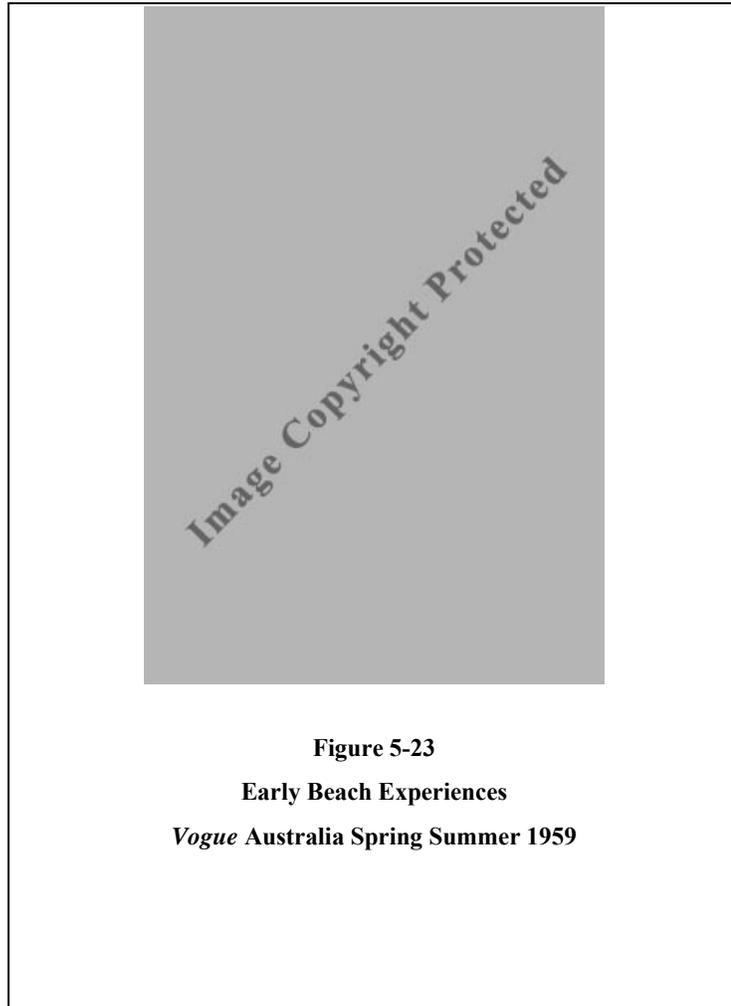
glamour associated with Williams' costumes, the bikini-clad Bardot stands unrestricted, uncorseted, and deconstructed – a wild exotic.

The Olympic swimming events are a focus for a sport-obsessed nation that has produced a long line of champion swimmers. The 1912, 1920, 1924, and 1928 Olympics profiled some early great Australian swimmers such as Fanny Durack, Mina Wylie (1912), Andrew (Boy) Charlton (1924, 1928), and Frank Beaurepaire (1908, 1920, 1924). During the same period, international greats included Duke Paoa Kahanamoku (1912, 1920, 1924), Johnny Weissmuller (1924, 1928) from the U.S.A. and Arne Borg (1924, 1928) from Sweden. It would not be until the 1950s that Australian swimmers would again surface as winners, with the interim years being dominated by the Americans, Europeans and, in the 1930s, the Japanese. At the 1956 Olympics, the men's 100m Freestyle event saw Australians John Henricks, John Devitt, and Gary Chapman placed first, second, and third respectively, with Murray Rose winning gold in the 400m and 1500m Freestyle events. Australian women Dawn Fraser, Lorraine Crapp, and Faith Leech blitzed the 100m freestyle event (*Swimming at the Summer Olympics* 2008).

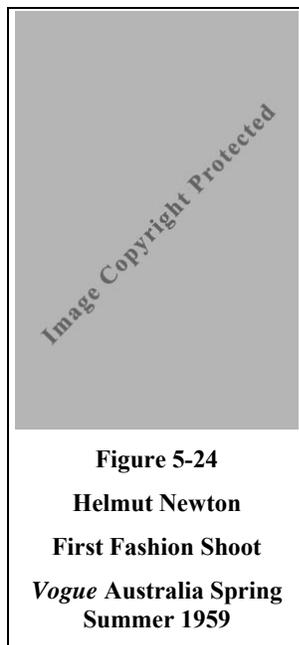
By this time Speedo was established as the 'Aussie Cossie' of choice for the Australian Olympic team, representing the 'real swimmer's uniform' (Wells 1982). Initially, the swimsuits were a combination of silk and cotton; however, by the Rome Olympics in 1960, Speedo had developed an advanced alternative to natural fibres. Nylon Tricot was exclusively knitted for the racing team by Prestige Fabrics, Melbourne, supposedly giving them an advantage over their competitors and marking

the beginning of Speedo's expansion into the global market place where the company positioned itself as a producer of performance swimwear.

The 1950s was the decade where 'swimwear now expressed geography as well as the clothing and model and the added attribution of site' and 'confirmed that travel was an intrinsic part of the post-war adventure with the sea and swimming' (Martin and Koda 1990: 105). Fashion photographers such as Norman Parkinson and Louise Dahl-Wolfe travelled to exotic locations, situating the swimsuit in its perfect habitat: the tropical paradise.

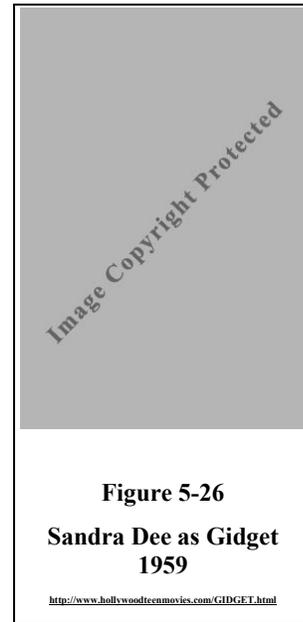
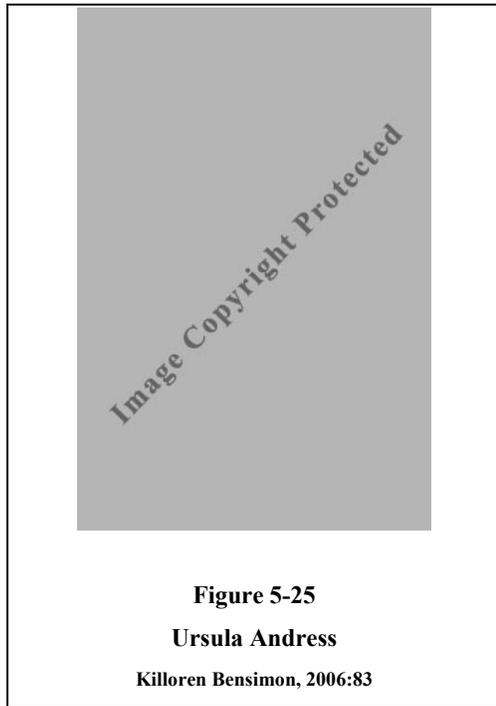


In 1959, *Vogue* Australia was launched and its first fashion shoot was of swimwear photographed by Helmut Newton titled 'Early Beach Appearances', a reference to the first beach experience of the season. The main image has the model immersed to the knee in an expanse of water with delicate ripples circling her lithe frame. There is a sense of space and no specific geographic location. That the model is surrounded by water suggests Australia's island status and isolation from cosmopolitan hubs. The first *Vogue* Australia editor, Rosemary Cooper, was an Englishwoman who attempted to mirror the British approach to fashion while lacking an understanding of how different the Australian style and fashion sense that was, according to Rosemary Squire, '... one that was much simpler and more suitable for the climate' (Goatly 1999: 131). Newton, who was married to an Australian, understood this, capturing the models in unique and unusual ways, without obvious make-up, jewellery, hats, scarves or umbrellas, and without the usual tropical backdrop of sand and palms. Newton personally embraced a casual style for this particular shoot, looking relaxed in his stripe boxer-style trunks and reflecting his affinity with the Australian style.



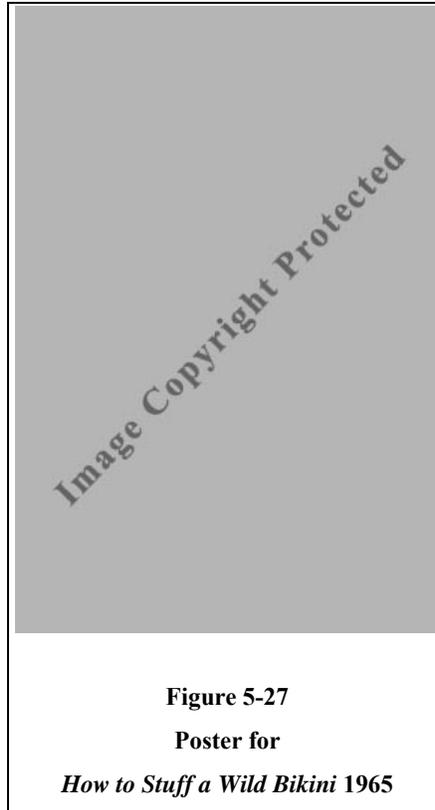
5.6 Stretching the Swimsuit's Potential

The 'youthquake' of the 1960s pushed the traditional boundaries and the entire structure of the fashion system was challenged from below with the influence of the Parisian couturiers weakened by the vibrant boutique businesses in London's Carnaby Street and Kings Road. The new style was youthful and exciting, epitomised by Mary Quant, whose aim was to produce 'clothes for ordinary girls like herself' (Steele and Fashion Institute of Technology (New York). Museum 1997: 50). She learnt her trade 'on the job', often purchasing her fabrics at a retail level. Targeting a young market that was not socially elite, she represented the antithesis of the Parisian couturier and their client base, instead producing mini-skirts for the leggy, boyish London girls of 1962. The mini focused on the natural body, challenging a fashion aesthetic that favoured the elegant, sophisticated woman with a rigidly structured silhouette engineered with complex undergarments. The result was similar to the impact of the 1920s swimsuit in that women were freed and enslaved simultaneously by the stark exposure of their bodies, heralding a new social order where physical beauty outranked the blueblood, with models like Twiggy and Jean Shrimpton, representative of a new breed who influenced what clothes and body types were fashionable. It represented a 'trickle-up' effect, with designers creating affordable and trendy styles for the young and hip. The swimsuit had set the scene at the beach; now the mini was taking it to the streets.



By the early '60s swimsuits were less structured and the Americans had finally adopted the bikini as a natural, semi-respectable form of swimwear. Beach movies with teenage stars like Sandra Dee playing a normal young Californian girl called Gidget whose summer adventures with surfer-boy love interests saw the cast attired almost entirely in beachwear, acquainted conservative moviegoers with the bikini. Teenage beach blanket movies were not the only genre Hollywood used to expose the bodies of its stars and extend the swimsuit's terrain. The Bond girl appeared in the 1962 James Bond film *Dr No*, with Ursula Andress striding from the sea in a daringly brief white bikini accessorised with belt and hunting knife. 'The Bond girl is quintessentially sexy' (Killoren Bensimon 2006: 80) and, unlike the saccharine sweet Gidget, represented an assertive, grown-up action woman, albeit, in a bikini. It was a new type of active glamour – vigorous, lively and youthful, and very different from the Esther Williams style of the 1940s and '50s. Even further removed was the sleek

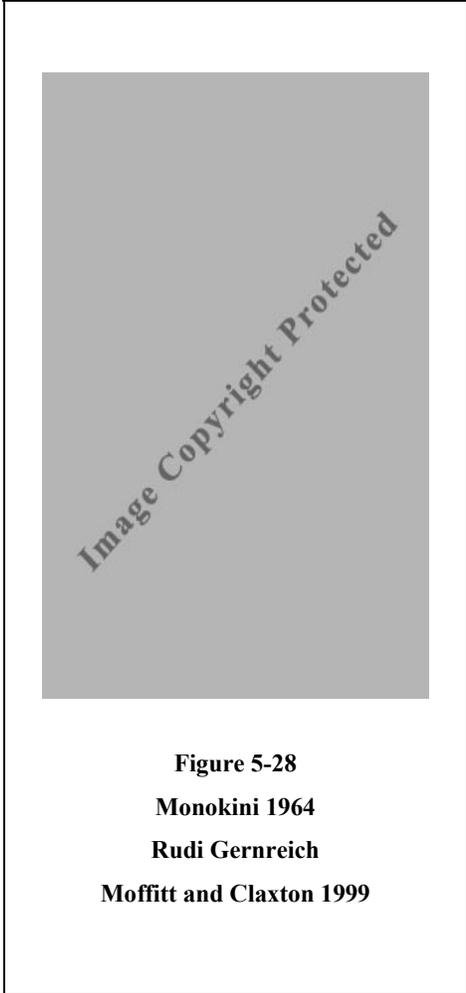
and sultry glamour of less sporty stars like Rita Hayworth, who was more likely to be found lounging in the boudoir than emerging from the ocean, ready for action.



Australians were exposed to American culture in the form of television shows, fast food, and beach movies. A theatre poster advertising the Australian screenings of *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* (Figure 5-27) was typical fare, contrasting the youthful exuberance of the hot, zany American bikini girl with the conservative, middle-aged stuffy Englishman wearing a suit and bowler hat. Nonetheless, Australians in the 1960s were not new to the bikini and were less restricted than the Americans in its terms of use. In America, only the young had the courage to wear brief swimsuits and fashion was ‘dominated by teen-agers’ (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 116). On the Gold Coast, the bikini was the swimsuit of choice for young girls and for many matrons

with Paula Stafford making made-to-measure versions for her more mature customers. Perhaps unwisely, one local manufacturer claimed to have made a bikini for a woman whose measurements were: bust 42, waist 32, hips 44 (inches). A former Gold Coast Mayor, Alderman Bruce Small, supported the acceptance of all body types claiming that: 'Here we accept the human form in the same way as we accept it when shown in an art gallery' (Wells 1982: 106-9). Australia's adoption of swimsuit styles was driven by a hedonistic desire to optimise the beach and leisure experience, regardless of colour, creed, or hip measurements.

One style of bathing suit introduced in 1964 by 'anti-establishment' designer Rudi Gernreich, stretched the conventional boundaries of how much flesh could be exposed in public with his topless monokini design. Gernreich believed that once fashion came from the streets, clothes were no longer just clothes, but a form of communication that could challenge gender stereotypes and engender equality. The monokini received 'extraordinary press coverage' (Martin and Koda 1990: 113), and was perceived as one of the last frontiers in the battle to bare all. Although Gernreich believed that he was freeing women from the bonds of fashion, the monokini was considered a freakish joke, more witty entertainment than women's



liberation, at women's expense. The breast is one of part of the female anatomy most likely to succumb to gravity, therefore limiting this revealing design's inclusion in swimsuit wardrobes.

Meanwhile, business was booming for Australian swimsuit designers. Paula Stafford had consolidated her market position, selling both locally and interstate and had also begun exporting her swimsuits to Hong Kong, Great Britain, and America. Watersun continued to establish a strong presence by promoting their swimsuits through ingenious public relations exercises. When international entertainer Eartha Kitt arrived in Australia for a tour in 1963, she was presented with one of Watersun's signature animal print swimsuits – an ideal method of promoting their product. The swimsuit was made in Bri-nylon, a fabric that not only dried quickly and clung sinuously to the body, but also lent itself to the new dyes and exotic prints that proved popular in the 1960s.

The 'Scandal Suit', introduced by Cole of California in 1964, daringly used see-through net to reveal tantalising glimpses of the body while technically still covering it. The styling was copied by other West Coast swimsuit manufacturers and 'high-fashion designers ... dedicated to the notion of bringing high style to the water-front' (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 127).

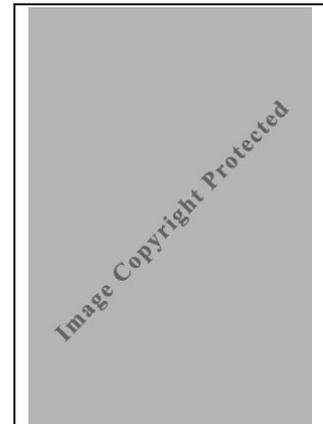


Figure 5-30
Eartha Kitt 1963
in Watersun Swimsuit
The Draper of Australasia

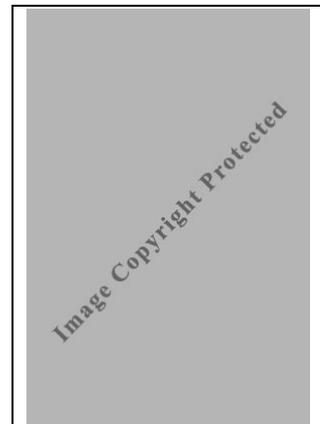


Figure 5-29
Scandal Suit 1965
Lencek and Bosker, 1989

In Australia, Speedo's primary focus was developing and manufacturing serious performance swimwear as opposed to high fashion or beach swimwear. From 1959, 'the brand started to grow globally' as a result of the brand's profile at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games through its association with the Australian team who blitzed the competition wearing sleek, silk racer styles (Newbury 2007: 62). Speedo supplied 21 countries with swimsuits for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, consolidating a connection with being a winner that was then reinforced when 16 out of the eventual 18 gold medallists wore Speedos. The Australian team still managed to stand out by wearing vertical gold and green striped swimsuits, a first in international swimming where teams had always worn block colours. Natural fibres were no longer used after the introduction of Nylon Tricot, a lightweight, strong fabric that not only absorbed minimal water but also had the added advantage of taking dyes and prints. Speedo

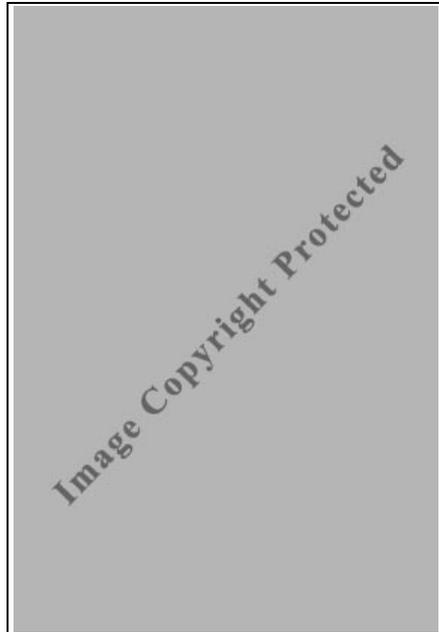
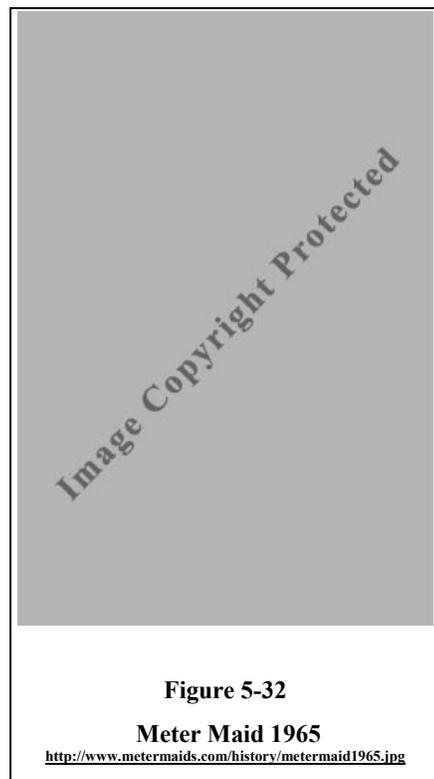


Figure 5-31
Maglia Swimsuit
Vogue Australia August 1966

improved performance for men by designing a skirtless trunk that produced less drag, creating a body-revealing style that filtered quickly through to the fashion market. Female swimmers were not included in the equation either skirted swimsuits did not cause drag for female competitors or protecting their modesty outweighed their competitive advantage. It would not be until the 1976 Olympics that women would be allowed to swim in this pared down style. Although stylistically Speedos were functional, the association with sport, particularly at Olympic level, added another

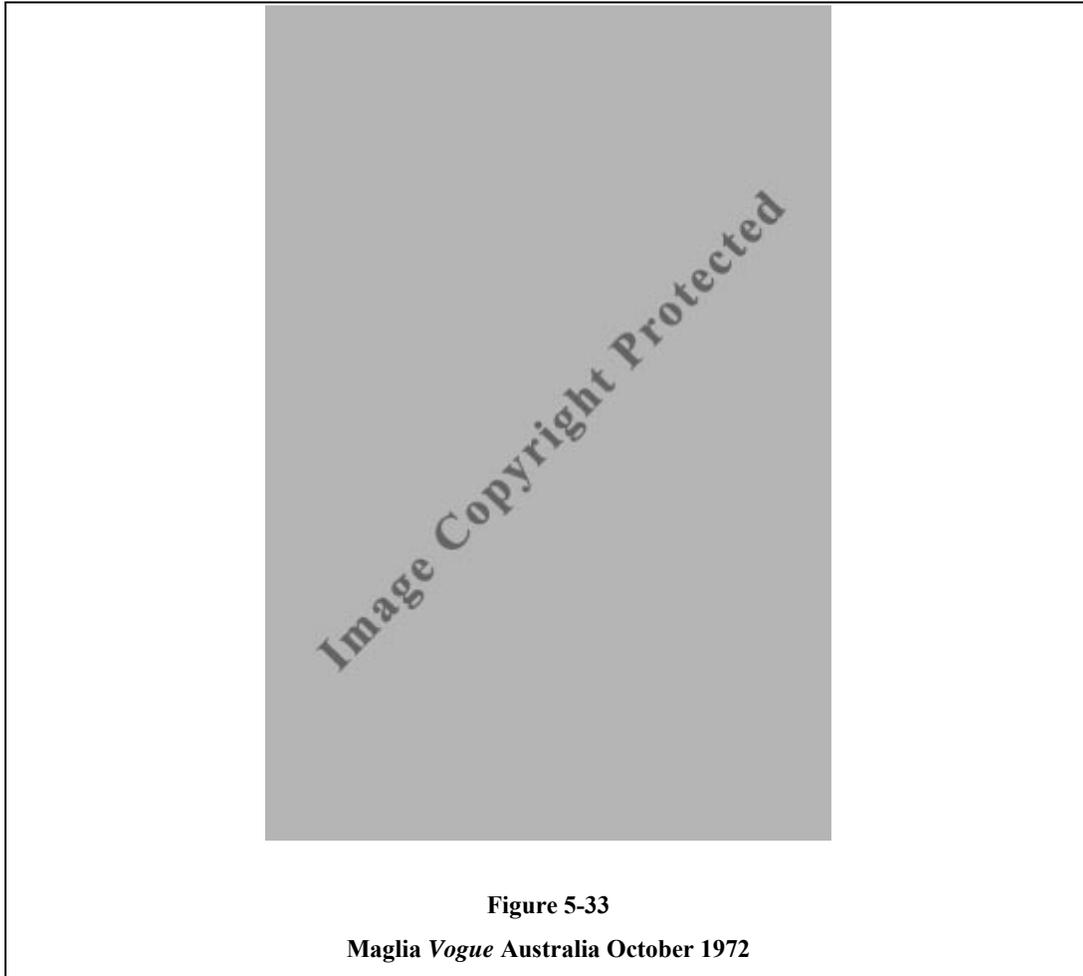
dimension to swimsuit design, and fashion stylists for *Vogue* Australia were following suit by the mid 1960s. Layouts favoured the one-piece that had the sporty simplicity of Speedos. The accompanying text describes the swimsuit as ‘Strappy strategy – athletic back’, with the title ‘Splash Makers’ suggesting a sporty, active aesthetic. In Figure 5-31, the model strides out in a streamlined black suit sporting a bold racing stripe.

On the Gold Coast, another kind of sport emerged in 1965 when Meter Maids were introduced to encourage tourism. These svelte young women in skimpy, coin-encrusted gold bikinis with sashes similar to those worn by beauty contestants, promenaded up and down the main drag of Surfers Paradise inserting coins into expired meters. Taking the swimsuit onto the streets away from its natural environments of the beach, pool, or stage, they gave shoppers a sporting chance against the traffic wardens. The bikini no longer needed a nightclub performer to model it 19 years



on – there were any number of eager participants ready to wear an item of clothing that covered little more than Eve’s fig leaves and parade about in the public domain. The revolution begun by Kellerman had almost reached maturity and by the end of the ’60s, padding and boning in swimsuits had been relegated to design archives. With the introduction of high performance textiles like Lycra and Nylon, it was time to play with the basic construction of both the one-piece and the bikini.

5.7 Fusing Fashion and Sport



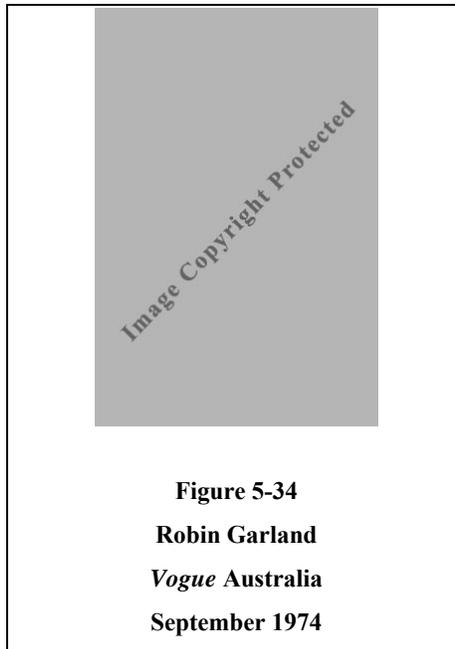
Australian swimwear labels Watersun, Maglia, and Paula Stafford had built the foundation blocks in the 1950s and '60s, designing fashionable swimsuits for a range of participants in various sites. By 1972, there was a diversity of styles available in both prints and plains for the one-piece and bikini (Figure 5-33). The lean and leggy body aesthetic with the swimsuits stripped of internal structuring reduced opportunities to create the illusion that the wearer was proportioned correctly. This new look led to more intensive exercise and dieting regimes than seen in previous decades: 'Suddenly, discipline and artistry were no longer bad words when it came to

preparing the body for public display' (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 131). The women of this new athleticism regularly participated in sports like swimming and gymnastics, clothed in swimsuits that provided a freedom of movement that men had benefited from since the 1930s. Martin and Koda suggest that in the 1970s 'women too expressed themselves as the jocks that men had long been' (Martin and Koda 1990; 131).

Australian designer Brian Rochford was one of a new breed of designers catering to the youth market of the 1960s with swimwear label Splash Out and ready-to wear label Dollywear. Rochford deconstructed the bikini top, removing the underwire and experimenting with different cuts and styles in lightweight Lycra fabrics. While Speedo had worked with DuPont to create technologically-advanced, performance-enhancing swimsuits for competition, Rochford went further, closely collaborating with DuPont and Heathcote Textiles in Melbourne to create new textiles that showcase the body for fashion. As a result, Australian designers had a competitive edge, creating snugly-fitting, sleek swimsuits that did not sag when wet and that dried quickly – ideal for a fashion market embracing sport and the gym in the pursuit of bodily perfection. In a telephone interview on March 5, 2007, Rochford commented that swimwear during this period was a form of fashion where everything was so emergent there was nothing to copy, deconstructing a criticism that has long been directed at Australian designers. He continued, arguing that Australian swimsuit designers produced some of the best swimsuits in the world due to a love of the beach combined with high levels of participation in outdoor activities. From an early age, Rochford had been a competitive swimmer and had regularly spent leisure time at Bondi Beach and believed this influenced his approach to swimsuit design. His vision

was to thread form and function to create trendy swimsuits, which were fashion garments with the ability to withstand high usage. Joining Rochford as a high profile swimsuit designer in the '70s was Robin Garland, a former international fashion model, who created minimalist swimsuit designs for those with well proportioned bodies. Joel describes her designs as 'racy' and, although some David Jones buyers had reservations due to the miniscule size of the swimsuits, they sold 'like hot cakes' (Joel 1998: 207). Figure 5-34 provides Bondi with tantalising product placement, combined with the accompanying text suggesting:

'Time for sun, for baring the body in a blissful new bikini, shaping up that body, making it lithe and slender ... You'll find inspiration right here. Robin Garland's chauvinistic silk cotton knit bikinis'.



The minimalist styling showcases toned bodies spruiking ‘Bondi’, ensuring everyone knows the place to be seen or associated with is an Australian beach, where one could display her slim body in its natural habitat.

Yet Australia was not designing the briefest bikinis. The skimpiest styles, including the Tanga, first appeared on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro around 1974. In the same year, American designer Rudi Gernreich created a similar design dubbing it the ‘Thong’.

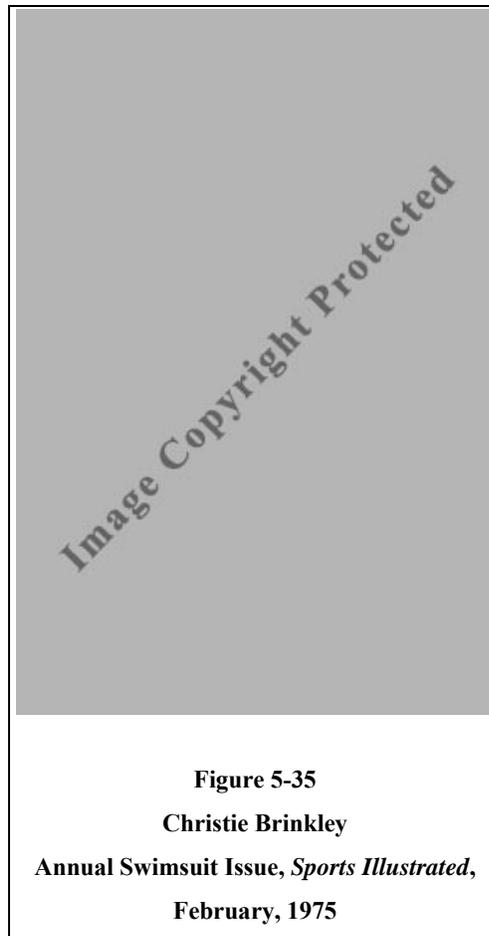
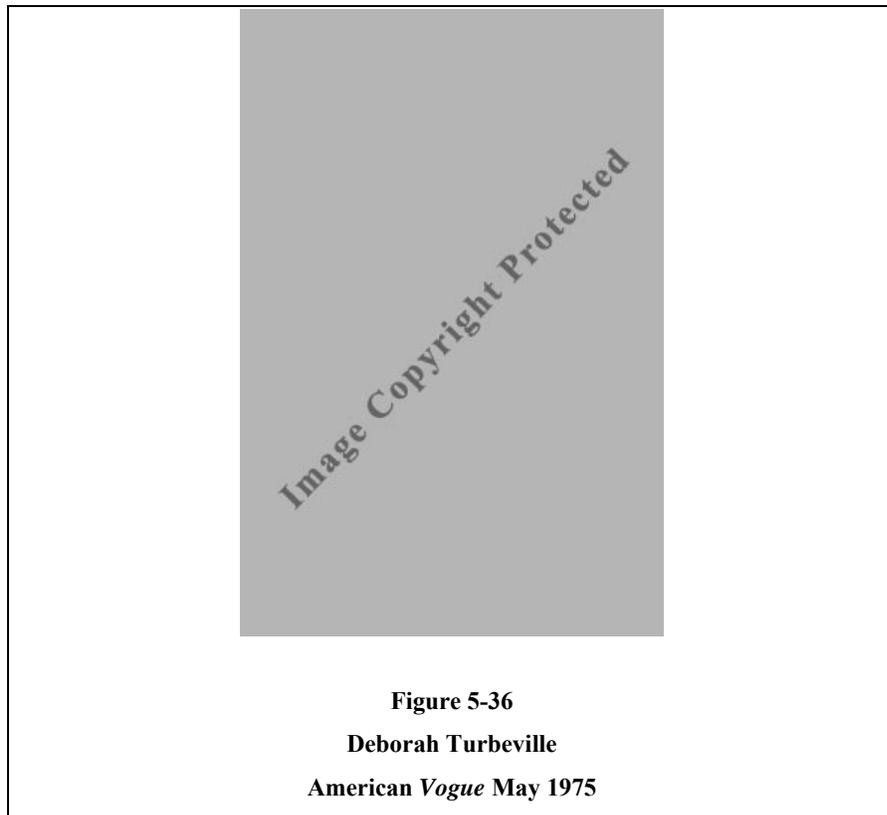


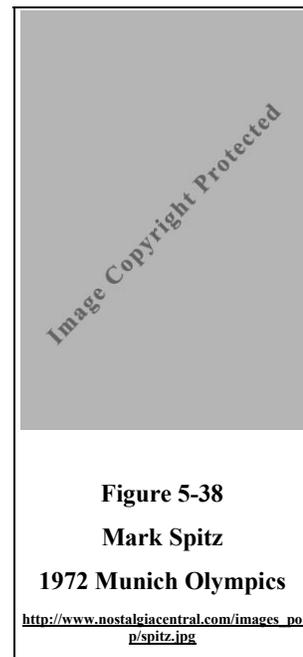
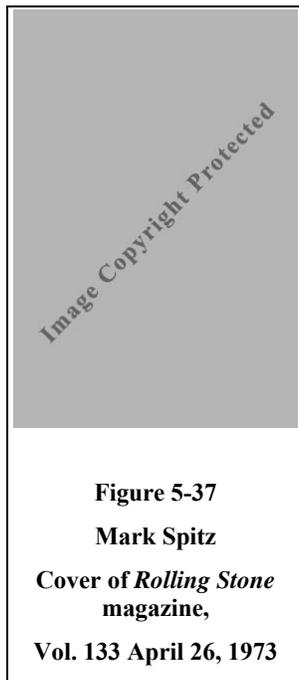
Figure 5-35 of Christie Brinkley in the foaming ocean sporting a Tanga that leaves little to the imagination, appropriately appeared in ‘a paper that portrayed the world as a man’s dream, *Sports Illustrated*’ (Alac 2002: 162). Launched in 1964, it was a

magazine dedicated to providing its readers with images of celebrity fashion models and movie stars posing suggestively in daring swimsuits, often set in exotic locales. The models appeared to be robustly healthy, veering towards an Amazonian, rather than waif-like fashion ideal of the '60s that had been epitomised by Twiggy. Whereas baring the navel and torso had been revolutionary in previous decades, the focus had shifted to the thigh and buttocks. Bosker and Lenček suggest that the introduction of such extreme body-baring designs were not for all and triggered a revival of the one-piece swimsuit (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 141-2).

Due to its appearance in a men's magazine, Christie Brinkley's suggestive pose with buttocks split in two by an almost non-existent bikini bottom drew little commentary. By contrast, fashion photographer Deborah Turbeville's shoot of bathing suits for



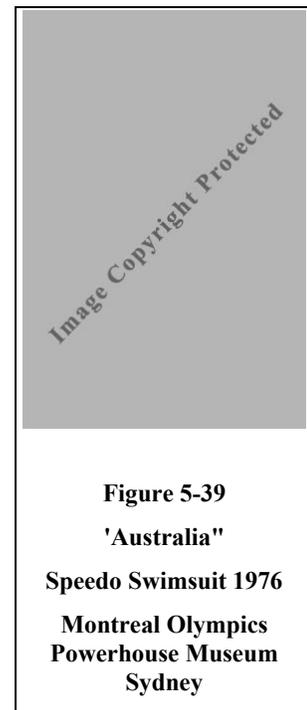
American *Vogue* (Figure 5-36) in the same year incited many readers to anger, with some states banning the sale of this issue. It was suggested the five models were portraying a lesbian scene, with the model in the foreground purportedly masturbating. The swimsuits appear to be made in super-light Lycra blends, near see-through white, and accessorised with Speedo-style swim caps. The central model has been captured in a gymnastic style pose, with the model to her right wearing a cross-back one-piece similar in styling to Speedo's competitive swimsuits for Olympic teams teamed with athletic footwear. The notion that the women do not appear posed for the 'male gaze' is reflected in the title for the fashion spread: 'There's more to a bathing suit than meets the eye' (Angeletti and Oliva 2006: 237).



Men were not exempt from the male or female 'gaze'. At the Munich Olympics, where he won seven gold medals, Mark Spitz's lean, muscular body was a perfect backdrop for his Speedos – the briefest swimsuit style for men to date. Reducing the

size made 'Speedo the fastest men's swimsuit ... also the sexiest' (Killoren Bensimon 2006: 228). A 1973 *Rolling Stone* cover featured Spitz in a glam swimcap that could have been worn by Esther Williams in her heyday. He was dubbed 'America's Latest Pin-Up' and, was referred to as 'a pelvic heartthrob'. Spitz appeared on billboards and in milk commercials in 'a pair of brief competition trunks' appealing to both 'women and the gay community' (Cahill 1973: 22).

By the 1976 Montreal Olympics, Speedo was appointed an official swimwear licensee for the Olympic Games, with a number of nations choosing their product for their swim teams. Levine reports that the new Speedo swimsuits could shave seconds off race times due to briefer styling, lightweight textiles, and swimmers wearing their swimsuits two sizes smaller than their actual size (Levine 1976). The Australian team had an all-over print design with maps of Australia in green and gold created by Gloria Mortimer-Dunn (Speedo designer 1962-1990), which caused heated debate with fashion experts declaring it 'bastardised and gimmicky'. Former model and fashion



commentator, Maggie Tabberer declared that 'Australia is now a sophisticated country, so surely we can have a sophisticated look about us'. But president of the Amateur Swimming Union of Australia Arch Stainback explained that 'it was aimed at making spectators and television viewers aware of the Australian competitors' (Robbins 1976). While not particularly sophisticated Mortimer-Dunn's graphic print, created an association between a nation and its athletes, branding them for global consumption.

The fitness craze of the '70s led to sporty styling: 'the Speedo hat for competition swimming moved fleetingly into high fashion' (Probert 1981: 57). In May 1978, American *Vogue* touted the Speedo swim cap 'the snuggest, sleekest' and a 'real find'. 'Racers wear them' and now a sporting accessory was appropriate for a fashion purpose. Swimsuit spreads had models posed around swimming pools with swim caps and goggles, elevating the status of simple maillots with accompanying text like, 'Swim-skins with sophisticated styling' (*Vogue* Australia, 1974). In 1978, *Vogue* Australia tells its readers: 'Legs on show. Longer because maillots, sliced high extend to the thigh'. It also quotes from Anacharsis 600BC, encouraging readers to: 'Play so that you may be serious'. Flabby thighs can be firmed with tennis, dancing, swimming or 'bare your feet and walk off thickening ankles'. If sport was leisure, participants could keep active and ward off bodily imperfections.

The swimsuit in Figure 5-40 was part of a spread called 'Breast Stroke', a double entendre that maintains a light-hearted connection between sport and fashion while offering the wearer a less functional style with 'lots of shoulder ... newsy ruffle trim around the top and high-cut legs'. Accompanied by a male model in tennis garb, the model wears socks and tennis shoes suggesting the swimsuit could double as a leotard allowing her to continue her exercise routine without changing. The 'Theatre of Operations' was morphing once again with active glamour and sport combining in a distinctly Australian way to create fashionable swimsuits.



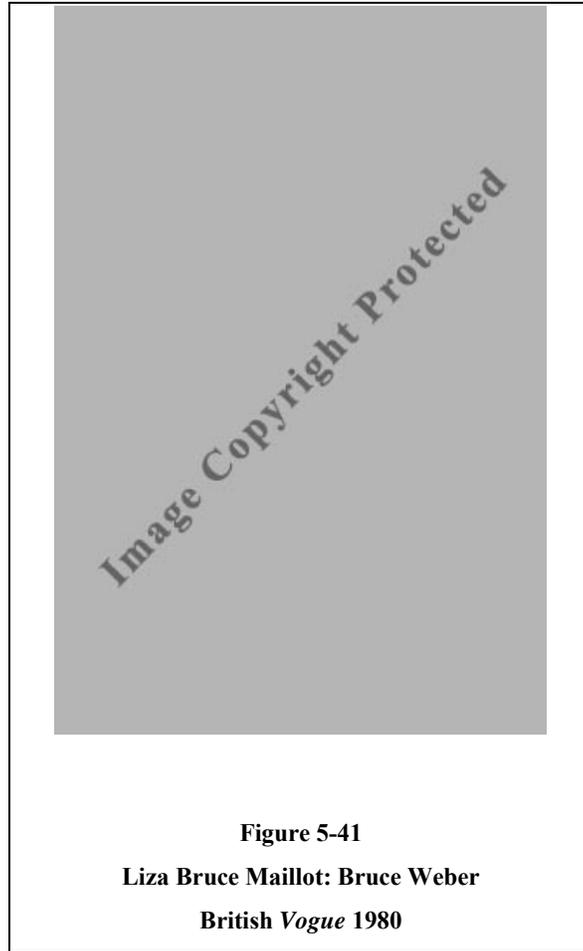
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Figure 5-40
Brian Rochford
Vogue Australia August 1979

5.8 Fine-tuning: Gym and Swim

Let's get physical, physical
I wanna get physical
Let's get into physical
Let me hear your body talk, your body talk
Let me hear your body talk
(Newton-John 1981)

Australian pop icon Olivia Newton-John's hit song *Physical* from her 1981 album of the same name went platinum, topping the music charts for 10 weeks (*Olivia Newton-John's Greatest Video Hits Plus Live Versions and Rarities on DVD Collections Video Gold I and Video Gold II* 2005). The accompanying video clip had Newton-John in a t-shirt over a leotard similar in styling to the then fashionable maillot swimsuit, along with leggings and a headband. Initially, she is surrounded by muscled men in Speedo-style trunks cut high on the leg, who are replaced by overweight males sweating it out in unflattering boxer shorts with huge overhanging bellies, who then morph back into the hunks. Unfortunately for Newton-John, who is ready for a round of tennis, they reject her preferring their same sex companions. The 1980s heralded a cult of fitness with aerobics, jogging, and body-building the trend du jour for both men and women. *Physical* sends the message that men, who could now also be openly homosexual, would have to shape up like women who were now more predatory and not satisfied with anything less than a fit, toned, muscular male physique, whether straight or gay. Sadly for Newton-John, the buffed bodies appeared to belong to the latter group.



Steele reports that fashion photographer Bruce Weber ‘created the most famous erotic photographs of men ever used in mainstream advertising’ with his portrayal of sexy men wearing only Calvin Klein underwear in 1982 (Steele and Fashion Institute of Technology (New York). Museum 1997: 126). In an earlier image created for *British Vogue* in 1980 (Figure 5-41), Weber’s has captured the model flanked by bronzed Bondi Lifesavers wearing a streamlined asymmetrical maillot by New York born, British based swimsuit designer, Liza Bruce. Using an American fashion photographer, *British Vogue* chose an iconic Australian beach and iconic Australians, Bondi Beach lifesavers, to showcase the work of an international swimsuit designer.

The exotic antipodean shores represented a hub where physical fitness, beauty and Australian beach culture fashioned the modern swimsuit.

In 1983, *Vogue Australia*'s November edition ran a swimsuit spread called *Ripper Looks*, which had the central female model surrounded by hunky males in Speedos. It gave advice on how to 'wear t-shirts over or under the sleek new maillots' referring to the styling in Figure 5-42, as 'The body conscious maillot'. It would seem that if the wearer got it right, she could soon be surrounded by muscular males like the ones depicted here. Swimsuits spreads in *Vogue Australia* in the early to mid-'80s consistently encouraged their readers to be sporty, 'use the beach as an outdoor gym: hop run, play beach ball, walk along the sand', referring to 'all- Australian summers' and girls who predominantly wear Australian designed and

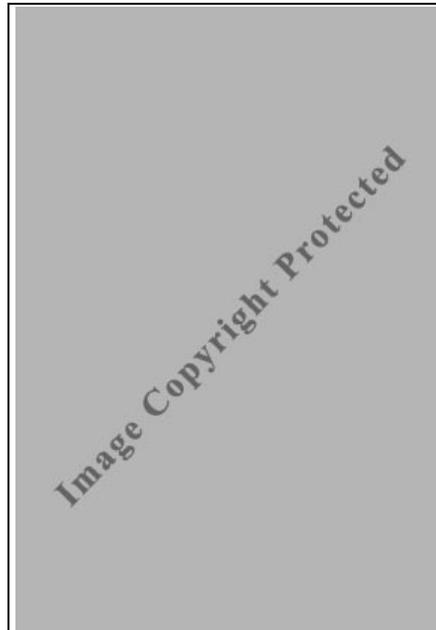


Figure 5-42
Vogue Australia
November 1983

produced swimwear by both the established and emergent companies like Seafolly and Jets, companies that continue to produce and export swimwear globally.

Since the 1920s, a small number of couturiers and high-profile fashion designers in Europe have included a swimwear range in their summer collections; however, the 1980s marked an increase in the number of luxury versions aimed at the exclusive resort market, and Killoren Bensimon reports that, ‘it became possible to sunbathe in Dior, Chanel, Versace or Geoffrey Beene’ (Killoren Bensimon 2006: 186).

An advertisement for Dior swimwear Figure 5-43, shows the model diving through raining money in a maillot

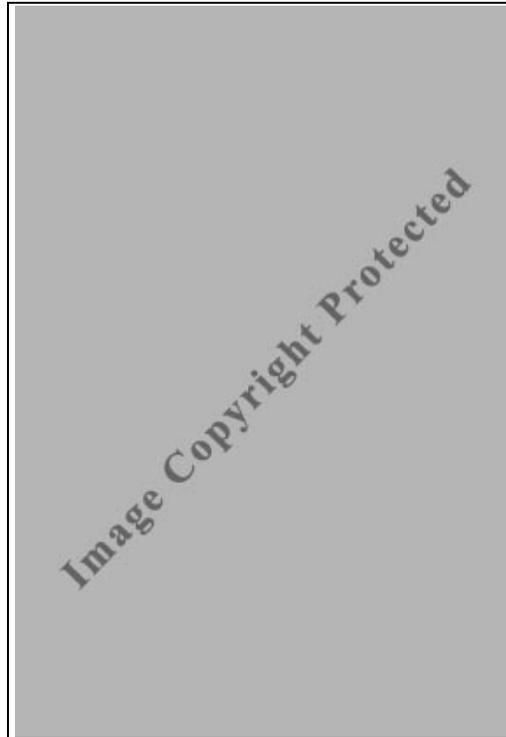


Figure 5-43
Dior Swimwear Advertisement
American *Vogue* January 1980

swimsuit. The styling was not significantly different from other swimwear styles being produced by manufacturers and did not represent an innovative trend. As discussed earlier, when analysing swimsuits designed by Patou and an Australian swimsuit manufacturer in 1927, it is the design intent described through the images that situates the product as luxurious or otherwise. The Dior model dives into a darkened space with money as the only prop. She wears a diamond bracelet and earrings, her hair is sleek and coiffed, and there are no associations with the beach, tropical resorts, or sport. The wearer is asked to ‘profit from the perfect fit of swimwear from the Christian Dior collection’, at a price of course, with Dior hoping to profit from an investment in luxury swimwear that, when stripped of accessories, looked little different from swimsuits produced in Australia.

Vogue Australia told their readers that ‘The key to success is a good body, narrow as an arrow, curved where a girl should be curved’. With tall, broad-shouldered muscular frame, Elle MacPherson was a model who exemplified this new body aesthetic. Slim-hipped and leggy, she had the look to enhance any swimsuit design, such as the Robin Garland bikini in Figure 5-44, which was used in a 1982 fashion shoot for *Mode* magazine, where MacPherson arches backwards revealing a self-control and rigidity to match the steel bars in the foreground. According to Steele, the ’80s models were a breed

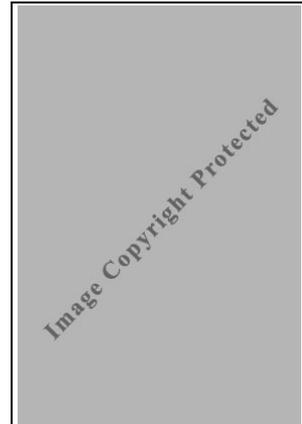


Figure 5-45
Elle MacPherson
Robin Garland bikini:
***Mode* 1982**

who would in time be referred to as ‘Glamazons’ (Steele and Fashion Institute of Technology (New York). Museum 1997: 135) – women with a steely inner-strength expressed through bodies that had been rigorously exercised into shape. In 1989, *Time Magazine* dubbed MacPherson ‘The Body’, a title she cemented as the supermodel most closely associated with the swimsuit. Her pose for the cover of *Sports Illustrated* in 1986 in Figure 5-45 shows a confident, tanned, well-endowed woman, hair flowing, gentle waves rippling in the background – an ambassador for Australia, while visually connecting the swimsuit and fashion through a glamorous athleticism.



Figure 5-44
Elle 1986
Sports Illustrated
http://dynamic.si.cnn.com/si_online/covers/issues/1986/0210.html

MacPherson's unique, individual style was based on the swimsuit and the body and was formed in a decade where models had the power to influence fashion. She was not associated with couture fashion and was rarely, if ever used by popular designers such as Lacroix, Versace, Dior, or Chanel who preferred more sophisticated models like Christy Turlington, Cindy Crawford, Claudia Schiffer, and Linda Evangelista. Through her regular swimsuit modelling and spreads in *Sports Illustrated* and *Playboy*, MacPherson maintained a high profile, profiting from her 'super body' through such global business ventures as: an 'Intimates' lingerie range manufactured by New Zealand company Bendon; 'The Body' workout videos and calendars; and in 2007, a range of beauty products named, 'Elle MacPherson The Body'. Polly Vernon, a reporter for the *Guardian*, states that 'No celebrity, male or female, has ever converted into a business force as successfully as Elle' (Vernon 2006). Like the swimsuit, she was not part of the couture fashion set, an outsider with attributes reflective of the democratisation of what can be fashionable. Eighty years earlier, Kellerman had established her credentials in a swimsuit and promoted physical fitness, without the benefit of a powerful mass media system or the superindividual status of modern celebrities. What had been begun by Kellerman was being brought home by MacPherson: the swimsuit had established a fashion garment niche through an Australian whose body was deemed to be ideal.

Australian swimsuit editorial continued to emphasise the sporty, energetic angle. The Speedo swim cap had become a popular fashion accessory and in 1986 the basic Speedo maillot was converted to a fashion swimsuit in the pages of *Vogue Australia* with the accompanying caption, ‘Swimsuit patterned for the all-Australian girl’. The model is caught mid-air, engaged in an athletic jump under an exotic backdrop of palm trees Figure 5-46. Other swimsuits in this issue reinforced the value of functionality with captions like ‘the muscle-back’ and ‘the understatement’, and further suggesting that ‘Australia takes the lead in swimwear design’. In 1989, *Vogue Australia*’s September issue continued the trend with a spread called ‘Swim’ with the accompanying text, ‘If you could have only one outfit this summer, what would it be? Swimwear! You wouldn’t be an Aussie without a Cossie’. American *Vogue*’s swimsuit editorial took a different track, illustrated by figure 5-47 from 1989, which features a model wearing a Ralph Lauren swimsuit and the caption: ‘Summer Sheer ... ‘What’s showing at the seaside’. All the images in this fashion shoot were close-ups with indistinct backgrounds, the relaxed model expressing a softer, less muscled aesthetic. The use of the word ‘seaside’ is reminiscent of paddling in calm waters, as opposed to an energetic surf experience.

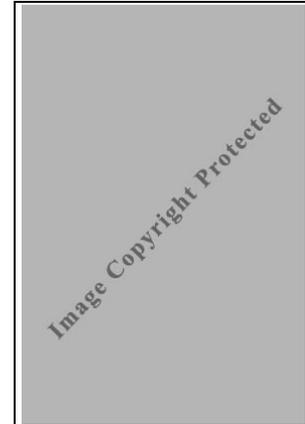


Figure 5-47
Speedo *Vogue Australia*
September 1986

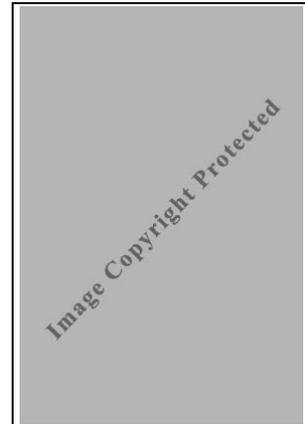
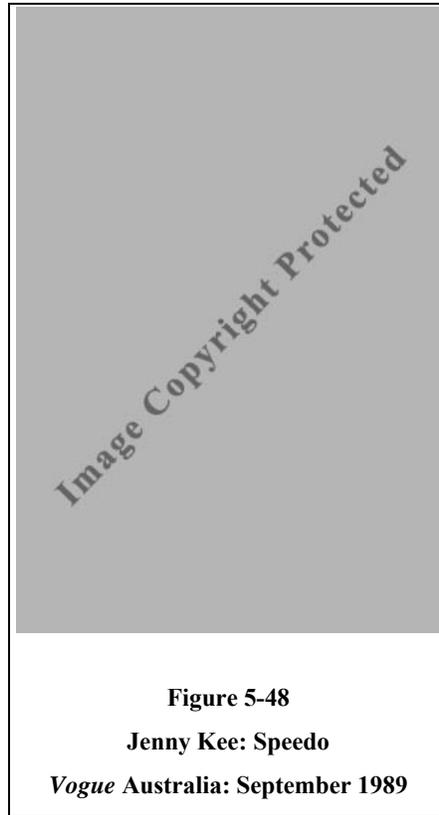


Figure 5-46
Ralph Lauren
American *Vogue June*
1989



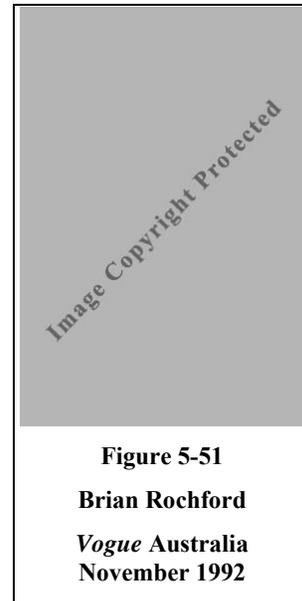
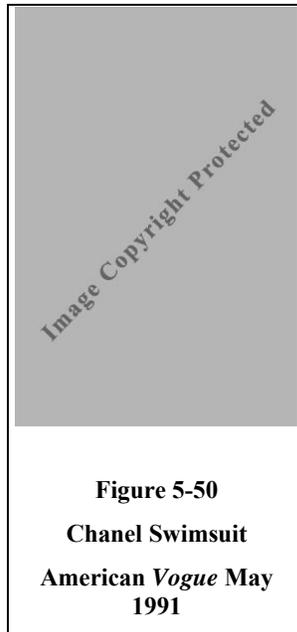
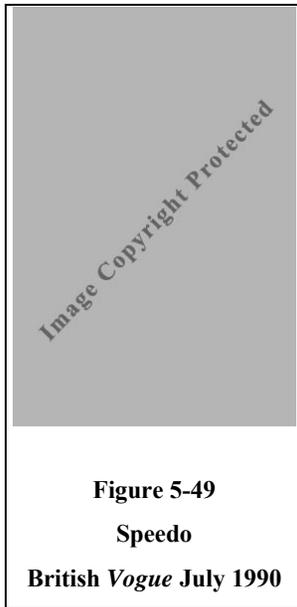
In the 1980s, Australian fashion designers carved a niche in a global market with designs that were sometimes adorned with Australiana motifs. For example, Ken Done's graphic depictions of Sydney Harbour Bridge and Bondi Beach featured on anything from swimsuits to glass coasters. Olivia Newton-John contributed with her Koala Blue boutiques in America showcasing designs that were unashamedly Australian. Iconic Australian fashion designer Jenny Kee was one of her regular suppliers, constructing knits with distinctly Australian patterns incorporating kookaburras, koalas, and waratah flowers. Her designs received huge press coverage in 1982 when a pregnant Princess Diana wore one of her a koala jumpers. Kee

established her label in the 1970s, opening a boutique called 'Flamingo Park'. In 1977, with new business partner Linda Jackson, they took their ranges based on Australian native flowers to Europe, where they were picked up by Italian *Vogue*, with Anna Piaggi describing their work as 'one of the most inventive "free" collections of fashion we have seen in recent times' (Joel 1998: 214). Kee who had developed a graphic style that drew inspiration from indigenous art and Australian native flora and fauna, collaborated with Speedo in 1989 to create a swimwear range. The results were a spectacularly colourful representation of Kee's handwriting, and according to Craik demonstrated 'a new level of Australian confidence and pride' (Craik 2006: 20). The use of indigenous flora and fauna in Figure 5-48 illustrates a 'process of cultural borrowing' (:22), however, for Australian swimsuit designers, the use of Australiana and Aboriginality was not a regular pattern, with Hawaiian flowers and African motifs a more likely choice of print. It was the swimsuit itself that communicated a sense of national identity and style.

5.9 Fashion Casts its Net

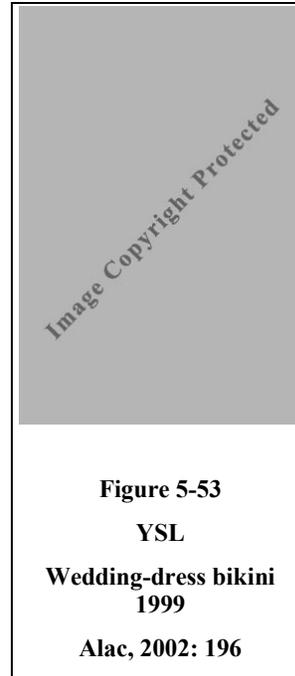
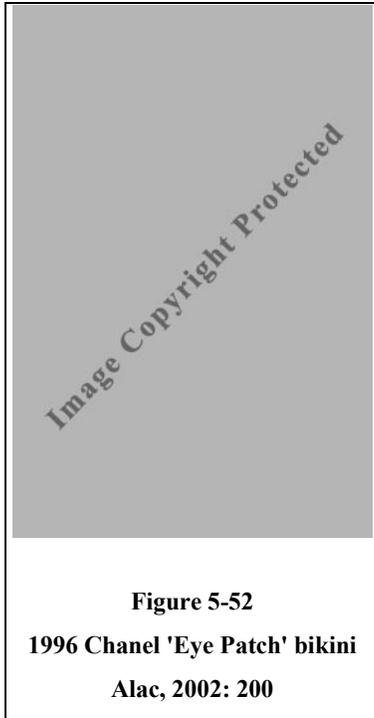
Grace Coddington, fashion editor at American *Vogue* in the 1970s, is attributed with creating the Style Essay, a narrative about clothes set in exotic locations. During the 1980s, the themes became more complex and by the 1990s it was 'refined and perfected ... influenced by the vision of each photographer' (Angeletti and Oliva 2006: 265). Coddington told readers: 'Designers have stretched the concept of the bathing suit so far that it now includes pieces as sophisticated as evening dresses' (American *Vogue*, May 1991). The spread was entitled 'Beyond the Beach' and the

styling is described as ‘more refined than traditional maillots’. In images captured by Ellen von Unwerth, voluptuous models attributed with ‘star-level presence’ gaze off into urban landscapes. The vision for the swimsuit harks back to the glamour of the golden years of Hollywood, including designs by Norma Kamali and Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel. The Chanel swimsuit (Figure 5-50), is reminiscent of a 1920s-style boy-



leg swimsuit and has the label’s signature buttons. The accompanying text suggests that designer Karl Lagerfeld has crossed ‘another boundary – with a great “little black dress” that’s really a swimsuit’. Figure 5-49, from a British *Vogue* spread called ‘Blue Belles, is described as ‘an intense turquoise swimsuit, by Speedo’ combined with ‘Esther Williams- style swimming cap ... topped with silk roses, sequins and raffia’, while Figure 5-51 from *Vogue* Australia is a streamlined, black maillot by Brian Rochford, accessorised with a Chanel belt. The Speedo swimsuit is the company’s basic maillot style, similar to those worn for competitive swimming, with a retail cost of £11.99; however, when accessorised with a Stephen Jones swim cap with a retail

cost of £150, it acquires fashion status. Jones is a London-based milliner whose haute couture hats are represented in prestigious institutions globally, including the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Louvre, The Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, the Kyoto Costume Institute, and the Australian National Gallery in Canberra (*Biography: Stephen Jones Millinery* 2007). The combination of a functional swimsuit with an extravagant head piece described as ‘Cascades of scintillating watercolour caught in a Hollywood heatwave’ takes the Speedos beyond the pool and into the fashion arena. By comparison, the Chanel swimsuit Figure 5-50, was designed as a fashion garment, influenced by existing design styles associated with the brand and, at USD\$425, is an exclusive luxury item that might never actually be worn in the water. Rochford’s sleek maillot in Figure 5-51 is included in a spread titled ‘The Strong Suit’, one of ‘six great swimsuits’ that ‘prove black is best’. The cost of the Chanel belt used as an accessory (price on application) would no doubt be far in excess of the accessible \$69 required to purchase Rochford’s maillot. Amalgamating functional or mass-market items with couture fashion pieces, then featuring them in ‘the fashion bible’ *Vogue* transmutes the meanings of all items, transforming what is fashionable; in this case – the swimsuit.



Designers in the '90s played with the swimsuit and it was 'used by haute couture as a less than serious exercise' (Alac 2002: 191). Unlike the Chanel one-piece (Figure 5-50), that mirrored the 'little black dress' in styling, Lagerfeld's 1996 'eye-patch' bikini' made no attempt to be a classic Chanel garment. Lagerfeld's novel approach to product placement sees two eye-catching discs sporting the distinctive Chanel interlocking C's barely covering the nipples. It was a parody of the swimsuit's function, distancing it from the sporty aesthetic or Style Essays that had dominated the two previous decades and situating it as non-functional whimsy. Yves Saint Laurent's wedding-dress bikini presented at the 1999 spring-summer haute couture collection positions the couture swimsuit as a true flight of fancy, far removed from the practical mass-market maillot.

Although the swimsuit was now included in designer ranges, fitness and sport regularly influenced its styling in fashion magazines. The April 1991 'Fitness Special' in American *Vogue* commented that 'fitness wear was made for honed bodies of the overexercised generation', informing women they had to keep exercising if they wanted to continue wearing their clothes. The article tracks the fashionable swimsuit's evolution from weighty wool to high-tech second skin its cross-breeding with sportswear, underwear, and exercise wear resulting in the interchangeable fashion of the 1990s, predicting

that 'it may be that the sports enthusiast will emerge as fashion's true avant-garde' (Fitness Special 1991). Through a swimsuit feature entitled 'Out in Front'; an enthusiasm for aquatic sports was revealed in the November 1993 issue of *Vogue Australia*. It celebrated the Australian summer and its sporting heroes, in particular by the iron men and surf lifesavers who have both shaped 'a lasting national identity' and defined 'the way we look at fitness'. The images depict an energetic slice of beach life, interspersing Nippers (Junior lifesavers) with models wearing one- and two-piece swimsuits by Speedo and Brian Rochford for wearers who need 'swimsuits with stamina'. The model jumping out of the water in figure 5-54 is wearing a Rochford bikini, Speedo swim cap, and goggles, creating a completely different idea of who might wear a Rochford swimsuit when compared with the image in Figure 5-51. Kawamura discusses the role of fashion journalists and editors as fashion gatekeepers

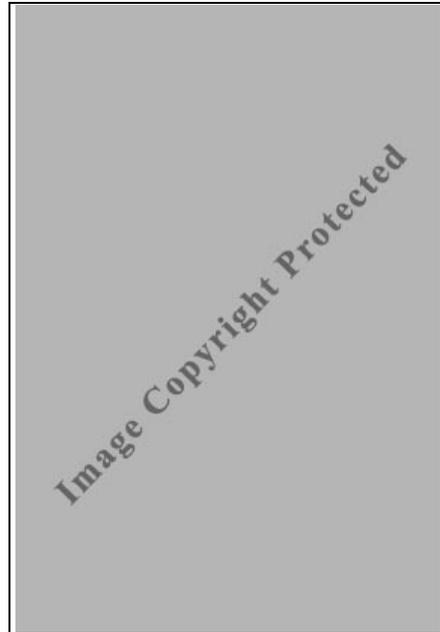


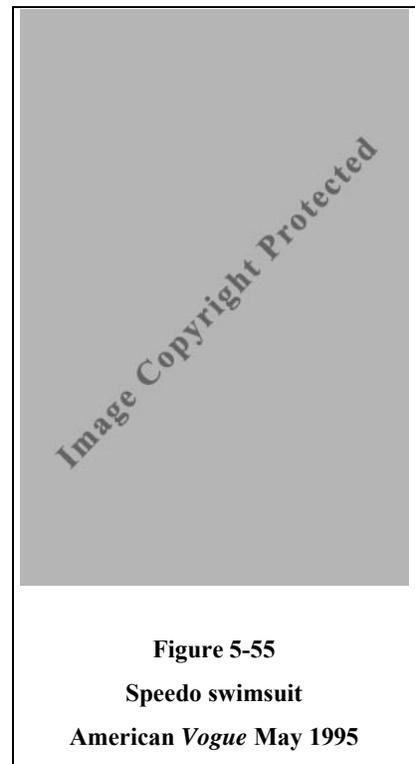
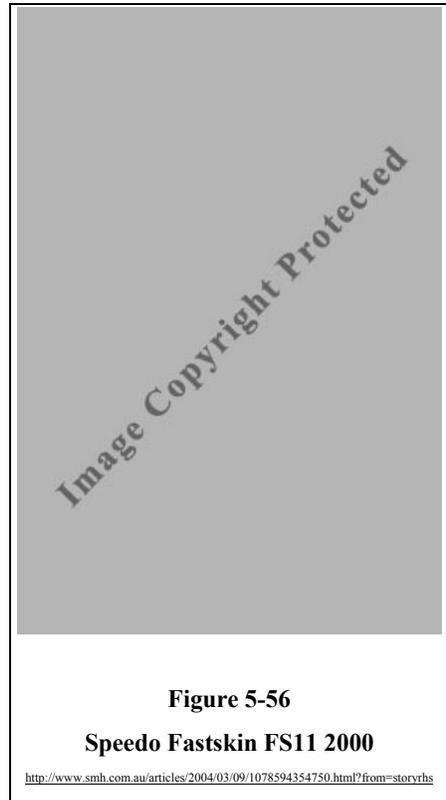
Figure 5-54
Brian Rochford and Sunup swimsuits,
Speedo Goggles and swim caps
***Vogue Australia* November 1993**

in 'Fashion-ology', suggesting they contribute to how designers' ideas are interpreted, profiling innovations that 'decide what is fashion and what is not, or what is ephemeral and what will endure' (Kawamura 2005: 80). The Rochford swimsuits both have the label's signature styling; however, the interpretations constructed by the fashion editors and photographers target diverse participants and participation sites.

Australian and international fashion magazines often featured Speedo's streamlined, athletic maillots in spreads that espoused the values of fitness and performance. In 1991, British company, Pentland Group purchased a controlling interest in Speedo licensees in America and Europe and officially took over Speedo Australia, renaming it Speedo International. A core component of Speedo Australia's design focus had been the continuing development and refinement of swimsuits for competitive swimmers by reducing drag and improving race times. As a global company, designers had broader access to textiles and technology and continued to produce cutting edge, innovative swimsuits culminating in the 1992 S2000 one-piece cat-suit, which was launched at the Barcelona Olympics by the Australian swimming team. The new style featuring a high collar, no straps, and a zip up the back, was made in a polyester elastine that increased body coverage and decreased drag, with the result that 53 percent of all medals were won by swimmers wearing the S2000. The

company followed this innovation with the Aquablade in 1996 and the Fastskin in 2000 continuing an innovative research and development programme by looking into the flow-efficiency of shark skin, aided by using computer programs like Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD), which is used for aero space and naval engineering to solve the complex flow problems of air or water. It resulted in a fabric that combined the rough and smooth surfaces of shark skin in a number of styles: full bodyskin silhouettes; with or without arms; knee skin; and leg skin options. The FS11 redefined performance swimsuits focusing on function, resulting

in a style that had more in common with Kellerman's swimsuits from the early 1900s than fashion in the new millennium. Although Speedo had been developing fashion ranges for decades, coverage in fashion magazines remained focused on their standard maillot styles. The cat-suit style in Figure 5-56 is similar to the S2000 worn by racers at the 1992 Olympics and has been used by the fashion editor and photographer to emphasise how 'an athletic style can also be sexy' (Good Sports 1995). Swimsuits in quick-drying textiles that sculpted the body could be worn under skirts, shorts, or pants beyond the sporting arena, thereby reconstructing sporty swimsuits as fashion items.



While established Australian swimwear labels Brian Rochford, Seafolly and Jets continued to extend their market share in the '90s, newcomer Zimmermann's approach to swimsuit design was more edgy and fashion oriented. Zimmermann's style philosophy was affordable fast fashion, with Nicky Zimmermann noting that 'We don't create garments for you to have for ten years' (Coffey 1996) a sensible edict for swimsuits, considering their short life-spans. Anthea Loucas reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that their designs were 'sassy and stylish', featuring 'graphic prints and risqué cut-away designs ... illustrating that a swimsuit could be more than a pair of Speedos'. Zimmermann commented, 'We just never understood why swimsuits and fashion had to be exclusive' (Loucas 2003). It was during this period that swimsuit design started to catch up with fashion, reflecting trends in colours, patterns, and prints with styling not restricted to any one cut. Bikinis, one-pieces, thongs, and boylegs were all fashionable, inspired by anything from Hollywood glamour to 60s hipsters and halters. Fashion had cast its net and caught the swimsuit in all its different forms of cross-fertilisation.

I have to this point omitted any discussion about surfwear as it is a separate genre to swimwear. 'Specialty surf trunks' or boardshorts were initially developed for male surfers while women who surfed had to make do wearing a swimsuit not specifically designed for surfing (Jarratt 2006: 71). It was not until the late 1980s and early '90s that surfwear companies like Quiksilver, Billabong, and Ripcurl, along with smaller companies Hot Tuna, Hot Buttered, and Mambo started to produce swimwear ranges.

Image Copyright Protected

Figure 5-57
Zimmermann
Swimwear
Vogue Australia
August 1996

According to Joel, surfers represent an Australian fashion tribe who ‘reject the very notion of fashion’, and potential purchasers are buying into ‘a desirable sub-culture that only the chosen few, the surfing cognoscenti, really understand’. All these companies have been successful in exporting their products to global markets, promoted as garments for an alternative lifestyle with over 50 percent of sales to non-surfers (Joel 1998: 277). In 1999, Quiksilver opened a store on the Champs-Élysées, bringing Australian alternative surfwear and streetwear to a traditional fashion hub. The women’s swimwear range, Roxy, featured in American *Vogue* May 1996, with an image of a model in a ’50s retro two-piece swimsuit water-skiing with two hunky male models in Quiksilver boardshorts. In short, active, sporty, and moving beyond its surfwear roots. In the same year, Roxy debuted at the New York Fashion week which was not the usual track for surfwear brands that sponsor world champion surfers and surfing competitions as a method of connecting with potential wearers. It suggests surfwear had been caught in fashion’s net, adding another piece to the pattern.

5.10 In the System

Research for this study has shown that initially it was the sporting and leisure participants who shaped how the swimsuit was refined, particularly when women adopted the male swimsuit for its functionality. From the 1920s, there have been a number of French couturiers who created sportswear ranges that included swimsuits designed for the resort wardrobes of wealthy clients. The styling, while similar to those produced by mass-market manufacturers, differed in the design detail, accessories, and accompanying editorial in fashion magazines like *Vogue*.

Swimsuit manufacturers eager to grow their businesses employed new technologies and improved styles in performance-enhanced marketing campaigns. Early alliances with Hollywood and stars to promote their brands represented an effective method of association with a democratised, modern aristocracy: the celebrity. In Australia, manufacturers focused on designing and producing swimsuits for active participants at the beach and in the pool, becoming world-leaders in the development of endurance and performance textiles and styles. The Olympics was the global stage Speedo used for showcasing its products, taking the lion's share of the race swimwear market, which was boosted by Australia's Olympic medal-winning swimmers promoting their brand. At home, beach life flourished, providing local swimsuit designers with the inspiration to develop innovative and exciting swimwear that has been successfully exported since the late 1950s.

The noughties mark the period when the swimsuit is fully integrated into the fashion system. Figure 5-58 is a cross-section of ‘hot styles’ covering all bases with the inclusion of surfwear label, Mambo. According to *Vogue* Australia in November 2001 the best in store were:

- Jets, Sydney
- Jaclin Chouchana, Western Australia
- Tigerlily, Sydney
- Zimmerman, Sydney
- Aquasuit, swimsuit division of La Perla, Italy

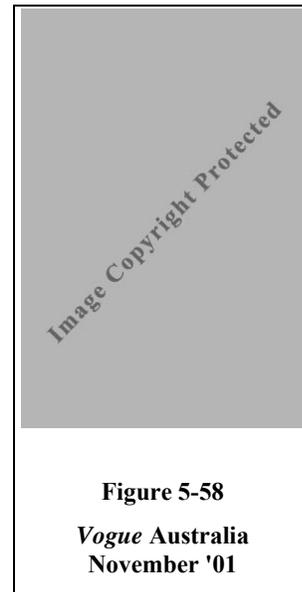
Fashion designers that have expanded their ranges to include swimwear:

- Lisa Ho, Sydney
- Louis Vuitton, LVMH, France
- Barbara Bui, France
- Versace, Italy

Surfwear Labels:

- Mambo, Sydney

The bikinis on this editorial page ranged in price from \$60 for a Mambo through to \$685 for the Louis Vuitton. Laid out flat without the benefit of a model, atmospheric background, or narrative layers, it is difficult to see any significant difference between the various designers’ work other than the Louis Vuitton and Versace signature logos



that reference the brands to those in the fashion loop. Viewing the page, there are a variety of styles in tops, bottoms, prints, and a variety of price-tags. This raises questions:

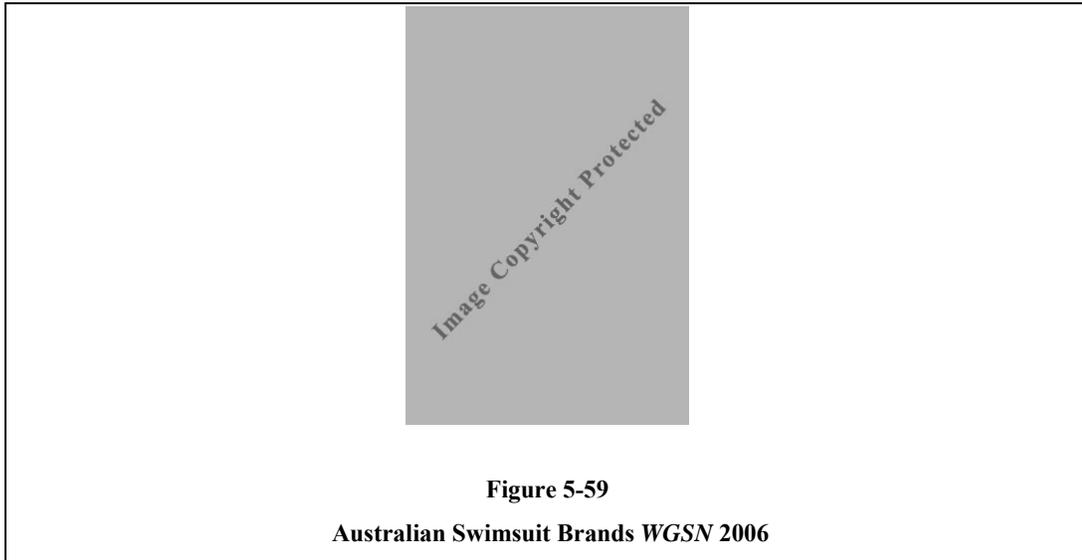
Is the swimsuit now a generic fashion item awaiting the imprint of individual fashion and swimsuit designers?

Does this represent the end of national styles in favour of an international approach to swimsuit design?

Moving through the decades of the 20th century in this chapter, there has been an exploration of how different nations, in particular, France, America, and Australia have influenced the development of the swimsuit. Australia developed a strong position due to its lush, tropical geographic location and an obsession with sports such as swimming and surfing. Unlike tailored jackets or couture evening gowns, the swimsuit did not require complex methods of manufacture, suiting a country that originally had limited expertise in the production of fine clothing. Australian designed and produced swimsuits reflect a country with a 'relaxed lifestyle ... a certain freedom, a feeling of ease, a physicality and frequently, an irreverent attitude, expressed in fashion' (Joel 1998: 289). Australian swimsuits represent an attitude or lifestyle, an approach that has been adopted by surfwear and sports brands in the last 10 years. In an interview in May 2000 with *WGSN*, the trend analysis and news service for the fashion industry, Nicole Zimmerman explains that, 'In Australia there's not such a differentiation between swimwear and clothing.

You're in your costume all the time.' She continues that the swimsuit can be worn either under a dress or sarong to restaurants or bars: Everyone does it' (*Fast Track Intimate/Swimwear: Interview Nicole Zimmermann* 2000). Zimmerman affirms the swimsuit is a fashion item and is to be treated like any other garment. In terms of the

Australian designed swimsuit, global success has been built on an Australian style associated with Sydney and Bondi Beach and Loucas reports in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that, ‘If Sydney was personified, she’d be bronzed, brazen and almost certainly wearing a Zimmermann bikini’ (Loucas 2003). Swimsuit design has become an Australian specialty that overseas buyers look to for future trends. In the noughties, swimsuit labels such as Tigerlily, Oscar & Elvis, and Anna & Boy have been creating glamorous, sophisticated swimsuits in tune with seasonal fashion directions and not necessarily specifically Australian in context (Figure 5-59).



Collette Dinnigan introduced a luxury Cruise Collection in 2007 that included exclusive swimwear pieces, continuing the trend begun by Patou and Chanel in the

1920s for couture designers to extend their ranges to cater to clients' holiday wardrobes. Dinnigan's chic swimsuit, Figure 5-60 references the glamour of the 1930s with ruched sides and a peephole-effect, while the print is of Australian native flowers. Wearing red high-heel shoes the model leans on a wrought-iron gate flanked by colonnades that suggest a Mediterranean villa or European resort destination. Although Dinnigan's design includes Australiana motifs, this glamorous swimsuit is situated as exclusive and international in style.

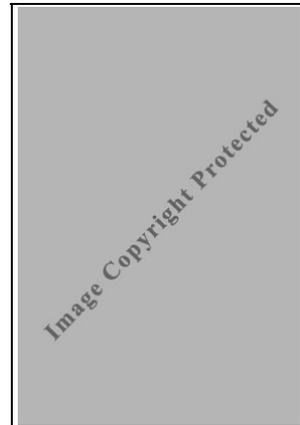


Figure 5-60
Collette Dinnigan
Swimsuit
Vogue Australia August
2007

Speedo continues to produce performance swimsuits and has discovered that the key to producing fashion swimwear lies in collaborating with high-profile fashion designers. Since 2006, Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons has produced a fashion range of swimsuits that retain the classic Speedo maillot silhouette but incorporate distinctive graphics that reflect Kawakubo's unique approach to design. The latest collection unveiled at Paris Fashion Week was reported by *WGSN* as 'statement swimwear ... that pleased the fashion world' (Cook 2007), reinforcing the concept that a garment can gain fashion status through its associations with high-profile fashion designers. It would seem that designers fit their designs to suit the client, tapping into local, national and global contexts reflecting 'an uneven montage of differing

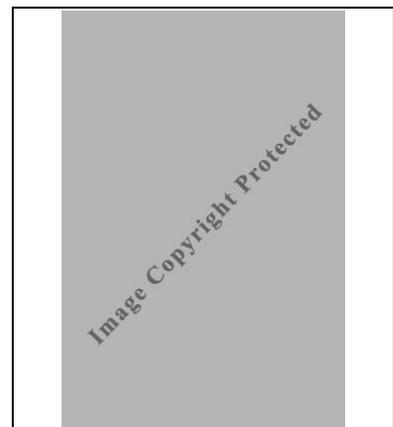


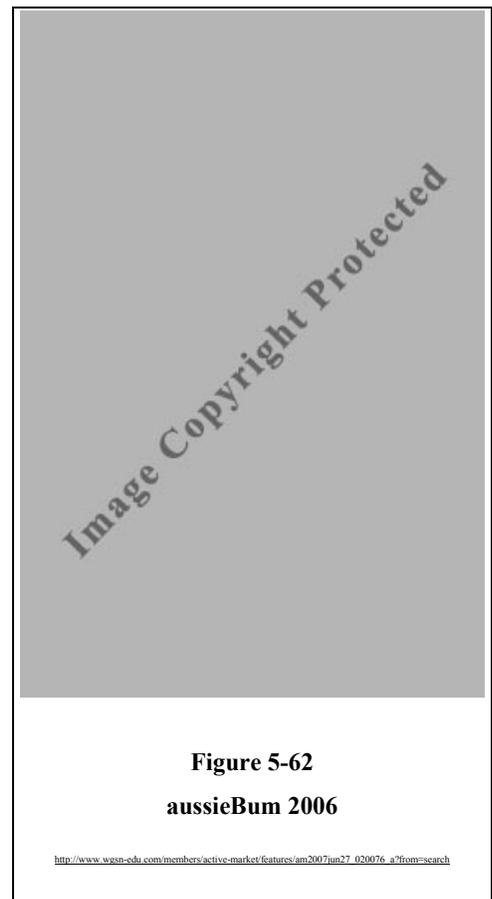
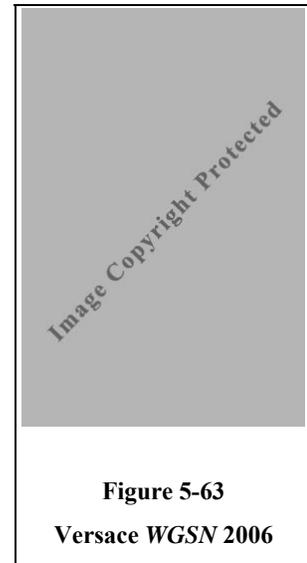
Figure 5-61
Comme des Garçons for Speedo
2007
WGSN

tastes and imperatives' (Maynard 2004: 154).

On the men's' swimsuit front, surf-inspired boardshorts have been a reference point for fashion designers in the noughties (Figure 5-62), and are regularly suggested as the preferred option for males over the age of 40 or for those who lack the necessary physique to complement the Speedo-style swimsuit. Launched in 2001, Australian company aussieBum produces swimsuits that leave little to the imagination and has been an international success. A 2006 innovation was the 'wonderjock pouch technology' designed to ensure a bulging front can be achieved by the less

well-endowed male. Alac's research into the history of the bikini suggested that, in its contemporary form, 'the swimsuit is now an excuse for showing off the body inside it' (Alac 2002: 206). And, as aussieBum demonstrates, this ethos also applies to men and their swimsuits. It is reflective of new trends in menswear that see men taking the same approach to beauty and fashion as women; and the swimsuit is at the coalface of how men participate.

Reviewing the assimilation of the swimsuit into the system, it appears that fashion continues to rein in designers and design influences from couture, mass market, street, and sport, blending, cross-fertilising and



creating designs for a modern world that cater to the individual and the collective simultaneously. The questions posed at the beginning of the chapter focused on the influences that shaped the evolution of the swimsuit and whether or not it represented a weakening of the fashion stronghold in the central hubs of Europe and America and led to the emergence of a new order in the 20th century. The swimsuit democratized fashion, allowing participants of all classes to participate at public beaches in garments that could be made at home or bought at reasonable prices from manufacturers happy to satisfy the growing demand. Fashion was no longer the preserve of the well-heeled aristocrats displaying themselves at prestigious events like the opera, races, or charity ball; people of all creeds were now participating in the bodily spectacle. While the brand still carried weight, the body beautiful had become the status symbol, whether clad in a costume bought in Paris or a cossie purchased from Kmart. In the early part of the 20th century, the swimsuit was popularized through performance in vaudeville and silent movies, where the currency for women was beauty and bodies could be closely examined in garments that left little to the imagination. Kellerman proudly led the way displaying her wares in clinging, woolly body stockings that allowed the freedom of movement she required to perform in her aquatic displays. Over the subsequent decades, the advances to styling and textiles were driven by swimsuit manufacturers and their competitive desires to increase performance for elite athletes in international swimming events. Clearly, swimsuit design was taking a different route to acceptance. Active participants in remote locales democratized the fashion process, no longer mimicking couture fashion trends.

Weaving together the decades and the significant participants, events, and design innovations through images and text builds an understanding of how the swimsuit has

been interpreted and shaped by individuals, groups, and nations to create a garment that is collectively acknowledged as part of the fashion system. A key question in this study has been to establish whether or not there is an Australian style and finding an answer has entailed analysing the contributions from different nations. To summarise: the European style had its foundations in the 1920s when Parisian designers extended their ranges to include swimwear for the high-end, luxury-leisure market and has continued with fashion houses using the swimsuit for further branding of their labels with signature logos and prints. The American style is closely associated with the sportswear aesthetic epitomised by Claire McCardell in the 1940s and '50s and by Norma Kamali, Calvin Klein, and Ralph Lauren in the 1980s. The Hollywood style reflects the glamour of individual stars and starlets – a global, as opposed to national style – exemplified by costume designers such as Helen Rose, who created many of Esther Williams's aquacade costumes, and Gottex, a favourite with celebrities like the late Princess Diana, Ivana Trump, and Elizabeth Taylor. The Australian style represents another variant connected to beach culture, sport, and a lifestyle; an approach to fashion design that places an emphasis on wearability, durability, and a less stitched-up design aesthetic. National newcomer in the 1980s, Brazil is known for its glamorous, barely-there swimsuits with an emphasis on Tanga-style bikini bottoms and vibrant colours – a carnivale and spirited approach to swimwear design.

Once the national styles have been delineated, it is tempting to suggest that the swimsuit has been pinned into position; however, a fashion model that has been developed to explain the relationships between participants and participation sites may provide a clearer understanding of how national and global trends are negotiated

by participants, both designers and wearers, and how this influences the assimilation of a garment into the fashion system.

5.11 Crafting Future Fashion

Over the last 90 years, essentially all possible variations to the cut of a swimsuit have been explored. Innumerable trick and trim design details and prints have been applied to one and two-piece styles, with established patterns of manufacture catering to all market segments from mass manufacture to couture, from performance sportswear to attitude (surf) swimwear. Within the global market, swimsuit design is fractured into national spheres and specific categories of production:

A cross-section of current fashion swimwear brands that are exported globally and sold in major fashion hubs are listed below by:

- Australia: Zimmermann, Seafolly, Jets, Tigerlily;
- America: Anne Cole, Catalina, Jantzen;
- Europe: Eres, Huit, Liza Bruce, Gottex, La Perla;
- South America: Rosa Cha, Cia. Maritima, Poco Pana;

Fashion brands that have extended their ranges to include swimwear:

- Australia: Collette Dinnigan;
- America: Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Norma Kamali, Michael Kors;
- Europe: Burberry, Diesel, Versace, Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Chanel, Dior, Louis Vuitton;

Surfwear brands:

- Australia: Ripcurl, Mambo;

- International: Quiksilver, Billabong (originally Australian);
- America: O'Neill;

Performance Swimwear

- International: Speedo (originally Australian);
- European: Arena;
- America: Tyr;

The newest swimsuit category is the celebrity swimwear brand exemplified by:

- Elizabeth Hurley Beach;
- Jessica Simpson Swimwear;
- Cozi by Jennifer Hawkins;

In his review of the global swimwear market, Newbury suggests that 'brands matter to the swimwear market' and, although the market is segmented into categories that define swimwear as either glamorous or functional, the ingredients required are the same:

- Fibres that stretch and control;
- Fabrics body shaping and aerodynamics;
- Style and cut;
- The advertising offer, feel good, perform well;

(Newbury 2005: 50-4)

Newbury points out that it is a product group not dominated by a few multinationals and details three main approaches to the market:

1. Large companies with a stable of brands designed to appeal to different segments of the consumer market;

2. Companies driven by a single product and lifestyle ethic usually recent start-ups in the performance swimwear, surf, and water sports segments;
3. Smaller niche players.

(Newbury 2005: 58)

An example of how a large company markets a diverse product range is provided by American company Warnaco, whose brands include Anne Cole, Calvin Klein, Catalina, Cole of California, Michael Kors and a license in perpetuity for Speedo in the USA, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The labels within this stable move from mass market to high end; from practical, functional, and sporty to fashion swimwear. Unlike other industry brands, it can be difficult to determine the chain from product designer, its place of manufacture, and the stockists. Brands like Speedo and Calvin Klein Swimwear are manufactured under license to large mainstream operations who then market these 'designer brands' through various outlets, ranging from independent boutiques to large department stores.

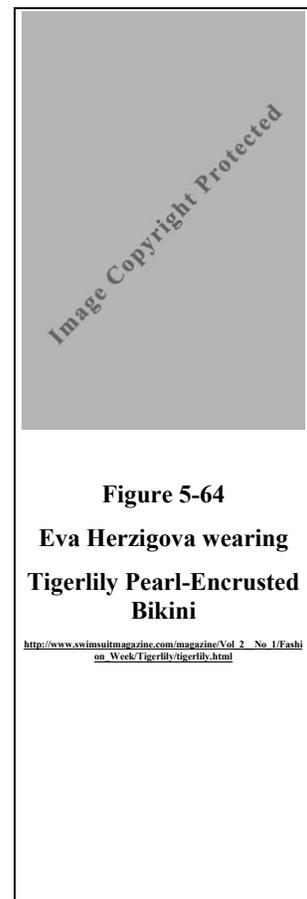
Quiksilver and Billabong are lifestyle companies that have flagship stores specialising in products related to wave, mountain, and board sports. Women's swimsuits, not initially part of their product ranges, have been included to cater to aspiring female surfers and young urban participants, with Billabong Girls and Roxy by Quiksilver now offering a broad selection of bikini and tankini styles in their summer collections.

Zimmermann bridges the gap between the lifestyle company and the niche player with concept stores in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and the Gold Coast. Selected designs are available from department stores and specialty boutiques in Australia and are

available to international buyers through showrooms in London and New York. In an interview with *WGSN* in May 2000, Nicole Zimmermann said: ‘We can’t compete internationally with our clothing’; however, the swimwear ranges are competitive and have been picked up by buyers (*Fast Track Intimate/Swimwear: Interview Nicole Zimmermann* 2000), indicating that the dominant design component of their brand is the swimsuit.

Tigerlily and Anna & Boy represent a trend where niche players without a fashion design background enter the swimsuit market. Tigerlily was launched in 2000 by Jodhi Meares, a successful model connected to a wealthy and powerful media family through her high profile marriage to the heir to the dynasty, Jamie Packer. Her brand is associated with glamour and her collections have included exotic and expensive designs like the AUD \$500,000 pearl-encrusted bikini seen in Figure 5-64. Having spent her school holidays and weekends on Sydney’s iconic beaches, beach culture was in her blood (Chen 2004). Meares’ designs regularly receive fashion editorial and she continues to have a high public profile, through her involvement in reality television program, *Australia’s Next Top Model*. Tigerlily swimsuits may have the added cache of a

celebrity designer; however, fashion editor for *The Australian*, Edwina McCann includes her as a cutting-edge Australian swimwear designer because ‘Jodhi uses quality fabrics and sells at a very good price point’, demonstrating that the product must have the core ingredients stated earlier (McCann 2007).



Anna & Boy was launched in 2005 by two *Vogue* fashion editors, Anna Hewitt and Lill Boyd, designers who had no previous experience in the ragtrade. It was their belief that they had a ‘fashion headspace’ which they applied to the swimsuit. Working as stylists for *Vogue* gave them exposure to a variety of local and overseas designs, and the inside knowledge that enabled them to identify a gap for their individual stylistic approach (Huntington 2006). Similarly to Meares, their launch received a high level of press coverage due to their fashion connections, which does not necessarily translate to sales, suggesting that participants do not blindly purchase whatever is ‘sold’ to them by the media.

The companies mentioned represent a small cross section of the number of swimwear brands available and raises the question:

How does a swimsuit brand compete with companies that target more than one segment in a mature market laden with choices?

According to Newbury, ‘because it is a niche sector and full of small players advertising budgets do not exist’ (Newbury 2007: 59). Fashion editorial is often in the form shown in Figure 5-58 where there is little to distinguish one brand from another. A significant method of differentiation is through the association with national characteristics. Over the last 30 years, the Brazilians have built their swimwear reputation on a sunny, relaxed approach to beachwear and the stereotypical female body type: large buttocks; small bust, displayed in daring Tangas teamed with skimpy triangle bikini tops. Top South American models such as Gisele Bundchen, Mariana Weickert, and Isabeli Fontana have made the transition to the global stage, reinforcing the concept of a geographic pooling of genetically beautiful women. According to

Newbury, “‘lifestyle’ of the country sells’ (Newbury 2007: 73). Likewise, Australia has built an international image as a beach culture and a nation of swimmers stretching back to Annette Kellerman and early Olympians Fanny Durack, Mina Wylie, and Boy Charlton, with Kellerman and MacPherson gaining global recognition for their bodily perfection. Australian swimwear designers have consistently worked towards producing swimsuits that mix function and design detailing, manifesting in fashion swimwear for the beach or the pool that is durable enough to last through the long summers. Kennedy comments that in Australia designers ‘have to keep it fresh and new for Australian women, who wear and buy swimwear far more than their European counterparts’, adding that the ‘Australian edge’ is ‘less fussy’ (Kennedy 2007: 276). Australia and Brazil, remote from the fashion hubs of Europe and America, have bred bodies and swimwear representative of a lifestyle which is tropical, exotic, and always on holiday.

National identity can play a part in creating a designer’s signature and assist manufacturers in establishing a foothold in an increasingly saturated market. Zimmermann has built a reputation as an Australian label born of Sydney and Bondi Beach in the same way that Brazilian labels such as Rosa Chá are connected with the beaches of Rio de Janeiro and Copacabana. Rosa Chá designer Amir Slama stated in an interview with *WGSN* in 2003, that his main competitors were likely to come from Australia due to the similar climate and lifestyle, noting Zimmermann as an example. Ted Polhemus reports that the national brand has both economic and political power in the 21st century, and that:

Place continues to convey meaning and such meanings – however clichéd, stereotyped, fanciful and unsubstantiated – continue to motivate us; influencing our consumer choices (Polhemus 2005: 85).

Australia clothed in imagery of the beach and pool forms an ideal backdrop for local swimsuit designers to position their products for a global market

A key location for purchasing swimwear is at holiday destinations and since the 1960s Westerners have increasingly holidayed all over the world at resorts where boutiques stock swimsuit labels originating from a range of different countries (Newbury 2005: 43). By increasing their presence on the world stage through fashion weeks and swimwear shows, Australian designers are finding stockists at international holiday hotspots and Australia has a reputation for producing quality swimsuits suited to tropical locales, thereby creating a competitive advantage in a crowded market.

What does the future hold for the swimsuit and its designers in a global market? Arguably, the most important contributor to the continuing growth of swimsuit and fashion brands globally is attracting new markets in China and Southeast Asia. China is a major supplier of swimwear, with as many as 70 percent of major brands choosing to manufacture there rather than in their own countries due to the reduced import tariffs and duties with the quality/price of Chinese manufacture situating the West as consumers rather than producers. The challenge now is to cast the net and capture participants in these countries, and for the swimsuit its potential may be realised by an interest in the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and in London in 2012. As Newbury (2007: 58-60) notes, 'Swimming is the most watched Olympic sport and swimming is accessible to all', bringing the sport-fashion fusion full circle.

5.12 Appliqué: Stitching on Australiana design details

Fitting Australia into the pattern articulates how the swimsuit has been popularised through beach culture, tourism, Australian individuals, designers, manufacturers, and social groups. The Australian lifestyle that is ‘sold’ to the global community is one of the great outdoors where participants are naturally gifted at sports. According to Nick Maywald, CEO of *Sporting Pulse*, an internet hub that creates IT tools for over 50 sports:

Australia is renowned the world over for excellence in sport, punching above our weight for a country of fewer than 21 million people Our sporting success on the global stage fills us with pride and is an inspiration to the whole nation (*Sporting Pulse take out Australian Sport Award for IT 2007*).

It is possible that Australia’s sporting success is connected to its loose links with Europe and the centuries of tradition, its geographic isolation, and aspirational participants keen to pattern a national identity of their own, with sporting heroes and heroines suitable substitutes for more class-based role models. The Australian contribution to the evolution of the swimsuit involves much more than stylistic changes to the garment; it is about the interactive flow of ideas and ideals that create the patterns of production and consumption on a global scale.

Creating patterns of meaning through geography and fashion built a picture of local fashion practice that extends beyond physical regional boundaries to ripple in and out of a global marketplace. Rather than clearly defined models of centre-to-periphery or periphery-to-centre, the fashion model in this study suggests amalgamations where individuals are both global citizens and national heroes; and nations and national

identities are fashioned to suit a number of diverse products and target markets – thereby increasing visibility and potential recognition in a world, where it would seem there is an over abundance of exceptional individuals and desirable products vying for attention. Australia has made its mark on the swimsuit developing inventive approaches to performance, textile development, and fashion swimwear demonstrating how a nation on the periphery without a strong manufacturing base negotiates and contributes to global fashion.

Writing about the latest fashion trends in *The Australian*, Edwina McCann reported that ‘Australiana is cool’, noting that there is a ‘uniquely Australian perspective connected to the beach and surf culture’ that European designers are tapping into. According to McCann, wetsuit materials have been translated into sculptured dresses by Nicolas Ghesquiere for Balenciaga, Karl Lagerfeld has featured surfboards on the runway, and Carine Roitfeld, French *Vogue’s* über-stylish editor, adopted a kangaroo fur jacket called a Chubby, making them instantly cool. She also commented that *Harper Bazaar* stylist Mark Vassallo, has captured an ‘utterly Australian look’ with images of Gemma Ward ‘decked out in diamonds and wetsuits on a Perth beach’, concluding that these new trends influenced by swimsuits, surfers, and wetsuits had been designed by Australians (McCann 2007). McCann’s commentary demonstrates the fluidity of fashion and the idea that fashion designers ‘survey the world for style ideas, transforming traditional designs and textiles into the latest look’ (Polhemus 2005: 85). For Australia, the swimsuit, and beach accoutrements such as surfboards are an iconic part of Australian style, however, Figure 5-65 of a Chanel day suit accessorized with a surfboard sporting the Chanel logo suggests that surf and beach culture is susceptible to ironic interpretation. The outfit worn by the model has more

in common with the type of clothing worn at the beach 120 years ago when it was essentially an adopted form of daywear. The stiletto shoes would be a hindrance if the model were to leave the concrete promenade for soft sand. The beach and surfboard have been disconnected absorbed into couture fashion as a witty accessory and backdrop by an iconic French fashion brand.

It suggests that local, national and global designs are stitched together to create an ‘amalgam of designs, ideals and aspirations ... that transcends geographic boundaries (Maynard 2004: 154). Wearers as global citizens are invited to tap into a multi-layered narrative that appliques designer and country brands onto fashion’s foundation block: the garment whether day suit or swimsuit.

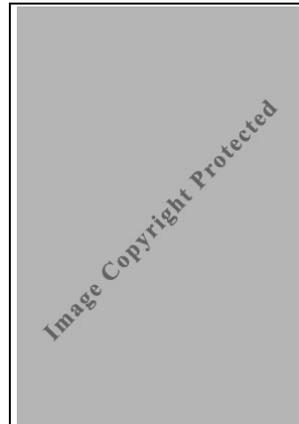


Figure 5-65

Chanel Surfboard

<http://pichaus.com/chanel-surfboard-fashion-@786236b9a7915075f3ef7d91361be724/>

6 Test fitting a Fashion model for the Swimsuit

6.1 The Toile: modelling the Swimsuit

The swimsuit is a garment of the 20th and 21st centuries, a modern inclusion in the fashion system. The question explored through the participants and participation sites is:

How has the swimsuit and the wearer contributed to modern methods of transmitting ideas and ideals about beauty and fashion, and how has it gained inclusion in the fashion system?

When images of Kellerman in a daring men's style swimsuit were circulated in the *Daily Mirror* in 1905, the novelty of seeing a woman in a state of virtual undress created a new 'theatre of operations' for fashion, where a particular style of dress can be normalised through media exposure. Before Kellerman had performed in vaudeville or silent movies, she traded on her abilities as a swimmer and her exoticism as the Australian mermaid to generate both public interest and an income. The novelty of seeing images of a woman in a swimsuit in the newspaper, especially in a form that would usually be relegated to daring postcards, promoted and disseminated new ideas about suitable bathing dress and physical activities for women. Newspaper editors would have been in no doubt that swimsuits sell newspapers. A Queensland University of Technology Fashion and Style Journalism lecture on September 5 2007, by Georgina Safe, a fashion editor for *The Australian*, commented that swimsuit editorial was assured a page three slot, whereas other fashion stories were often omitted altogether, situating the swimsuit as an ongoing newsworthy garment. Kellerman used the media coverage for her long-distance swims to launch her career as a vaudeville performer and later as a silent movie actress. Her

motivation was clearly driven by her desire for independence and personal goals connected with her vision to create fantasy water spectacles. Early swimsuits were anything but glamorous, as was swimming in polluted rivers. There was, however, a glamorous quality to the concept of a young Australian girl who measured up to the Venus de Milo, daring to bare all to a stitched-up public. In terms of fashion, the swimsuit represented a key design rule of form following function. The early home-made costumes created by Kellerman demonstrated how design concepts evolve in the early stages as a result of a participant's needs. Broader acceptance requires a stylish individual to sell it to the greater public. According to reporter Malcolm Gladwell in his research into how ideas and trends gain popularity, it is 'heavily dependent on the involvement of people with a particular and rare set of social gifts' (Gladwell 2002: 33).

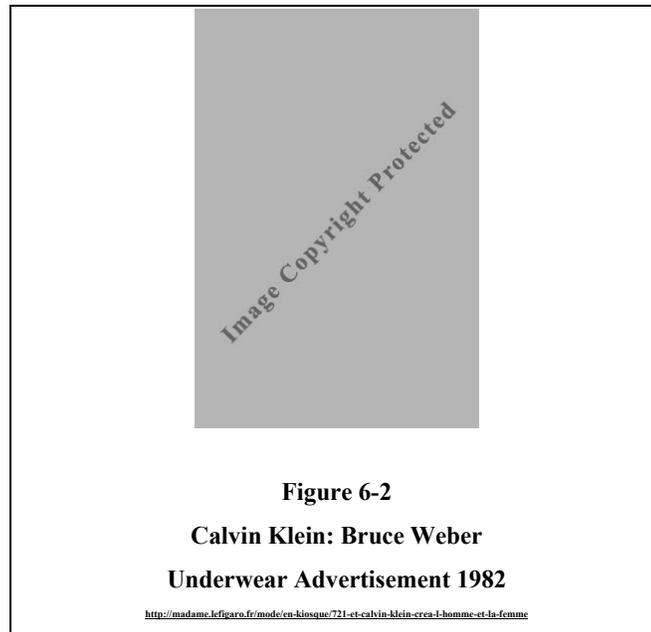
Figure 6-1 is a visual timeline of the swimsuit, with selected images that have emerged in this study as important markers in its design development, fashionability, and social acceptance. These images plot and tease out key influences and relationships between the individual and the collective and through this process gaining an understanding of fashion's plurality, its complexities, and how the swimsuit contributed to a significant connection between modern fashion and bodily spectacle. The images represent diverse forms of communication, participants, and participation sites and why it only makes sense when these elements are combined.



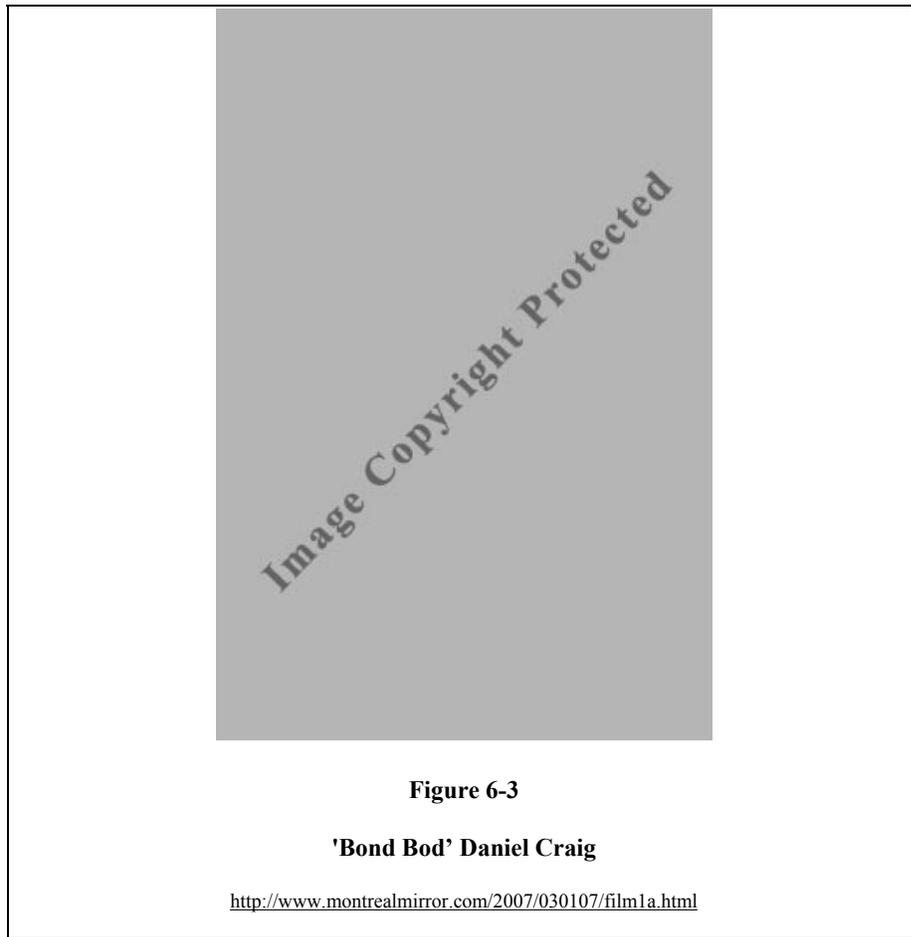
Placed externally to the maillot pattern, Kellerman defied the conventional swimsuit styles for women in the early 1900s choosing to wear a men's one-piece bathing suit similar in styling to the 1906 David Jones catalogue image that is placed strategically in the crotch of the pattern and is the foundation block for the styling of men's and women's swimsuits in the 1920s. Hovering above the dashing moustached gentleman, are four examples of women's bathing costumes from 1916, mirroring the

conservative styles worn by women from the late 1800s – designs which continued to be worn by some participants until the end of the next decade.

The men's swimsuit has not been overlooked. It is, however, placed externally to the maillot pattern, situating men and their fashions as peripheral to the greater body of fashion which has consistently focused on women's dress in the modern era. Steele states that 'fashion is a particular kind of clothing that is "in style" at any given time', and that men are not exempt from inclusion in these changes (Steele and Fashion Institute of Technology (New York). Museum 1997: 3). The included images do nevertheless visually articulate a common observation that there are less dramatic changes to the style of clothing worn by men. Historically, a man in a swimsuit is not page three news and men in swimsuits featured in fashion spreads in predominantly women's magazines could be viewed as accessories both to the women and the clothes, which are typically the main focus of the editorial. Physically beautiful men in swimsuits appeared in Hoyningen-Heuné's photographs from the 1920s in poses that highlighted their finely-tuned muscles, hinting at a potent sexuality. Hollywood actors were used to promote studios, their pictures, and swimsuit manufacturers' products.



Johnny Weissmuller, discussed earlier in this chapter in relation to his star quality, was ‘a swimmer and heartthrob’ (Killoren Bensimon 2006: 248) who undoubtedly enhanced the fashioning of the male body when stripped to either loin cloth or swimming trunks. It is the 1980s, however, that marks the sexualisation of the male body through advertising campaigns such as Calvin Klein’s underwear billboards that were created by Bruce Weber. Steele says that prior to this decade, men were less objectified than women, due in part to ‘a lingering puritanism or homophobia’ (Steele and Fashion Institute of Technology (New York). Museum 1997: 126). Weber was not interested in portraying some idealistic inner beauty; it was all about the sensual male body with sculpted muscles and bulging crotch, in barely restrained iridescent white underpants.



The Speedo has played a role in glorifying the male body through men's swimwear, initially through competitive swimming participants such as Mark Spitz in the 1970s when he sported the briefest cut swimsuit at the Munich Olympics. Proving his god-like sporting abilities, he won seven gold medals and in Figure 5-38 cements associations between a sporting alpha male and the Speedo in flashy style. aussieBum has taken the Speedo one step further with the introduction of internal structuring to bolster the crotch bulge ensuring a solid 'packed lunch', even in cold conditions, thus reinforcing men's inclusion as sexual objects and a potent marketing tool. Daniel Craig, the latest James Bond, has created a distinctly different characterisation of 007 that includes a buffed, muscled body. One of the more memorable scenes is Craig

emerging from the water in a pair of tight, pale blue swimming trunks. According to celebrity and movie websites it was not a scene that had actually been written, but gained inclusion because ‘when he came out all the women gasped ... it wasn’t intended for the scene to go that way but he made a real impact’ (*Craig's Swimwear Scene a Close Call* 2006). In an article for *The Boston Globe*, Michelle Kung referred to Craig as a ‘gym rat’ in an article titled, ‘Dismissed as blond and bland, the sixth 007 plays Bond dark and dangerous’ and adds that love is a central theme (Kung 2006), a daring departure from previous incarnations, which focused on lengthy action scenes and relied on naff double entendres to hold the audiences’ attention. Craig’s swimsuit scene has been likened to the Ursula Andress scene in *Dr No* (1962) when she makes her iconic entrance from the ocean in a white bikini accessorised with a huge knife. Men are now saleable sex objects who can be commodified in much the same way as women have been, and the swimsuit and underwear has been part of this process. Bodily spectacle requires a clear view of a participant’s physical assets and the swimsuit is an ideal garment for this purpose, especially in the public arena where underwear is not as welcome. Although a character like Bond is in many ways is the quintessential heterosexual stereotype, when played by a buffed Craig, acceptance of the male body is normalised for both the straight and gay ‘gaze’. His body is the result of training similar to that of elite athletes and connects to the notion that sport and athleticism are essential ingredients in fashioning an ideal form.

As a result of the continuing exposure of the male body, fashion trends in swimsuits for men are extending beyond ‘a pair of racing briefs or baggy shorts’. In an article for *The Age* amusingly titled ‘Set the budgie free’, Tim Hunter reports that like women who ‘are spoilt for choice’, there are now ‘a flood of styles, colours, fabrics and prints

for men to choose from, and its all about being bright, colourful and sexy'; a celebration of the male form influenced by the success of Daniel Craig as the new James Bond (Hunter 2007).

Australia's early contribution has come a long way, with the word 'Speedo' now included in most dictionaries, defined as:

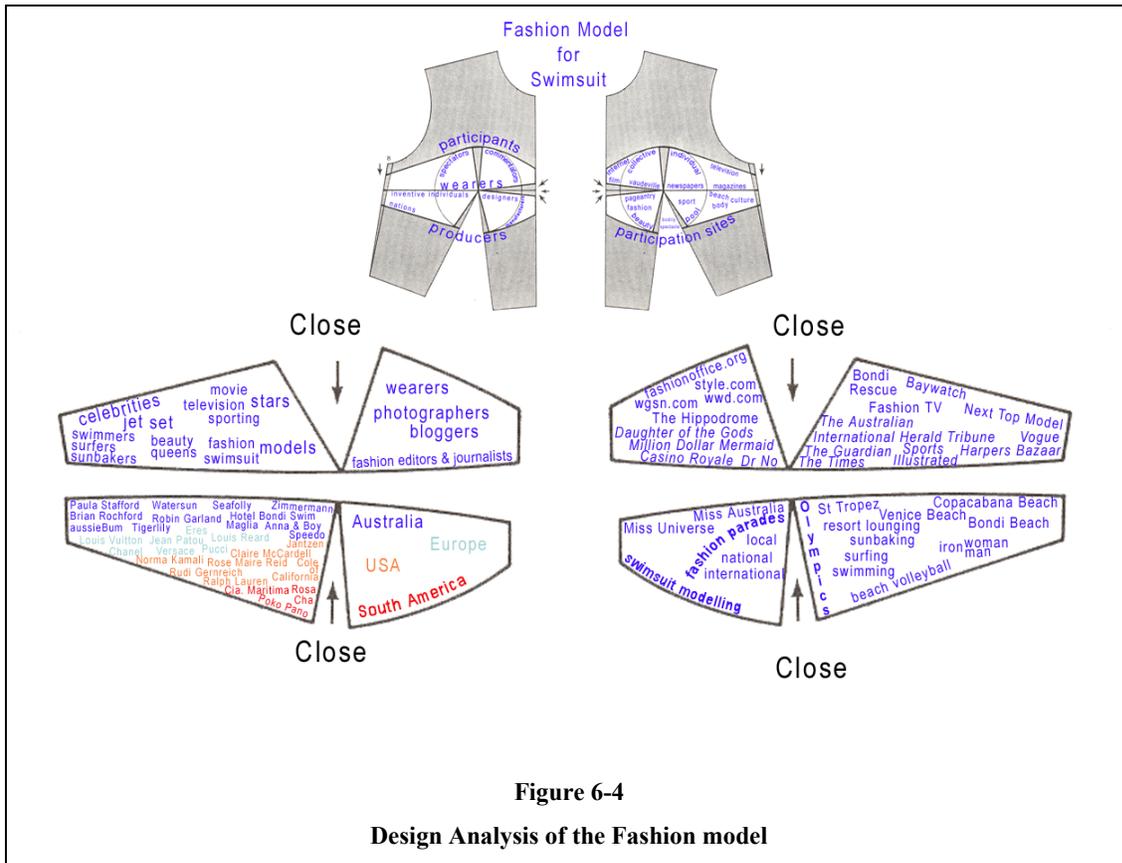
A proprietary name for: a make of swimming costume. Also more widely (in *sing.* and *pl.*): any swimming costume, *esp.* a pair of very short, close-fitting men's trunks (*Oxford English Dictionary: Speedo* 2008).

As men embrace fashion-forward swimsuits, Australia is well-positioned as global design trendsetters in men's swimsuit design, with contemporary companies such as aussieBum, the all-Australian-made brand stocked in the world's leading department and sold in 75 countries (Cossie is a smash hit all over the world 2006).

Collectively, the external men's swimsuit images and the internalised images that track the women's swimsuit trajectory over the last 90 years piece together and visually explore the interfaces between fashion, media, celebrity, sport and the cultivation of the modern body. (Appendix 5 details explanations and thumbnail images of the Fashion Model maillot)

6.2 Design Pattern: Body, Beauty, Sport and Beach Culture:

Figure 6.4 illustrates how participants can be simultaneously wearers, spectators, and commentators, illustrating the fluid and interactive nature of fashion by recognising contributions from individual, national, and global participants. In relation to the swimsuit, the participants represent a broad cross-section: movie, television, and sporting celebrities; fashion and swimsuit models; and beach participants, many of whom migrate like exotic birds visiting resorts in far flung locales. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are a number of designers and manufacturers in Australia, the United States, Europe, and South America, who combined with wearers locally, nationally, and globally to represent the collective and provide a cross-pollination of stylistic approaches and ideas that have influenced the swimsuit's design direction. The participation sites that directly contribute to swimsuit design have been plotted with key films, television shows, magazines and newspapers, sports and leisure pursuits, and pageants.



Viewing all the segments together describes the complexity of the relationships between the participants and participation sites and the diverse influences on the swimsuit's development, and is only revealed when the pattern is viewed as a whole.

An exploration of Australians and their contributions to the evolution of the modern swimsuit and where it has made a splash unfolded into four concepts or themes: body; beauty; sport; and beach culture. The core concepts are plotted on a flat design pattern for a longline one-piece bathing suit. (Figure 6-5)

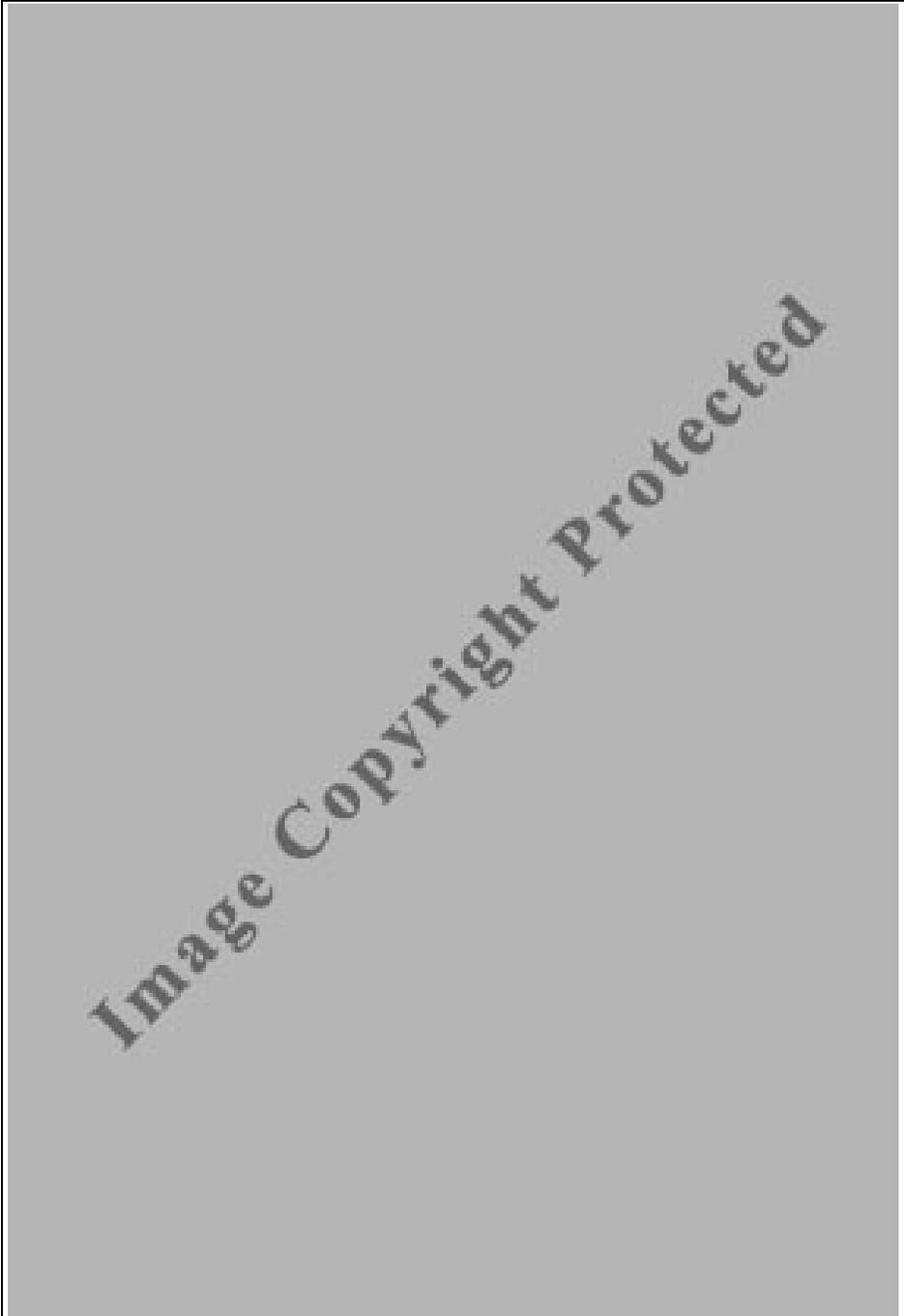


Figure 6-5
Core Concepts

The segments articulate the Australian swimsuit's development in its natural habitats including images highlighting the role of individuals in the process. Bell has suggested that explaining fashion through individuals is not a conclusive method; however, I contend that it is through individuals that we can understand and engage with historical and contemporary life and events, and highlight the type of influential participants who contribute to the evolving process of fashion. Individuals with a unique style, novelty, and/ or performative skills, become fashion participants who experiment and push the boundaries of traditional and existing styles of clothes to create new paths forward.

6.2.1 Body



Figure 6-6
'Body' Segment of pattern

Due to the revealing nature of the swimsuit, individuals who have secured its acceptance and appeal to wearers are likely to have won the genetic lottery with a bodily ideal that others aspire to. Kellerman was the 'Perfect Woman' in 1908, 'with measurements that almost surpass belief'; a woman whom Professor Dudley Sargent declared was 'The most beautifully formed woman of modern times' (Gibson and Firth 2005). Almost 81 years later Michael Gawenda nicknamed Elle MacPherson 'The Body' in a cover story for *Time Australia*, reporting that she was 'strikingly, startlingly tall, and, while not exactly Rubenesque, she has a bust and a waist and hips, taken together form an image of healthy, exuberant femininity'. Kellerman and MacPherson represent a physical ideal; healthy, Open-Air beauties, both national and global identities, with the swimsuit, the garment closely linked to their public image. In a 2007 interview with Condè Nast Interactive online magazine *Easy Living*, MacPherson commented that when she started modelling her body type was not fashionable, 'but it was commercial', indicating that she was more glamour than catwalk as evidenced by her success as a regular cover girl for *Sports Illustrated* (*Body and soul* 2007).

Like Kellerman, her body was her entrée to building a diverse career that has included exercise videos, lingerie and, in 2007, a beauty care range called 'The Body'. Gawenda refers to her as 'Australia's gift to world fashion' and suggests that she is not a 'mysterious beauty', but rather a type to be found on any Australian beach. He surmises that her popularity was due to her healthy, 'robust form of femininity', which is the antithesis of the 'thin, pale, androgynous, bustless, hipless models of a decade ago!' (Gawenda 1989). Kellerman heralded a new body type in the early decades of the 1900s when women were fleshy and unhealthily constrained by sturdy

corsets, pushed and pulled into shape, while MacPherson signalled the change from waif to an Amazonian body type in the 1980s. Both women advised that through strenuous exercise women could attain a desirable body worthy of display in a swimsuit.

6.2.2 Beauty

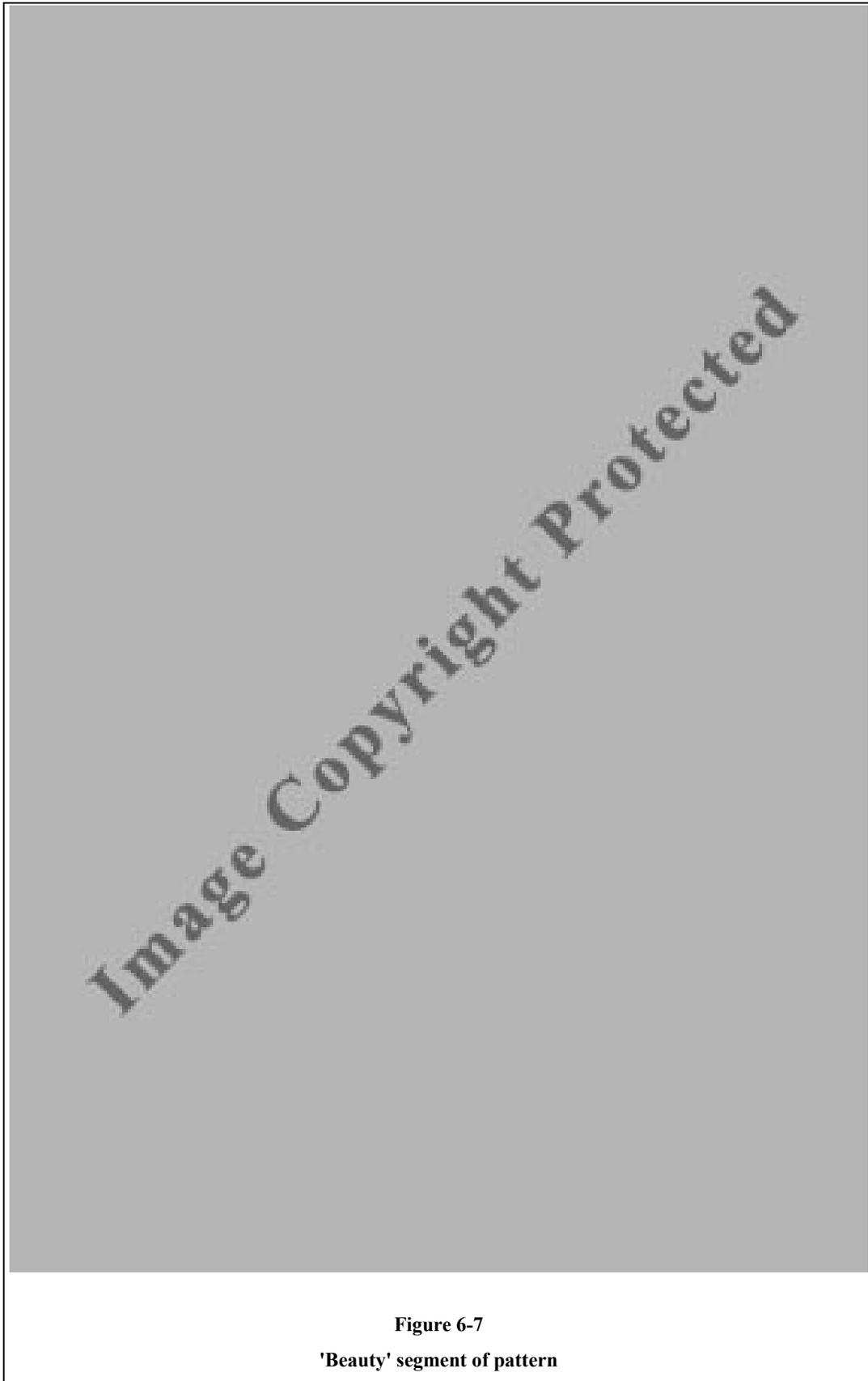
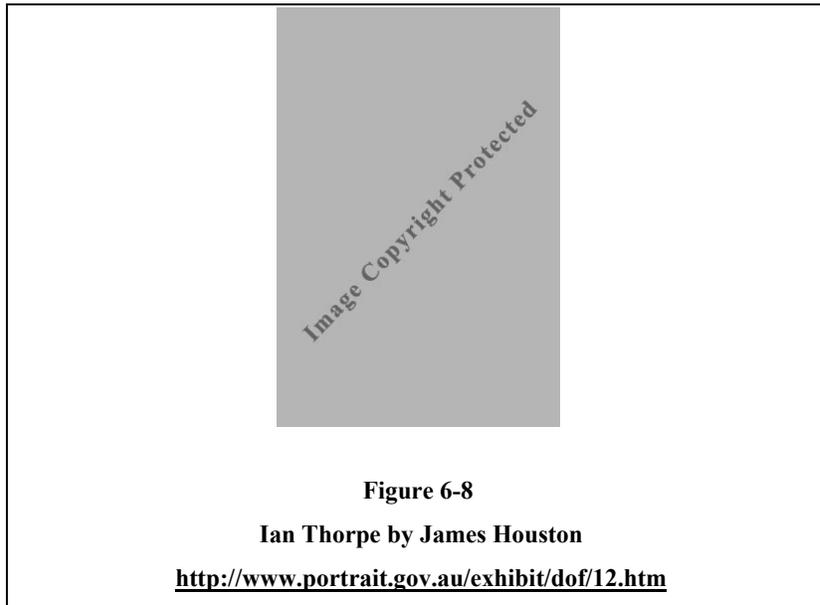


Figure 6-7
'Beauty' segment of pattern

Kellerman and MacPherson are not the only women whose bodies were packaged for public display in swimsuits and, as was noted in the contextual historical overview, the beauty contest flourished from around 1906-7. According to Daley, the potential positive outcomes for contestants were career opportunities in theatre and film, a stepping stone to fame and fortune (Daley 2003). In addition to their individual success, beauty contestants came to represent a form of national beauty that could then compete in international competitions as representations of the typical beauty of their home countries. Jennifer Hawkins, Miss Australia and Miss Universe 2004, illustrates how this is still the case. From Newcastle, 156km north of Sydney, her father is a manager in a train company and her mother a homemaker. Prior to her crowning, Hawkins had never travelled overseas, and is referred to as someone who ‘loves all water sports and heads to the Gold Coast whenever she can’ – in essence, the all-Australian beach girl. Since taking off her Miss Universe crown, Hawkins’ career has flourished, becoming: the international face of Lux, ‘following in the famous footsteps of Sarah Jessica Parker, Gisele and Linda Evangelista’ as well as ‘spokesperson’ for a new multi million dollar residential property development in Hong Kong, featuring in its television advertising campaign that was aired throughout southern China. Her modelling work includes lingerie brand Loveable, in addition to appearing on the covers of popular magazines and hosting the television show, *Great Outdoors*. She is also ‘in high demand on the corporate speaking circuit where she shares her incredible climb to the top’ (Jennifer Hawkins 2006). From Kellerman to Hawkins, a beautiful woman in a swimsuit has the potential to optimise their career prospects with financial independence built on a body that is commercially viable. Similarly to Kellerman and contemporary model-actress Liz Hurley, Hawkins has now extended her business interests to include a swimwear label called Cozi. In a

press release in the *Daily Telegraph* reinforces the economic potency of merging beauty and a celebrity body to produce a fashion collection:

She made her name as the most beautiful woman in the universe - now it seems Jennifer Hawkins is destined to rule the world (Toy 2008).



As noted in the previous chapter reviewing men's swimwear in the noughties, women no longer have a monopoly on the body, beauty, swimsuit triangle. Bulging biceps, taut 'six-pack' abdomens, and toned thighs all waxed to a marble smoothness represent a masculine, athletic beauty that would not have been out of place in an ancient Greek gymnasium. An Australian 'modern day god', Olympic swimmer, Ian Thorpe has morphed from elite athlete to fashionista. Figure 6-8 shows Thorpe crouched in a feline pose, his glistening body in a transitional state between human and alien or animal, his gaze confronts as he poises ready to leap. In an interview with Thorpe, fashion journalist Marion Hume refers to 'the power of his own celebrity',

which has led to a friendship with Giorgio Armani, jewellery design for Broome pearl producers Autore; a signature fragrance, and an underwear collection. In common with his female compatriots, Kellerman, MacPherson and Hawkins, Thorpe taps into his Australian-ness – a sporty outdoors aesthetic that is well-suited to promoting the swimsuit and underwear that showcase the celebrity body naturalised by its sporty connections.

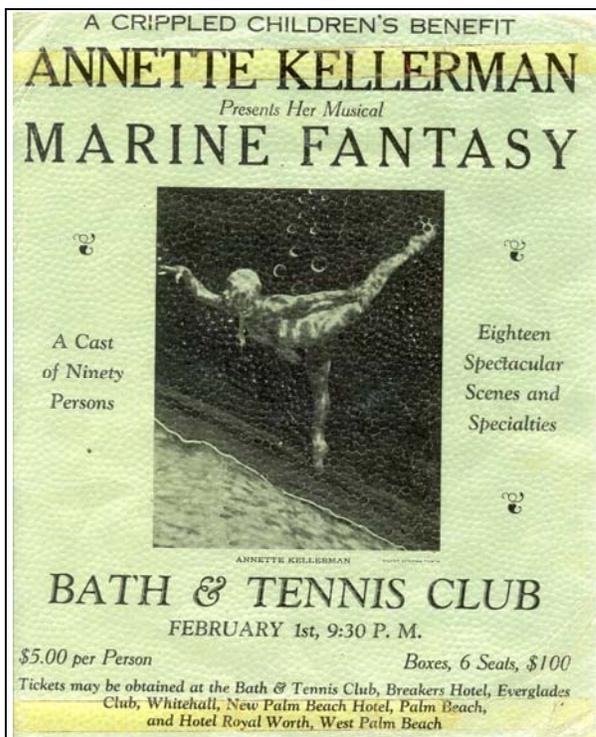


Figure 6-9
Annette Kellerman Benefit Cover

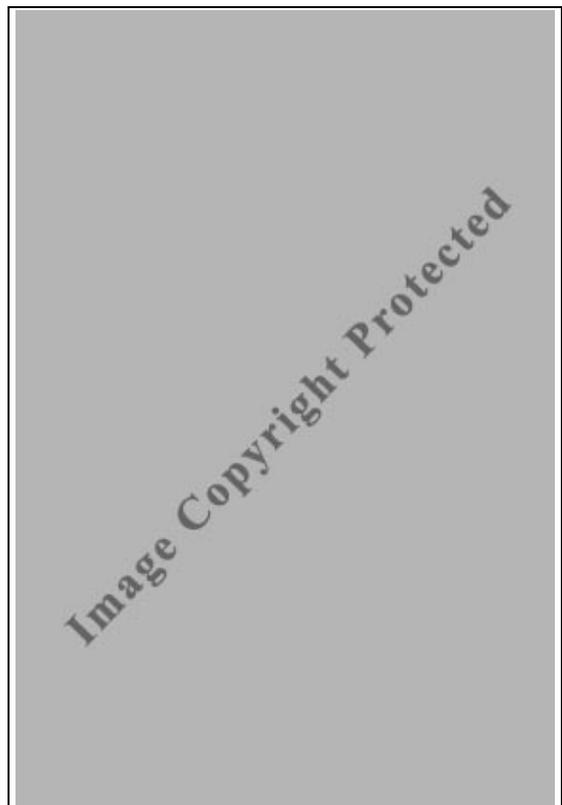


Figure 6-10
Naomi Campbell modelling for
Miss Bikini Luxe, Milan September, 2007
<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqMSI-qJh7IBTRdO8Zq1HYCRwYSps-KO>

Adding another layer to the swimsuit and the wearer’s repertoire are charity events which can combine humanitarian work with swimsuit-clad beauties. Figure 6-9 is the cover of a 1950s booklet promoting a Kellerman ‘Marine Fantasy’ performance in aid

of crippled children. It was a means of enticing potential contributors to part with their money for a worthy cause while providing them with visually pleasing entertainment, a formula that continues to the present day. Figure 6-10 of Naomi Campbell modelling a Miss Bikini Luxe swimsuit in Milan is titled in *The Australian* as, 'Naomi splashes out for Charity in Milan'. Campbell managed to sell a luxury swimsuit collection while promoting her favourite charity, Fashion for Relief, which gives money to help victims of natural disaster (Naomi splashes out for charity in Milan 2007). Campbell in an expensive, revealing emerald sequined bikini is a tasty promotional tool for the charity, suggesting that in the 21st century the swimsuit continues to be a popular garment for generating much-needed money for charities; beauty with a purpose. It describes a multi-layered fashion conversation that influences what is fashionable and cannot be contained and controlled by fashion intermediaries who include fashion designers, fashion journalists, buyers, and retailers. The swimsuit has been fast-tracked to page three of newspapers globally and to innumerable blogs, where its splashy appeal attracts large reader numbers. Ian Thorpe adorned the charity mantle without revealing his Speedos in 2002 when he hosted a charity-based reality show called *Undercover Angels*, which proved a huge ratings success coming in just behind *Big Brother* with 1.74 million viewers. It entailed 'dispatching three 'angels' to do good deeds for the needy', with an article in *The Age* suggesting that it 'bodes well for a television career in Thorpe's swimming after-life' (*Thorpe takes gold with Undercover Angels* 2002). Thorpe and Campbell's actions illustrate how through sport and fashion, careers can be forged, extended, and mediated through participation sites like television and film, often clothed in worthy causes. Theirs are modern success stories of individuals with exceptional physical beauty and/or stellar sporting abilities, evidence that traditional values have been

replaced by 'new ideals and life-styles based on personal accomplishment, entertainment, consumption and love' (Lipovetsky 1994: 189); ideals that Kellerman endorsed over 100 years ago. Joining these individuals on their journey has been the swimsuit.

6.2.3 Sport



Figure 6-11
'Sport' segment of pattern

Tracking the swimsuit's evolution through sport led to an analysis of high-achieving sporting participants, specifically competitive swimmers. Elite athletes move beyond the sporting arena to pursue careers in television, film, and theatre raising the question: How do sporting celebrities contribute to our understanding of the swimsuit and its inclusion as a fashionable item of clothing?

In the early 1900s, Fanny Durack was one of Australia's fastest swimmers when 'the new century was still young when Australians were recognised as being great swimmers' (Wells 1982: 85). Raszeja refers to a *Bulletin* quote that describes Durack as 'the first Australian petticoat to represent this continent (officially) in great sporting events in the old world' (Raszeja 1992: 81). Durack was an exceptional athlete and Figure 6-12 shows her seated on a jagged rock in a confident and relaxed pose with waves lapping behind her. There is no false modesty and rather than coquettishly baring her body in her revealing swimsuit, she has a natural quality with a warm and friendly gaze. There is nothing salacious about this image that could connect her with the raunchier Bathing Belle postcards of the period and, she fits with the caption describing her as a 'lady champion swimmer'. In Figure 6-13, Kellerman wears the functional swimsuit of a competitive swimmer, similar to the one worn by Durack; however, her pose and gaze are at odds with her drab swimsuit. With her hair coiffed and arms clasped behind her head, she invites the viewer to assess her bodily assets. Kellerman may have been a champion lady diver but her sights were set on a larger pool.

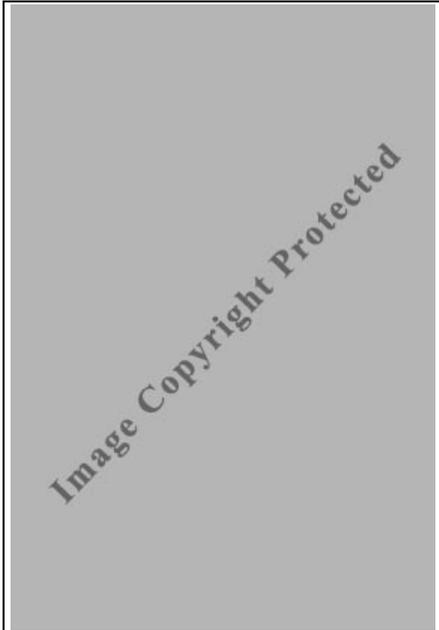


Figure 6-12

Fanny Durack

<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A080411b.htm>

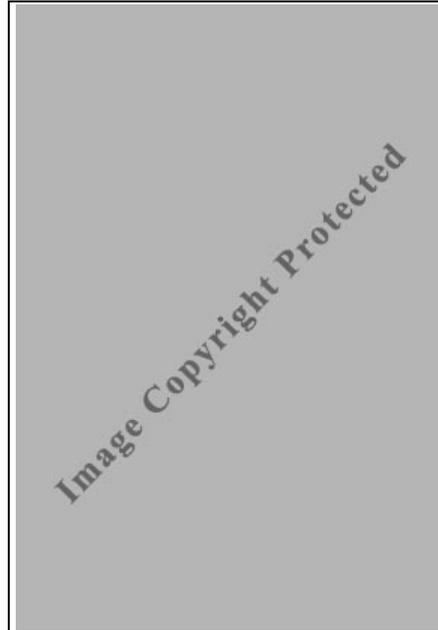


Figure 6-13

Annette Kellerman

<http://image.sl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ebindshow.pl?doc=picacc6703/a191;seq=48>

‘Boy’ Charlton, described as ‘Australia’s first modern swimming hero’ (*Fair Sport* 2006), set a world freestyle record when he was 15 at the New South Wales State championships. He grew up on Sydney’s northern beaches and was dubbed the ‘Manly Flying Fish’. Charlton represented Australia at the Paris Olympic Games in 1924, becoming the third Australian to win gold for his country, successfully competing against renowned Swedish swimmer Arne Borg and ‘American Sensation’ Johnny Weissmuller. Shy and retiring, Charlton avoided publicity, refusing to turn professional on the grounds that he felt the Australian public would never forgive him for pursuing sport for monetary gains (Walsh 1983). Johnny Weissmuller, an Austro-Hungarian émigré who learnt to swim in Lake Michigan in Chicago, was included in the US Olympic team in 1924 and 1928, when he won five gold medals and set a number of world records. Unlike Charlton, Weissmuller did not shun publicity and in the late 1920s signed with US swimsuit manufacturer BVD as a swimsuit and underwear model. In 1932 he was contracted to MGM by Louis B. Mayer, morphing into the legendary Tarzan and later Jungle Jim.

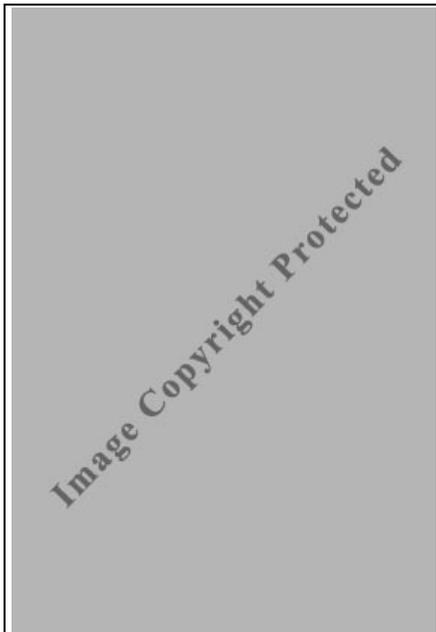


Figure 6-14
Johnny Weissmuller 1930
by Hoyningen-Heuné

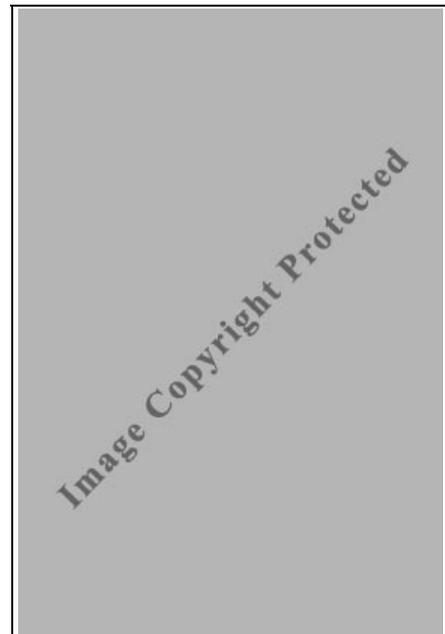


Figure 6-15
'Boy' Charlton <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn3298706>

In Figures 6-14 and 6-15, Charlton poses in a sporty stance with his mouth slightly open revealing little of his personality, while in Hoyningen-Heuné's 'famous beefcake shot' (Bright 1998: 63), Weissmuller entices the viewer with an intimate gaze. Framed by changing room doors, there is an aesthetic purity to the image with Weissmuller exuding a star quality that Lipovetsky refers to as 'the unique charm of their appearance ... their bewitching seductiveness' (Lipovetsky 1994: 182).

Kellerman and Weissmuller radiated charisma and a unique style that successfully translated to the big screen and Hollywood star status. They communicated the ideals of bodily spectacle creating an erotic layer to the swimsuit that was not representative of a national cultural identity. They were inventive individuals who became global identities associated with active glamour and physical beauty. By comparison, Fanny

Durack and Boy Charlton were elite athletes in functional swimwear who represented sporting Australia. Crombie observes that:

Athletes, like soldiers, have an individual character but it is unusual to conceive of them operating independently of national origin and their successes are inextricably linked to national pride and progress' (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 76)

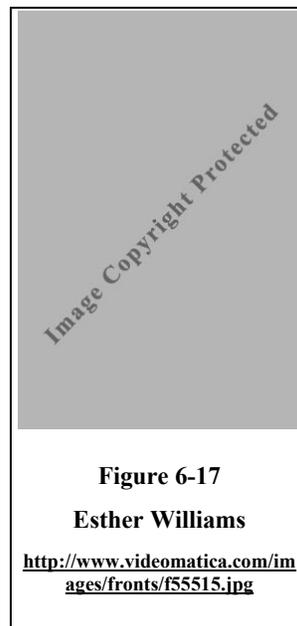
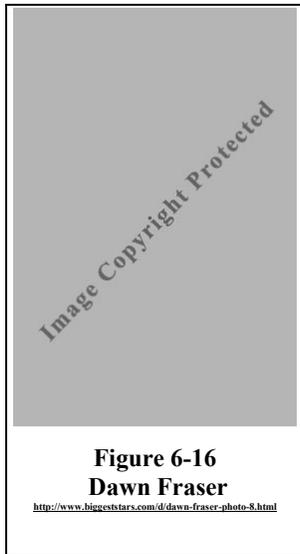
Durack and Charlton were national heroes consolidating an Australian identity as a sporting nation; Kellerman and Weissmuller were 'superindividuals' who represent an otherness that establishes a different hierarchical structure for the modern world that has come to be populated by 'great actresses and great couturiers, sports figures and popular singers, movie stars and show-business idols' (Lipovetsky 1994: 77).

Moving forward to the 1940s and '50s the participation sites of sport and film continued to shape swimsuit design. Esther Williams, an Olympic swimmer, became the 'swimsuit's pin-up girl', performing in Busby Berkley aquacades inspired by Kellerman's fantasy mermaid films. Kennedy's description of 'her graceful, arching body [that] set off her swimsuits to perfection' (Kennedy 2007: 108), illustrates the symbiosis of a well-formed body and the swimsuit and its appeal to wearers, spectators, and commentators. Williams, a diving Venus upgrade, glittered and shimmered in gold Lastex swimsuits encrusted in sequins and gold flakes; that Cole of California simplified for the mass market encouraging wearers everywhere to embrace their inner starlet.

When Williams was at the peak of her career as an actress, a new Olympian female swimmer was waiting in the wings. Aged 19 at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, Dawn Fraser set a new world record in the 100m freestyle event; however, sport would not be a launching pad for a film career, and in an interview with Amanda Smith on *The Sports Factor*, Fraser discussed the barriers a sportsperson experienced in the 1950s and '60s when their amateur status prevented them from earning an income from their sport. At the age of 12, Fraser was stood down for two years by the Australian Swimming Union for accepting a two shilling Christmas gift from the football club her family belonged to, deeming this classed her as a professional. (Smith 2001). It reflects an attitude that had initially prevented Kellerman from

receiving publicity at her diving and swimming exhibitions in the UK in the early 1900s, as it was seen as ‘detrimental to the amateur nature of athletics’ (Gibson and Firth 2005: 24). Unlike Kellerman who chose to commercialise her skills through alternative participation sites, Fraser was unable to financially benefit from her sporting achievements.

Both sportswomen are remembered for scandals surrounding their swimsuits; Kellerman for exposing the female form in a daring men’s swimsuit at a public beach; Fraser determining to improve on the style of swimsuit worn by competitive female swimmers in the 1950s and ’60s by refusing to wear official team swimsuits. Although there had been technological advances, swimmers still trained in wool swimsuits transferring to a silk and cotton combination for competitive events. In 1957, Fraser and fellow Australian swimming champion Lorraine Crapp collaborated with Speedo to develop a competitive swimsuit in the ‘new wonder fabric nylon – a fully man-made fibre’ (Swimwear 1989). Unlike, natural fibres, which lacked elasticity and were slow to dry, nylon was resilient, light, and created less water drag; a continuing focus for performance swimwear design. A design problem with the women’s swimsuit was the required modesty skirt, which increased its weight and water drag. Fraser’s vocal attempts to have it removed for competition swim events were to no avail. She was an inventive individual who chose to make her own swimsuits that, in her opinion, improved the fit and performance, incurring the wrath of officials at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics when she chose to wear her own version instead of the official swimsuit. It led to a 10-year ban, which Fraser believes was imposed because she stood up for her rights. As a result, she was labelled a larrikin who would not conform to rules and regulations (Smith 2001). It can be argued that being single-minded and focused on self-development is a key ingredient to success. Fraser’s sporting achievements were recognised in 1999 at the World Sport Awards in Vienna when she was named ‘World Athlete of the Century’ (Fraser 2007).



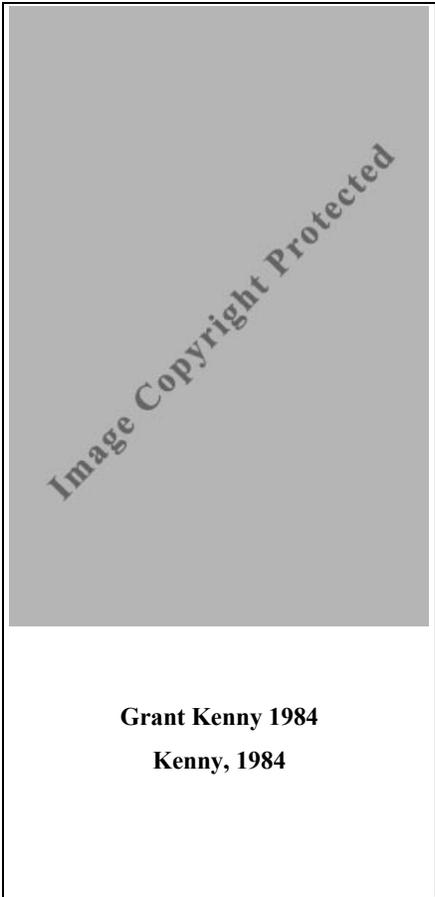
Figures 6-16 and 6-17 illustrate the marked contrast between: the glamour Hollywood swimsuit and the sporty swimsuit; the professional and amateur swimmer; the MGM and Olympic pools. Williams' dazzling reinvention as a modern Hollywood mermaid follows a trend Kellerman initiated 50 years earlier: a 'modern individualist ideology' materialising as 'originality, nonconformism, fantasy, uniqueness of the individual personality, eccentricity, comfort and bodily display' (Lipovetsky 1994: 86). Despite the fact that Fraser exhibited a number of these qualities, sporting authorities considered her detrimental to the team and punished her harshly. Although Williams' performances were still predominantly aquatic-centred, she was part of a Hollywood star system that elevated her to 'superpersonality' status – sport and its participants would take a few decades to catch up.

By the 1980s, a new breed of Australian swimmer had surfaced including Olympian Lisa Curry-Kenny. A striking blonde, glowing with sporty health, she benefited from the softening of the constraints that had prevented Fraser from earning an income from her sporting prowess or sports star status through sponsorship deals or product endorsements. Curry-Kenny and the Uncle Toby's muesli bar were an inseparable duo during her career as a swimmer; a natural and mutually beneficial partnership. In 1992 she launched her own swimwear brand 'Hot Curry', which was 'something groovy –

not daggy or boring' (Rymer 1996), 'a unique blend of glamour wear for the physically fit' (Maynard 2000: 141). Kellerman and Williams drew on their fame as Hollywood aqua stars to collaborate with swimsuit manufacturers, Ashbury and Cole of California respectively, to create their own signature swimwear ranges, with Williams continuing to sell her style of 1950s glamour swimsuit from her official website. Now sportswoman Curry-Kenny joined performers like Williams, in a decade when sport and fashion fused with television acting as an intermediary.

Sportswomen did not have exclusive rights to sponsorship deals. Olympian canoeist and Ironman Grant Kenny raised public awareness and interest in surf athletes in the 1980s when he won four consecutive Australian Ironman titles. Blonde, bronzed, and in the peak of physical condition, he is remembered for kayaking vigorously through rapids in advertisements for Kellogg's Nutri-Grain cereal which can be viewed on YouTube. According to Booth, ironmen are 'the embodiment of Australian health and masculinity', an association that glamorised the Kellogg's brand (Booth 2001: 153). Curry-Kenny and Kenny became an Australian aquatic golden couple in this decade, promoting healthful well-being through their endorsements of cereal products. Kenny penned a training book in 1984 called 'Grant Kenny's *Fitness for Gold Training Book* that provided insights into fitness through diet and exercise, informing his readers that the three golden rules for success are: 'discipline, dedication and a good diet' (Kenny 1984: 79). In 1990, Curry-Kenny published the first of a series of health and fitness books, including books on exercise during pregnancy, and fitness in children. Books on health, fitness and well-being began in Kellerman's time with the self-publication of her first book, *The Body Beautiful* in 1912 followed by *Physical Beauty: How to*

Keep It in 1918. It supports the notion that Australians have contributed to the fashioning of the body, shaping it for sport and leisure pursuits, suited to display in a swimsuit, a garment that Wells suggests is ‘the nearest thing we have to a national dress’ (Wells 1982: 98). Curry-Kenny has been a sports commentator on Channel Nine’s *Wide World of Sports* and is currently involved in promoting the Fernwood Fitness Centres, women-only gyms that promise to get you into those summer cossies. She also works for ICMI Speakers and Entertainers, who describe her as an ‘inspiring speaker’ who is able to deliver motivational messages based on her success as an Olympic athlete (*Speaker Lisa Curry-Kenny* 2007). In 1984, Kenny starred in ‘*The Coolangatta Gold*’ film, ‘an engaging story ... an inspirational film ... it covers a lifestyle that will always be a large part of Australia’s identity’ (*The Coolangatta Gold* 2007). He has since become a property developer, was the Deputy Chairman



Grant Kenny 1984
Kenny, 1984

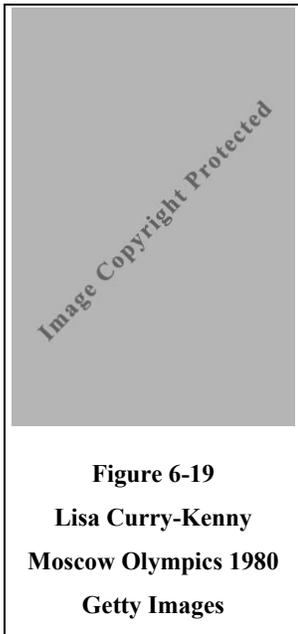
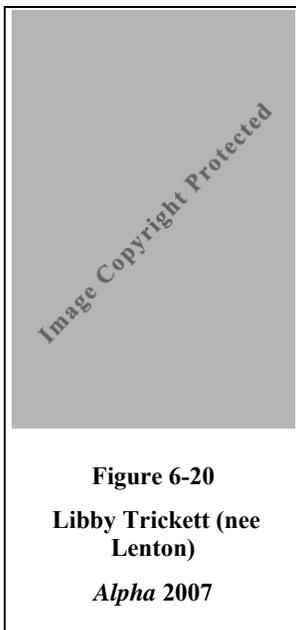


Figure 6-19
Lisa Curry-Kenny
Moscow Olympics 1980
Getty Images

of the Board for Tourism Queensland, and is joint Managing Director of the Curry Kenny Group on the Sunshine Coast (*Corporate Governance - Tourism Queensland* 2002). Together they illustrate how contemporary Australians continue in Kellerman’s footsteps, connecting the swimsuit to fashion through a democratising process that connects sport, active glamour, and the Australian lifestyle.

Figures 6-18 and 6-19 show them in swimsuits – open, sunny, relaxed and comfortable, encouraging others to engage in sport with its obvious benefits. Their bodies illustrate an evolving physical aesthetic, with the defined muscles that result from the fitness regimes of elite athletes. Fashion commentator Suzy Menkes describes the new feminine ideal in 1996 as ‘a body ... molded by gymnastics to the peak of its power. It has broad shoulders, swelling athletic thighs

and buttocks’, continuing that ‘its development has become a metaphor of self-discipline and self-development’. Menkes reports it is an approach to the body that harks back to the ‘glorification of the body and the cult of the male-only gymnasium in ancient Greece’. Kenny’s defined pectoral muscles and ‘six pack abs’ signposted the way for increasingly body conscious men in the noughties who aspire to a classical physique, while Curry-Kenny illustrates ‘the sporty takeover of the fragile figure’ (Menkes 1996). They were part of the athletic set that pioneered a move towards a more muscular physique, as did Kellerman in the early 1900s, consolidating Australia’s contribution to patterning a bodily ideal for a swimsuit.



At the end of 2007, Stella McCartney’s collection statement for Adidas is ‘Sport as integral part of our everyday life!’ (*Adidas by Stella McCartney spring/summer 2007*). As McCartney brings ‘an edge’ to sports clothes, sports celebrities add a sporty glamour to campaigns. Sport is big business and, Australians are situated to benefit from this relationship by punching above their weight in a number of sports with sports stars not averse to endorsing a number of brands. Libby Trickett, lauded as the current ‘Australian swim queen’ has a number of lucrative sponsorship deals including Sunsuper that has regularly featured her in advertisements and television commercials that connect with her success as an Olympiad whilst selling their products with

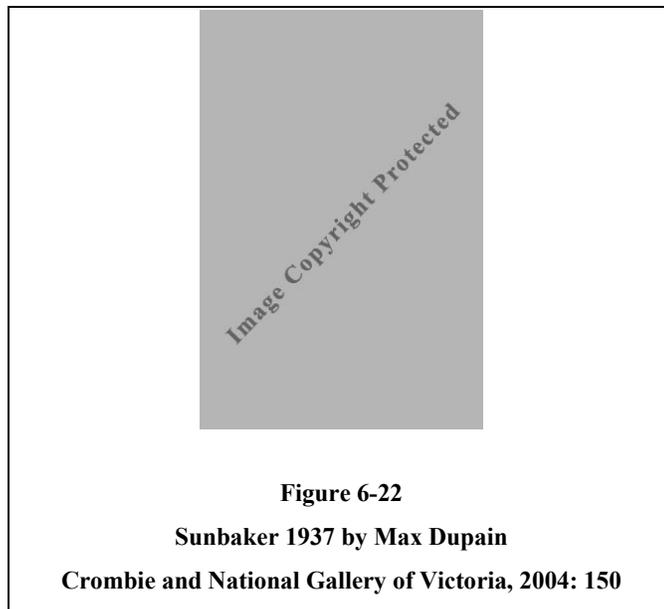
the aid of a sunny blonde in a swimsuit. Figure 6-20 illustrates how athletes are now groomed and repackaged as glamorous celebrities reflecting an evolution that has led to fashion drawing from diverse sources to create designs that ‘are no longer an inferior reflection of a prestigious prototype’ of haute couture (Lipovetsky 1994: 94). In the noughties, athletes such as Trickett and Thorpe communicate a bodily ideal, endorsing bodily spectacle, connecting Australia, the swimsuit and sport to fashion through the process.

6.2.4 Beach Culture



Figure 6-21
'Beach Culture' segment of pattern

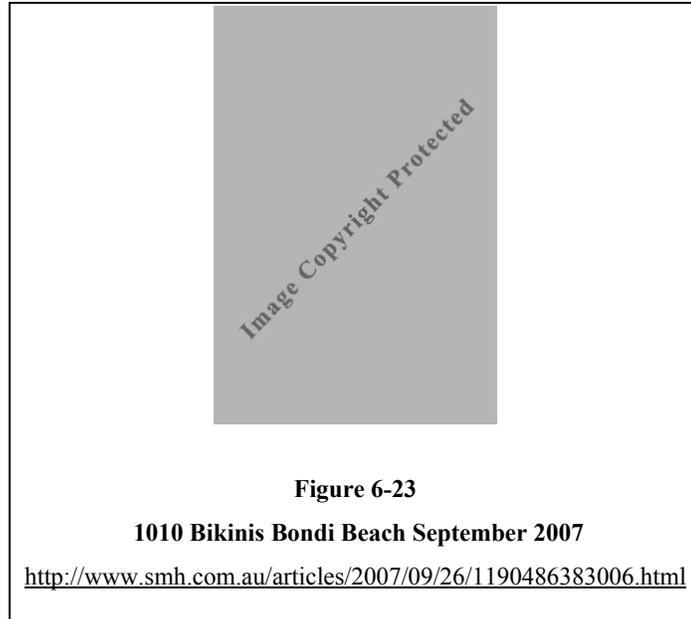
According to Wells, ‘Australians have one love in common – the seaside’ (Wells 1982: 13), a sentiment this study supports. From the early days before bathing machines that appeared around 1885, Australians went down to the sea to play and exercise. In New South Wales and Queensland, swimmers flouted early laws, that prudishly insisted on encumbering beachgoers with impractical, weighty swimwear and restricted bathers to swimming after dark, instead fighting for the freedom to swim in daylight in functional one-piece swimsuits. Crombie remarks that the beach is an equalizer, ‘a democratic zone’ stripping bathers of their usual social markers and creating an alternative hierarchy that is ‘physical rather than class-based’ (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 177).



By the 1920s and 1930s the beach was a regular destination, with surfers and lifesavers representing a unique slice of Australian-ness. The beach offered

participants an opportunity to revitalise body and soul, at times in a state of inertia beneath a blazing sun, an integral part of the process and a delicious abandonment, as seen in Max Dupain's iconic photograph, *Sunbaker*. (Figure 6-22) Displaying the defined muscles of someone who is not always inert, his body is representative of a new order that is both beautiful and capable of taking on the challenges of the surf. Another Dupain photograph from *Bondi* in the late '30s – a back view of a couple gazing out sea (middle image in Figure 6-21) – reveals a relaxed approach to beach life. Crombie suggests that the woman is emptying sand from her bathers, an 'endearingly colloquial gesture' (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 118). Or it could be the recurring problem that many beach participants experience, where swimsuits ride up and require readjustment to cover the bottom cheeks. The couple, while not young, appear fit and have embraced the new swimsuit styles popular in this decade. Her swimsuit has a cling associated with textiles containing Lastex and his swimming trunks are daringly brief. Other male beach participants in this image are wearing higher belted styles, with one sporting the Speedo racer-back one-piece. As they all gaze out to sea, there is a connection with the beach; they are 'at home', conveying a casual informality which according to BBC's style commentator Jeff Banks has influenced Australians approach to fashion. Banks was in Australia for the Melbourne Cup (November 6, 2007) and was astounded at 'the amount of exposed female flesh', commenting that 'Australians do love to show some skin' and attributing the bodily display to the amount of time spent outdoors, in particular at the beach in bikinis. He wryly noted that it would be beneficial if the standard of dress were more in tune with the races than Bondi Beach (Safe 2007). Although it is doubtful that his comments will influence future race fashion, as

Australian women remain independent and individualistic in their approach to what they wear, even if it is not deemed good taste by arbiters of style.



In September 2007, Bondi Beach was the site of the world’s biggest swimsuit shoot with 1010 bikini clad women gathering to set a Guinness World Record. *Cosmopolitan* magazine editor Sarah Wilson, who coordinated the event, commented that, ‘we love a challenge, we’re not afraid to show our bodies, we love the beach and we don’t take ourselves too seriously’ (Safe 2007). Australians at the beach or the races continue to celebrate a national identity that is associated with freedom, hedonism, and a bodily spectacle often showcased in swimwear or garments that offer similar revealing features.

Bondi Beach continues its high-profile exposure through reality television programme *Bondi Rescue*, tracking the very real drama of lifesavers saving hapless beach participants from drowning in rips, albeit, sometimes unsuccessfully. Three camera

crews, three roving directors with their own cameras, and a fixed camera in the patrol tower capture locals and tourists who share the beach. According to curator Janet Bell ‘the lifeguards whom we come to know as individuals over the long weeks of summer ... are skylarking elite athletes ... who work together as a finely tuned machine to keep beachgoers safe’ (*Bondi Rescue (2005-2007)* 2007). Unlike American television series *Baywatch*, which is bereft of a solid storyline, instead focusing on beach babes with pneumatic breasts and muscled actors impersonating lifeguards, *Bondi Rescue* taps into elements of beach glamour with real footage of athletically fit lifeguards in minimalist Speedos, offering audiences a slice of Australian life, while creating a new form of celebrity that bridges the television and reality personality. The *Bondi Rescue* team are not acting the part, nor are they “ordinary people” with no special abilities and achievements’, as Graeme Turner describes reality TV participants (Turner 2004: 53). They are skilled professionals providing a community service that just happens to be located at the beach where they combine work and leisure. Martin and Koda propose that ‘the water’s edge is the *speculum mundi* of the century of individuals and leisure’, whereas in ‘the industrial and urban nineteenth century’, it was the city (Martin and Koda 1990: 132). Since the First Fleet landed on the shores of Botany Bay in 1788, Australians have had a close affinity with the beach. Convicts became free folk and at the end of the working week would gravitate to the beach to enjoy their freedom. As a result, Australians were well-positioned to contribute to the evolution of the swimsuit, connecting a modern garment to fashion in a democratised era where individuals engaged through sport and beach culture at participation sites such as Bondi Beach.

6.3 The Cult of the Body

The Australian participants and participation sites gathered from the fashion model for the swimsuit (Figure 6-4), consolidate the framework created by the Venn diagram (page 26) to describe how Australia, fashion, and the swimsuit intersect through; sport, democratic modernity, and active glamour to a central, mutually-inclusive core of bodily spectacle. Australia is not the only country that has beautiful women, elite athletes, stunning beaches, or successful swimsuit designers; however, Australia has managed to create a niche in a global market that taps into the concept that we are a sporty, sun-loving beach-surf culture with the ability to produce highly successful individuals and products that have global appeal. Many of these qualities are defined in the Mermaid Maillot (Figure 4-14), a pattern created to analyse Kellerman's mermaid persona, and the concept that Australia exists outside the cosmopolitan hubs as a utopian paradise whose inhabitants are romanticised outsiders with a natural unaffected beauty, the exotic 'Other' with transformative powers connected to their desire to travel beyond traditional boundaries to achieve personal goals. Australians are often perceived as individualistic, active, and fearless – a race of gifted aquatic athletes immune from the restrictions and formality of the European class-system.

According to Lipovetsky, Louis Dumont and Marcel Gauchet recognised the role of individualism and 'the individual the key to understanding modernity and its metamorphoses'. Rather than accepting a model of fashion that dates back to the 19th century where there is a hierarchical class structure that creates a trickle down effect resulting in 'mimicry and conformity', contemporary fashion 'emphasizes its

democratic and individual aspect', and a new meaning where it 'has become a general principle restructuring entire facets of society'. It is a 20th century phenomenon and reveals the changing dynamic where there is 'a growing preoccupation with the body' and a variety of bodily fashions including 'aesthetic, dietetic and athletic models'. In 1991, as many as four million French citizens were participating in gymnastics or body-building activities – sports of all types were a growth industry. Lipovetsky continues that individuals are investing time and money on self-development, building well-defined muscle groups and ensuring their bodies are maintained to the highest possible standard. A 'cult of looks no longer aimed at a display of rank; it is experienced as a way to stay young, to feel good, to maximise self-confidence' (Lipovetsky 1994: 242-4). Australians have led the way in the body business since the early 1900s, with Kellerman's proclaimed health and fitness through diet and exercise regimes emphasising the desirability of youthful self-assurance.

6.4 Stitching up the Maillot

Sifting through the images and ideas has led to ‘stitching up’ the maillot design pattern (Figure 6-24) into a representation of the types of people, places, media, and concepts that have shaped and influenced the evolutionary process. All pattern lines lead to a central theme of bodily spectacle and to an intimate connection with the body. It is a particular type of body, one that is perceived as beautiful, possessing an athleticism that has the potential to translate to sporting prowess. A beautiful or athletic body was not the only criteria for inclusion, as a core theme has been the analysis of inventive individuals, their transition to global identities, how they may have shaped a national identity, and what influence these participants have when carving a niche in a global community. Embedded in this process is the swimsuit, a minimalist garment that unmasks the social identity of the wearer laying bare the body to fend for itself in very public spaces.

Kellerman was the starting point for this study and, in an early concept map (included in Appendix 1), was centralised to represent a type of individual who connects with the collective, operating as a transmitter and receiver of ideas and ideals. She was one of the first celebrity bodies of the 20th

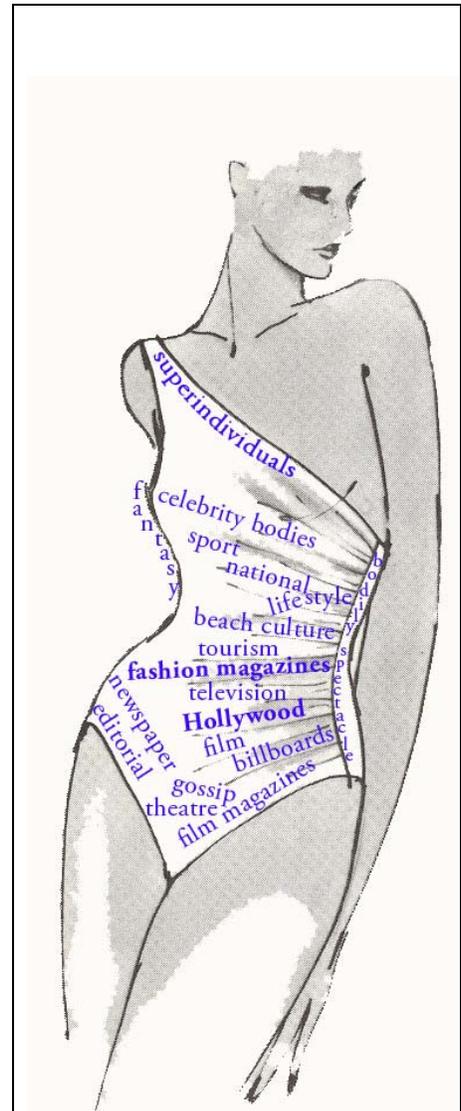


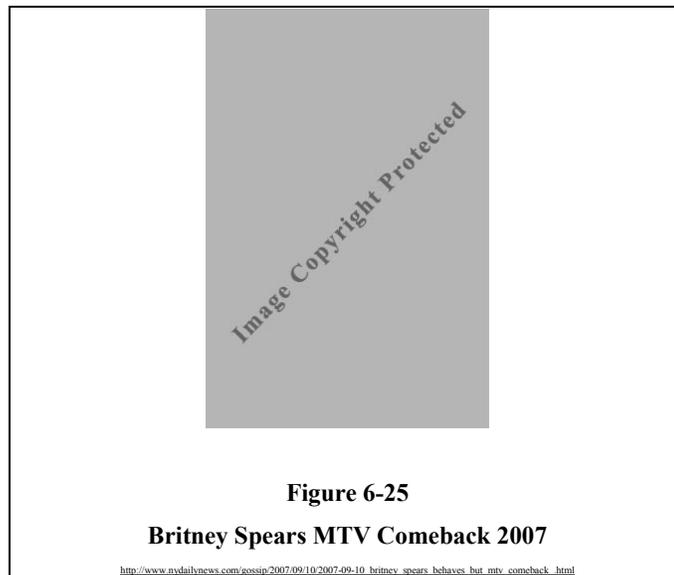
Figure 6-24
Maillot stitched up

century; a mantle claimed through her ability to promote both herself and the participation sites she was involved with, where bodily spectacle was of central importance. Sport was a launching pad for a performative career predicated on a body that had been fine-tuned to perfection. Kellerman's individualism enabled her to move seamlessly from site to site, inventing and reinventing herself, pooling her resources in a continuing quest for self-development. In archival and biographical material about Kellerman, there is regular mention of her Australian-ness and how this was used as a promotional tool. Associations with her country of origin as the Coo-ee girl and Australian mermaid allowed her to negotiate and chart new territory for performers in the 'Old Country', where a rigid class system and old-fashioned prudery limited the type of local participants who performed on the vaudeville and music hall circuit. As an outsider, an exotic 'Other' whose perceived national lifestyle and identity were stitched to the sporty outdoors, she was able to experiment and develop performances that would, in a short period, be accepted as mainstream. Essential to her success were the innumerable articles and images produced by newspapers, magazine editorial, promotional posters plastered around urban locales as well as her significant reinventions as a silent movie actress, courtesy of a newly invented Hollywood. The swimsuit clothed her in a layer of fantasy that, when captured by these exciting new mediums, enchanted spectators who, as wearers, were eager to adopt it these now-visible magical qualities.

Over the next 90 years, a number of unique and inventive individuals and swimsuit designers would contribute to popularising the swimsuit, at times mediated through their national identities or associations with a lifestyle or sport. The swimsuit's acceptance in the public arena has been patterned by body types from the genetic

pools that are deemed alluring and/or elite. A word that has persistent reverberations in relation to the public body is 'fat'. Kellerman articulated a fundamental belief about physical beauty in the modern world where:

“Fat” is a short and ugly word. But “stoutness,” “plumpness” “fleshiness,” “obesity”, “embonpoint” are only soft-pedal euphemisms. It is fat just the same, and just as clumsy, as unhealthy, as ugly and awkward when spelled with ten letters as with three. (Kellerman 1918: 24)



Over the next few pages she continues to condemn those women who fail to discipline their bodies as well as the men who encourage women to be lazy and overweight. Glancing over the maillot images, it is hard to imagine an unfit or soft body replacing Lisa Fonssagrives’ supple gymnast’s body or a big-busted Victorian matron wearing Rudi Gernreich’s monokini. More recently, Britney Spears (Figure 6-25) was

lamponed by the press for baring her less than toned body in a bikini at her MTV comeback concert in 2007. Comments from viewers revealed that it was not her wearing the bikini that was a problem, it was that 'she isn't fit enough to be wearing (or not wearing) what she is' (Noveck 2007), suggesting that social acceptance will follow if the body is of a high enough standard. Britney is by no means fat, and the debate sparked by the film clip has centred on body image and the unforgiving nature of swimsuits. Criticism of Spears or any other celebrity body, demonstrates how important the body is in building a career in sport and entertainment. Discussing 'the beauty of consumption', Umberto Eco explains: 'The mass media is totally democratic' offering contrasting models of beauty from svelte to voluptuous (Eco and McEwan 2005: 425); however, there is no room for flaws, whatever the type. Britney has fallen foul of the system by daring to ignore the strict guidelines, paying the price with innumerable articles and blogs cruelly criticising her demise from sexy to loser. Spears is no ordinary individual and it is probable that she will bounce back, reinventing herself through body shaping, naturally or medically, or perhaps a career change to add a novel lustre to future comebacks.

Superindividuals have a number of characteristics in common, including the ability to create economic value from their physical beauty and their performative abilities. Elle MacPherson is a prime example of a 'celebrity body' who has created a business empire extending beyond her career as a swimsuit and fashion model. Sporting individuals have recently caught up. For example, Ian Thorpe making the transition to underwear and jewellery designer. Many of the products they produce or endorse intimately relate to the body or contribute to its preservation or enhancement. It is not about couture fashion, but about body fashioning, as articulated in the Venn diagram.

How fashion, entertainment, and sport have become entwined in the last 100 years to produce deviations that trickle through the fashion system has been explored in this study and could potentially shape future research directions.

7 The Finished Garment

7.1 Australian fashion?

This study has explored the role of participants, the individuals, and collectives that have influenced the design and stylistic evolution of the swimsuit. An initial motivation for undertaking the research was to underscore the role of designers in the fashion process and to discover how a garment develops its fashionable edge. Another motivation was to discover how Australia fits into the fashion system and to describe the pattern of relationships between the two.

Australia's early history as a penal colony with a limited textile and manufacturing base that relied on textile and clothing imports has led many commentators to question design originality and garment quality in Australia. Georgina Safe, in a 2008 review of a book *Fashion Speak*, describes it as: 'the most comprehensive and authoritative tome about the industry to come out of this country in a long time', in part because the author, David Meagher, approaches the industry as: 'a serious business and looks at corporate trends as well as aesthetic ones'. Safe discusses the 'Fashion-speak' that has been part of Australian fashion journalism in the past. In 1998, Australian *Vogue* editor Marion Hume criticised local designer's copycat tendencies through show-and-tell images. Comparing designs by Australian label Charlie Brown to international designs by Anna Sui, Marni, and Jil Sander revealed the garments were virtually indistinguishable from each other. Safe suggests that, unlike Hume's damning assessment, many 'critics tend to cloak their criticism behind

euphemisms such as “interesting” or “ambitious” for fear of appearing too negative about a cultural industry that is still comparatively youthful’(Safe 2008). Either way, it builds a picture of a nation that lacks design originality or cultural sophistication.

Australia and fashion do not have immediate or obvious connections; nor did the swimsuit and fashion in its early stages of development. Establishing these relationships emerged through research into an individual who was neither a fashion designer nor a fashionista. What made Kellerman a compelling starting point was the global recognition that she received for popularising the one-piece swimsuit, as well as her innovations as a performer and writer of self-improvement books on fitness and well-being in the early 1900s. As a prototypical Hollywood star, she prefigured the celebrity culture focused on the body that has predominated since then. There is no question that Australia has –and is – producing individual fashion designers capable of competing in global markets; however, Kellerman led to a core question of how Australia may have influenced and shaped the stylistic direction of fashion in a broader context. In terms of a garment, it was never going to be a tailored suit or a couture evening gown, as Australia does not historically have the technicians or a manufacturing base to produce garments that require specialised skills and machinery. The swimsuit is a garment with functional foundation blocks, a modern garment that started its life in knitting mills that primarily produced underwear and hosiery. It was much more likely to be worn in tropical and sub-tropical geographic regions as opposed to cosmopolitan centres; therefore it is arguably a garment which may be open to influences from Australia and other countries not traditionally associated with fashion. It suggests a level ‘playing field’ when comparing contributions.

When explored through participants like Kellerman, the study illustrates there are more ways to connect to fashion than via couturiers, luxury fashion garments, and the fashion hubs in Europe. What became clear when developing concept maps was the fluidity of fashion as a result of geographic and cultural influences, the convergence and cross-pollination between individuals and collectives globally, and how this has been communicated through film, publishing, broadcasting, and, more recently, the internet, in turn defining, interpreting, and influencing what is fashionable. Seeing how it all fits together using collages and patterns marked out with terms and images describing the participants who have been involved in shaping the swimsuit through the design process or as muses resulted in a pattern of complex and dynamic interactivity between producers, spectators and commentators who are, in addition, all wearers. Collectively, the design patterns included in this study illustrate the swimsuit's evolutionary path; how it was designed, worn, promoted, and how it gained its fashion credentials.

'Trickle-up', or '-down', 'bubble-up', or '-across' can define the relationship between haute couture and street style and, the influence on fashion by cultural groups who express their identity through specific forms of clothing. However, the swimsuit transcends these defined boundaries filtering into the fashion system through sport and beach culture, swimsuits modelled for men's magazines, and in beauty pageants thus situating its position as more popular than high culture. Fashion models, celebrities, elite athletes, and couturiers aspire to contribute to the design process through the production of collaborative ranges with established swimwear brands and individualised labels branded with their names. The swimsuit energises the fashion system, signposting the way forward in the 21st century as a modern garment that does

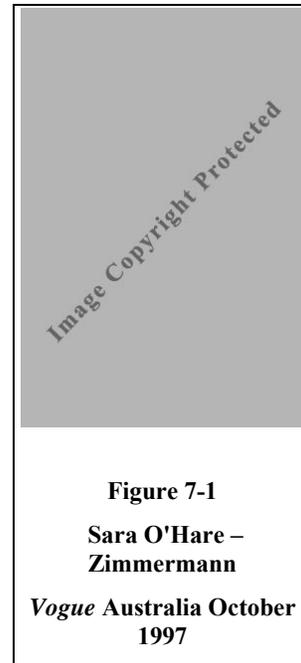
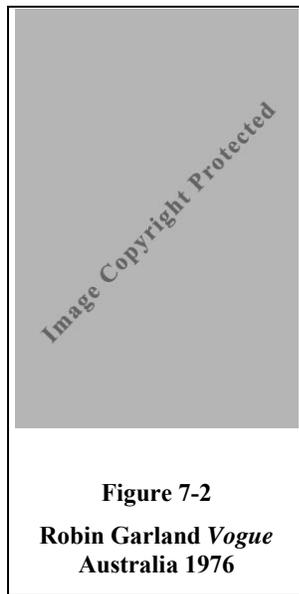
not fit into the fashion - identity paradigm, where wearers can build a variety of social surfaces with which to meet the world. The body is as much undressed as dressed, best suited to the performative body genetically well-designed, toned, and fit. Stripped to the bare essentials, gender, cultural, and sexual layers are not peeled away, rather heightened by the lack of clothing concealing the wearer. The swimsuit and its wearers examined in this thesis test the limits of body, dress and national identity as vehicles for global recognition.

7.2 Australian Style

One feels that Australia has a character of its own that reflects in the look of its women.' a French designer observed during a visit to Australia in the twenties. 'Women wear clothes well, but they wear less clothes even better. They might eventually develop a fashion look that is entirely their own. (Martyn 1976: 226)

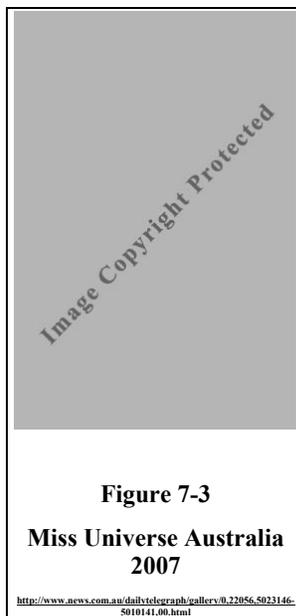
Fashion commentator Norma Martyn described the Australian look as 'fashioned by geography' (Martyn 1976: 11), influenced by sea, sand, and sun. Her research findings support the concept that there is an Australian style that is influenced by its geographic location, raising the question: What is the essence of this 'style'? Reflecting on the Australian fashion landscape, Martyn comments: 'In the seventies Australia caught up with the world and the world caught up with Australia' (Martyn 1976: 219). During this decade, casual fashion, sports-related clothing, and the swimsuit edged their way onto the radar of fashion designers around the world, garments that were already a part of the Australian woman's wardrobe. Designers Brian Rochford and Robin Garland were producing cutting-edge swimsuits in lightweight Lycra fabrics, daringly brief and suited to a country where Christmas is celebrated in high summer. Martyn's history of Australian women and their fashions

from the early settler days to the fashions of the 1970s ends the journey with Figure 7-1, an anonymous model, face cropped from the photograph. The eye is drawn to an expansive, cloudy sky and desert-like sand stretching behind the model in her brief Robin Garland bikini. It would seem that, in Australia, less is more.



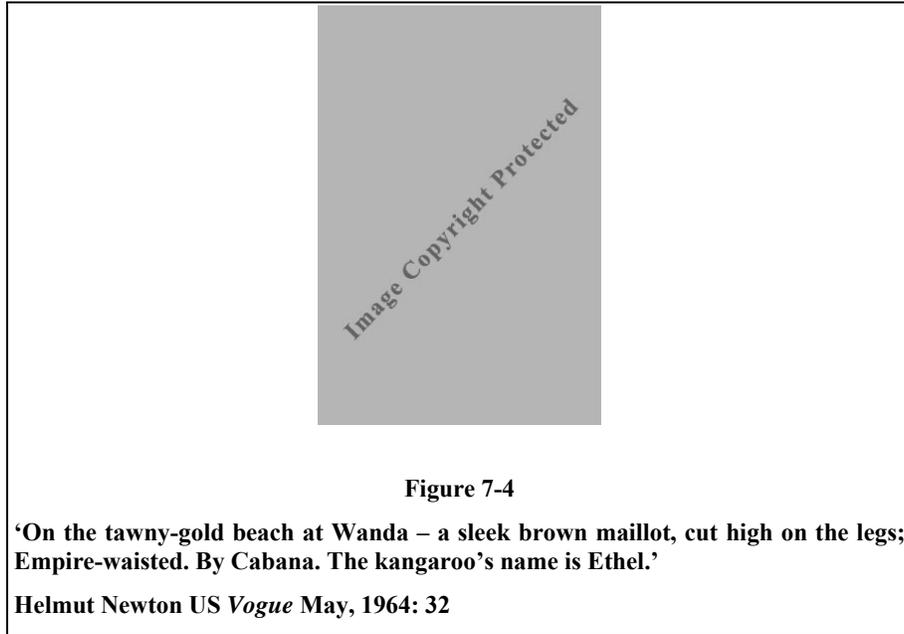
Twenty years later, in her book, *Parade: The story of fashion in Australia*, Alexandra Joel outlines Australia's success in casual clothing, specifically swimwear and surfwear. According to Joel: 'what renders a style Australian is often not so much the garment itself as where and how it is worn' (Joel 1998: xiii). Casual clothing, initially designed for leisure activities, has moved to more formal settings through the national pastime: enjoying the great outdoors everywhere. Figure 7-2 is the final image in Joel's book with the caption: 'Australians dress in a way that reflects their country – a

bright, beautiful land with a relaxed lifestyle' (Joel 1998: 288). Martyn and Joel reinforce the importance of the swimsuit to Australians and Australian fashion, in particular through images like these. Both create a sense of space with, neither model engaging with the viewer; the body is centre stage. Early adoption of the swimsuit and an ongoing enthusiasm for the garment has led to Sydney being imagined as a bronzed beach babe in a Zimmermann bikini and, Kimberley Busteed, Miss Universe Australia 2007, wearing a swimsuit and lifesaving cap for the national costume section of the pageant. As a result, links are forged between the swimsuit, fashion, and Australia through an active glamour that is uniquely Australian, audacious, and, at times, entertaining.



Helmut Newton's 1964 photographs for American *Vogue* see Australia imaged onto a global landscape through its exotic beach locations. According to Muffie Sproat, in a feature about iconic *Vogue* photographers who chose Australian beaches to showcase their work, it was not so much the location that inspired them but 'a society with real

freedom and enviable quality of life'. The result is a fusion of fashion and a laid-back lifestyle which 'did not equal a lack of sophistication' (Sproat 2007).



Newton's humorous and witty method of ensuring the viewer knows the beach's location in Figure 7-4, describes an Australia where the swimsuit is at home and not taken too seriously. Analysing the image further, there is an incongruity in the caption: 'The Special Look of American Sport Clothes', when the subject is the swimsuit, the location is the Australian beach. The swimsuit is innovatively cut and the model is groomed, sleek, and sophisticated, imperiously soaking up the sun with her exotic pet leashed and passive beside her. There is, however, a sense that the beach is one environment that may not be totally conquered or colonised as a

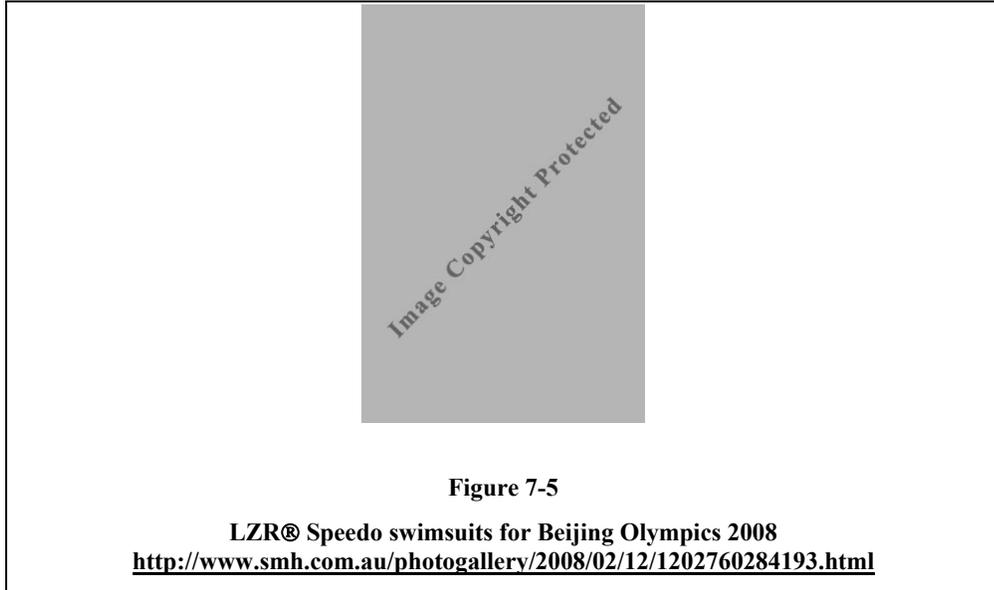
convenient backdrop for other nation's fashion swimsuits, as an Australian flavour may filter through with or without a kangaroo.

7.3 Teaming Fashion and Sport

The trend in the noughties is for high-end fashion designers to collaborate with major sportswear brands, with Rei Kawakubo producing a swimwear range for Speedo, Stella McCartney and Yohji Yamamoto designing collections for Adidas, and Alexander McQueen designing shoes for Puma. The fusion of couture and sport is the marriage of high-profile fashion designers and major sportswear brands developing products that earn the parent brand 'kudos' and, for the designer, exposure to a wider market. According to brand adviser Rob Mitchell, this doesn't necessarily translate into profits with 'returns ill-defined' (Mitchell 2005). Another angle sportswear brands take to entice wearers to purchase their products is through associations with elite athletes. Adidas launched the *Impossible is Nothing* campaign in 2007, profiling international sports stars and everyday athletes sharing the stories of defining moments in their lives. Included is Ian Thorpe's account of how his 'glittering career' was nearly foiled by an adenoid problem that caused a chlorine allergy. The message from Adidas is that we all have potential and, with determination, even seemingly impossible goals can be achieved (*Impossible is Nothing for Ian Thorpe* 2007). Sport and sports stars are the ever strengthening threads in this fashion pattern, where the garment allows the individual to actively engage in self-development and body sculpting. The clothes the average sportsperson now wears are increasingly designed for performance and fit to which the leading designers add a fashion infusion. It underpins the idea that all participants can be aspirational, believing that they too can achieve a finely-tuned body and sporting prowess.

As the average swimming athlete wears versions of garments worn by the elite athlete, the elite athlete test-drives space age swimsuits designed in collaboration with international research institutes, including American space agency NASA and the Australian Institute of Sport. On February 12, 2008, Speedo launched an Olympic swimsuit called the SPEEDO LZR RACER®. The worldwide launch took place in Sydney with Australia's leading swimmers modelling the suit, reinforcing the elevated position Australia has in competitive swimming. It was followed over the next 24 hours with similar launches in London, New York, and Tokyo. Australia has historically led the way in performance sportswear, developing swimsuits that shave seconds off times, initially for local swimmers and now globally for elite swimmers of all nations. The latest design is described as 'the world's first fully bonded, ultrasonically welded swimsuit' (*Speedo Launches 'Space Age' Swimsuit in Worldwide First* 2008) and is touted to have 10 percent less drag than Speedo's Fastskin FS11, which was launched 2004. The suit is so tight it has been likened to a corset and, in a report on the Channel Nine News on the day of the launch, Grant Hackett joked that the girls might want to wear them out of the pool to suck in their bodies and knock a few centimetres off under that special party dress. The design has panels that stabilise the abdominal core to minimise fatigue during a race and gives the swimmer a better body position in the water. In Figure 7-5, the Australian swim team stand in a row android-like and expressionless, displaying their futuristic swimsuits. They are paving the way for competitive swimmers where the body and swimsuit are one. The LZR Racer is already proving its worth: Perth swimmer Eamon

Sullivan unleashed the fastest 50m Freestyle in history, breaking Alex Popov's world record of seven years ago, and, Zimbabwean swimmer Kirsty Coventry broke the 200m Backstroke world record in the new Speedo suit (Jeffrey 2008).



Sport and its participants continue to influence the types of products that sportswear brands develop, as the obsession with high performance bodies and textiles capture the attention of fashion designers and wearers globally.

The style of swimsuit worn by the current crop of Olympic swimmers illustrates how fashion changes yet stays the same. Kellerman wore a similarly streamlined unitard style of swimsuit in the early 1900s for competitive swimming events. It was not, however, heavily constructed and panelled to create a corset-like effect. Produced in a woollen knit, it would have had none of the benefits of the contemporary LZR Speedo swimsuit, resulting in water drag that most modern swimmers would have difficulty imagining. Part of Kellerman's fitness philosophy was to develop a strong abdominal core so the corsets women wore at that time could be discarded. In 2008, the underlying principle of the corset has re-emerged to enhance performance and brings swimsuit design full circle.



7.4 Patterning Future Research

Locating future research directions emerges from patternmaking and the exploration of fashion through links with sport, entertainment, economic innovation, and swimsuit media representations resulting in an inter-disciplinary network that describes the process of fashion in relation to other cultural domains. Australia's exclusion from swimsuit and fashion histories triggered analysis of national contributions to fashion and, raises the questions: How do designers negotiate and establish a competitive position in a global market where there are a plethora of brands and labels? Are affiliations with a nation a useful marketing tool for fashion designers and

manufacturers? Reflecting on the role of individuals included in this study reveals contributors other than fashion designers to the design process and, research into the significance of celebrity entrepreneurs' contributions to fashion innovation could be valuable.

In conclusion figure 7-7 revisits three major patterns developed that illustrate the approach taken to gathering and analysing material. A key to the fashion model is the body, which is always centre stage and, using patterns, is a visual marker of the intimate and co-dependent relationship between clothing and the body. Extracting the pattern pieces from the fashion model working pattern and detailing who the participants and participation sites are that have shaped the swimsuit, builds a picture of the diversity of influences. Although the focus has been Australia, the inclusion of nations that have contributed to the evolution of the swimsuit illustrates how common threads are woven together to contribute to the finished global garment. The final patterns –'Maillot stitched up' and 'Gathering the swimsuit into global fashion' – synthesise the swimsuit's stylistic development, while viewing the historical journey creates a community of meaning celebrating the inventiveness, innovation, and bare-faced ambition of participants, beautiful bodies, and a garment that is a second skin.

8 Appendices

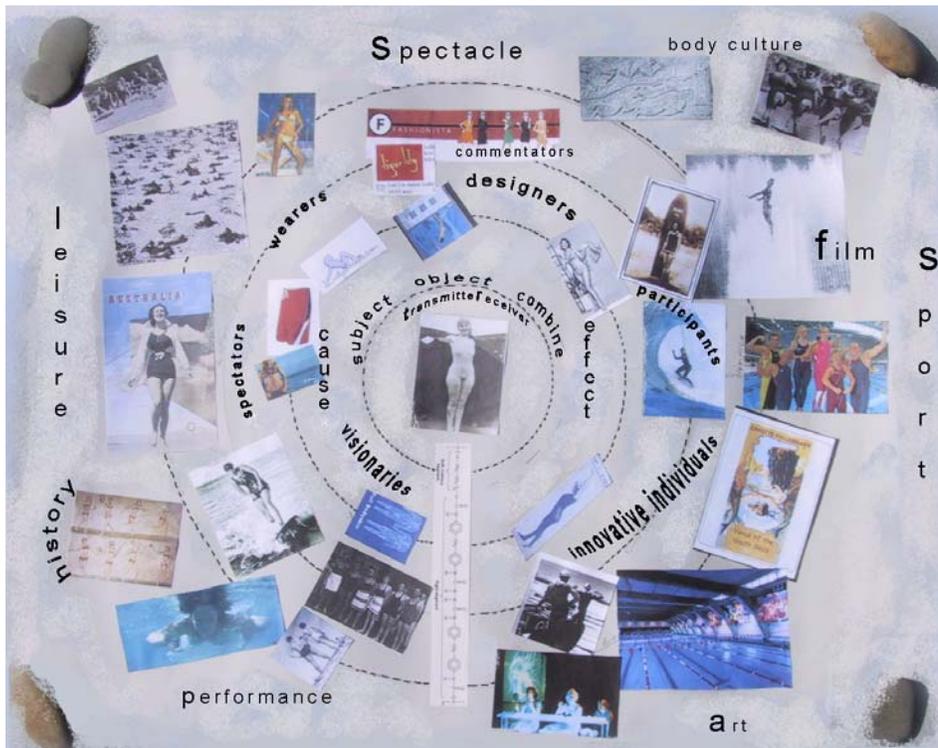
8.1 Appendix 1

Framework for the Topic

Initial research into costume history sources confirmed that Annette Kellerman is attributed with creating the one-piece bathing suit (Batterberry and Batterberry 1977; Lencek and Bosker 1989; Glynn 1978); however, information about the history of the swimsuit is scant and there is little reference to Kellerman's country of origin, Australia, or its contribution. Internet sources provided more detailed information about Kellerman's achievements and key swimsuit developments, skirting an inclusion of Australia in this process.

To develop a framework and topic focus, a number of images of historical and contemporary Australian swimwear were collected. Additional images related to how swimwear manifests culturally were gathered and placed in categories. These included: sport; leisure; film; body culture; performance; photography; and art. As the creator of the one-piece bathing suit Kellerman was placed centrally and images randomly scattered around her to create a visual image of the variables and their influence on each other. Kellerman was a swimmer, diver, vaudeville performer, and actress, not a fashion designer, and understanding how her bathing suit creation filters into the fashion system and the cultural realm needed clarification. A model was developed in the form of concentric circles retaining Kellerman as the central sphere. She represents both the individual and the social group or collective: the site of the bathing suit's origins and adoption by the global community. From this core the

swimsuit flows into the fashion system where designers, manufacturers, and inventive individuals refine, modify, and produce evolving forms of the original design concept, the one-piece bathing suit. How we, as participants, then relate to these products is expressed as wearers, spectators, and commentators and is evidenced in the cultural realms of leisure, sport, body culture, and spectacle.



The outer sphere includes references to: Kellerman's early silent movies; the 1952 Esther Williams movie, *The Million Dollar Mermaid* about Kellerman's life; the Australian Olympic team in Speedo swimsuits; Boy Charlton, one of Australia's earliest Olympic swimmers with a group of competitive swimmers; photographs of beach life by Max and Rex Dupain; Miss Australia/Universe 2004, Jennifer Hawkins; Australian surfer, Kieren Perrow; and the Cook and Phillip Aquatic Centre in Sydney

with murals depicting the life of Annette Kellerman painted by Wendy Sharpe. These diverse images clearly indicate that Australia's influence on the evolution of the swimsuit merited investigation and the challenge was then to piece together the ideas and concepts from all the spheres to shape the research direction.

8.2 Appendix 2

An image of Kellerman in the one-piece bathing suit was the starting point for the participants' pattern piece on the left side of the body stocking. It was placed in a central position on the torso section inside a circle drawn as a marker for the bust circumference and, is used as a guide when placing stylelines on the pattern. Maintaining the focus on Kellerman is recognition of the individual and participant contribution. The images that are placed around her represent and contextualise the historical period in which she lived and show how it has evolved over the last 100 years.

Body stocking – left side: upper part of torso

Participants: wearers and spectators

- An image depicting bathing machines and beach life in 1880. The bathing machines are spindly, mobile, and occupy the liminal space between land and sea. The folk on the beach are dressed for what would seem appropriate for city promenading as opposed to a day at the beach. They are disconnected from the environment and constrained from fully engaging.
- An image of Fanny Durack, Mina Wylie, and Jenny Fletcher, swimmers and winners at the Stockholm Olympics in 1912. The Olympians are wearing similar costumes to Kellerman; however, it was within the confine of sporting activities. Kellerman wore this garment in more public arenas such as at the beach and in vaudeville shows and was effectively a trigger for the pursuit of appropriate beach and leisure garments. She was a transmitter.

- An image of women at an Australian Beach circa 1927-29. Their swimwear is restrained and the styling similar to that worn by Kellerman 20 years earlier, depicting the lack of synchronicity between a design idea and acceptance by all participants.

Producers: Designers and Manufacturers

- The Speedo Fastskin swimsuit is a ‘state of the art’ design that streamlines the body and reduces water drag. It is a style that has been adopted by a number of Olympians worldwide and its precursor, the Aquablade, may have contributed to Irish woman Michelle Smith winning gold at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. It was designed in 2002 and the styling is remarkable similar to Kellerman’s original one-piece bathing suit – the cyclic nature of design.
- A torso mannequin with a bikini defines the body parameters that are the focus of swimwear design whether it is a bikini or one-piece.
- An image of a Paula Stafford bikini. Stafford is attributed with designing the first bikinis in Australia in the early 1940s, which is at the same time as Louis Reàrd, a French engineer, was recognised as the inventor of the bikini in France. Articles found in local Australian newspapers and magazines in the 1950s accredit Stafford with fine tuning the bikini, stating that this design reached its full potential in Surfers Paradise in Queensland.
- A Tigerlily swimsuit. The million-dollar bikini is encrusted with precious gems and is worn by celebrity model Kirsty Hinze. Jodhi Meares started the label in 2001-2 and has received considerable media interest due to her high-profile marriage to Jamie Packer and her own status as a fashion model. Celebrity and glamour are key elements of this label.

- Billabong is a surfwear label that started on a dining room table in Burleigh Heads on the Gold Coast in 1973 by a keen surfer and his wife. It was primarily created to produce garments to cater for local surfers. The company developed a reputation for an innovative and quality surfwear ‘made by surfers for surfers’ (*History of Billabong* n.d.). Billabong has expanded its market to include swimwear and skatewear and is representative of an Australian contribution to beachwear. Their designs and those of other surfwear companies increasingly leaks into the urban fashion market and are a site for exploring how fashion trends are transmitted locally and globally.
- Included is an innovative design and manufacturing company, Zimmermann. This label has a distinctive handwriting and is globally renowned for its swimwear. It has proved popular on the Victoria’s Secret website. In this image the print on the bikini is taken from the Florence Broadhurst collection. Broadhurst was a popular printmaker in the 1960-’70s in Sydney and created bold and vibrant wallpaper designs. It extends the terrain by using textile designs that were originally intended for interiors for fashionable swimwear. Zimmermann designs have received extensive editorial in Australian fashion magazines and international *Vogue*, *Elle* and *American W*.

Commentators:

- *Fashionista* is a SBS program that explores fashion ‘in the streets and in salons, in wardrobes and museums’ (*Fashionista* 2002). It is representative of a media commentator on fashion. Lee Li Chin has interviewed a number of swimwear designers, including Jodhi Packer.
- The cover of *On Human Finery*, a fashion theory and history book written by Quentin Bell, has a reproduction of two of only four colour plates

depicting outdoor girls of two periods, 1759 and 1975. Although the 1970s girl is wearing a bikini, there is little mention of swimwear in the text. To date, fashion theorists commentary on swimwear has been minimal. There is either a cursory mention of its association with sport and leisure activities, revealing and concealing of the body, or historical reference to changing social mores in the 20th century.

- An advertisement from *Vogue* 1957 for Myer swimwear depicts the approach to advertising swimwear in this period. In this image the graphic figure has been abstracted and the lower limbs flow into one reminiscent of a mermaid's tail. Swimwear advertising and editorial portrayed the glamorous and fashionable elements of swimwear.
- In 1961 Australian *Woman's Day* offered their readers a paper dressmaking pattern for a glamorous Hollywood swimsuit. It was an innovative concept and created by Gloria Mortimer-Dunn, the designer for Speedo swimwear. It was another progression, an option for the home dressmaker to create their own swimwear. The enclosed pattern was a stack grade comprising a number of sizes that the dressmaker could choose from and trace off accordingly. Mortimer-Dunn was the first to introduce this concept and it wasn't until a decade later that international pattern companies would include this innovation in their products.

Body Stocking – right side: upper torso

Participation Sites:

- In the top right shoulder area is an Australian beach photo from 1929. It is similarly positioned to the bathing machine beach photo on the participant side and is approximately 50 years later. It illustrates the evolution of beach life.
- Kellerman is placed in the circle for the bust circumference and is again the focus. The image is a still from the 1916 silent movie *Daughter of the Gods*. Kellerman was involved in early cinema in Hollywood and created innovative films that incorporated elaborate underwater sequences in large water tanks. The movies were magical fantasies and she was the mythical mermaid transmitting ideals of physical beauty and glamour.
- A movie still of Esther Williams from the *Original Mermaid*, the Hollywood version of Kellerman's life, conjoins the image of Kellerman. Williams was originally a competitive swimmer who made a number of Busby Berkeley water extravaganzas, building on Kellerman's water ballets of the early 1900s with the addition of Technicolour, sophisticated film techniques and costumes in the 1950s.
- The image below them is contemporary Australian synchronised swimmers. Together the three images reveal the evolution from vaudeville to Hollywood to synchronised swimming, an exacting and choreographed Olympic sport.
- The female form with gridlines conveys the body as a concrete and finite parameter that provides a canvas for the garment.
- The three women in this image represent three body types: a plump older woman; a full figured young woman; and a slim athletic woman. The swimsuit

heightens body issues and the focus leaves little to the imagination. Conflicts between the ideal and reality.

- An image from an article in *Marie Claire* describes how the mayor (a man) in an Italian beach town banned women who were too fat, measuring potential female beach participants. Body image controlled at a participation site.
- An image of 1950s Sun Girl contestants on the Gold Coast, arranged on a large table in conjunction with an image of Jennifer Hawkins, Miss Australia and Universe 2004, describes the local/micro and global/macro levels of beauty pageants.
- In the 20th century, Australia produced two ‘bodies’ or ideals for other women to aspire to and men to admire: Kellerman, the ‘perfect woman’ in 1908; and Elle MacPherson who was dubbed ‘the body’ by Time Magazine in 1986. Bodies are central to an alternative social hierarchical structure that profit from being showcased in swimsuits at the beach, through sport, in films, and beauty pageants. These images of MacPherson on the cover of *GQ* and *Sports Illustrated* reflect the values of sex, sport, and swimsuits.
- Speedo was in the vanguard of high-performance swimsuit development. The swimsuits flanking the leg of the body stocking pattern show the evolution of both styles and prints developed for the Olympics from 1964 to 1980. ‘Athletes, like soldiers, have an individual character but it is unusual to conceive of them operating independently of national origin and their successes are inextricable linked to nation pride and progress’ (Crombie and National Gallery of Victoria 2004: 76).
- The male bodies have externalised and centralised between the two halves of the body stocking. At the neck is a male in a wool suit in 1906. Central is a

cluster of men in a Speedo advertisement from 1971 and, at knee level, men in Speedo wool suits from 1935-36. It recognises the significance of the men's swimsuit to the evolution of women's swimwear and includes the males as participant voyeurs who, when the body stocking is stitched together, are thrown into the 'mix'.

8.3 Appendix 3

Australian Swimsuit Manufacturers 1912 -1963: *The Draper of Australasia*

Year	Company	Product
1912	Metropolitan Knitting & Hosiery Co, Sydney	Russian Bathing Costume
1913		Sargent brand
1930		Penguin brand
1930		Sunkist brand
1935		swim-easy bathing suits
1914	Falk & Co	Unshrinkable bathing suits
1916	Mark Foy's	one-piece and Canadian two-piece costumes
1922	Weames Ltd, Sydney	Pure Wool Beach Patrol Costumes
1923	Daisy Hygienic Wear	Daisy bathers for the whole family
1928	T.R.Hill Ltd	Fashion bathers
1929	D.W.Murray, York Street, Sydney	Challenge Racer
1930	Australian Knitting Mills, Richmond Victoria	Golden Fleece, Kookaburra, Kling-tite
1930	Marcellan & Co Swimwear sold by Foy & Gibson	
1930	Patons & Baldwin, Melbourne	Crocus Knitting wool
1930	Cropley Knitting Mills	Fashion bathers
1930	Thomas & Ross Ltd, Forveaux St, Sydney	Meritas
1930	Sargood Gardiner Ltd Sydney	Top Dog
1931	Isherwood & Bartleet Pty Ltd, Melbourne	Dolphin
1931	W.Brash MacArthur Ltd Sydney	United bathing suits
1931	Paterson Laing Bruce, Sydney	Black Lance
1931	Robert Reid & Co. Ltd	Women and Children's bathers
1931	Botany Knitting Mills, Melbourne	Seagull & Fle-o-knit bathing costumes
1932	Lincoln Mills	Two ply super wool, family bathers
1933	Manchester Mills, Melbourne	Manmilla Seasuits

1934	I.R.Morley & Co. Australian subsidiary for English brand	Morley
1934	Conqueror Knitting Mills	Fashion bathers
1935	Eagley Mills Collingwood Victoria	Eagley swimsuits
1939	Union Knitting Mills Pty Ltd, Melbourne	This'le-Fit swimsuits
1939	Stirling Henry Ltd, Camperdown NSW	Elastic satin two-piece 'Ripley' bathing suits
1946	Turner Parachute Co Sydney	Scamp swimsuits
1946	Sphinx Apparel P/L Sydney	fashion bathers
1947	Pacific Chenille Craft Pty Ltd Sydney	Pacific Super-tex- Chenille
1956	Watersun Melbourne	Watersun
1958	R. W.H. Symington & Co Pty Ltd	Liberty, Sea Urchin swimsuits
1958	Kay Hilvert Pty Ltd Marrickville	Kay Hilvert
1960	Heller & Co Pty Ltd, Sydney	Helco
1961	Supertex	Supertex terry towelling two-piece swimsuits
1961	Marina Couture, Melbourne	Marina Couture - lux swimwear
1963	Maglia, Melbourne	Maglia

8.4 Appendix 4

The Little Mermaid Synopsis

Andersen's fairy tale of the *Little Mermaid* begins in the land of the sea people who live far out in the depths of the ocean where a sea king, a widower, lives with his six daughters and his mother who acts as guardian to the young mermaids. The six sisters create their own underwater gardens with sea flowers and treasures they have found on sunken ships. The youngest princess chose only flowers coloured like the sun and a statue of a beautiful young boy for her garden design and, combined with the stories about the human world told to her by her grandmother, she longed for the time when she would turn 15 and be allowed to swim to the surface to see the forest and cities of these land folk for herself. Time passed and on her fifteenth birthday she 'rose as light and clear as a bubble up through the water' to gaze upon the surface of the ocean, drenched in the warm colours of the setting sun and to the sound of boisterous sailors singing on a large ship where there was a party in progress for the young and handsome prince. She watches them, mesmerised by their frivolity and gaiety, unaware that the storm brewing was anything more than additional fun for all. The ship is destroyed and the prince is thrown into the waves, where the little mermaid saves him from sure death, depositing him safely on land before returning to her underwater world to pine for both the handsome prince and the human world. Her grandmother compounds her unhappiness by explaining that, unlike humans who have an immortal soul, merfolk live for 300 years, only to dissolve into the sea foam as though they never existed. She continues that the only way to gain an eternal soul is through the faithful love of a human being.

The *Little Mermaid* determines to leave her underwater paradise and fish tail behind and seeks out a sea witch to transform her to human form. There is, of course, a costly price to pay: her tail would be replaced by beautiful legs and, the *Sea Witch* warns, that it would be ‘as though sharp swords are slicing through you’. Further, she demands of her to relinquish her voice, to which the Little Mermaid exclaims, ‘what shall I have left?’, and the Sea Witch’s replies, ‘Your beautiful figure, your graceful poise and your expressive eyes’. The deal is struck and her tongue is cut out. The Little Mermaid faints and floats to the surface and is washed up near the palace. She is discovered by the prince with her new and painful legs and taken to the palace, where they dress her in ‘costly garments of silk and muslin’. Although mute, she enchants everyone with her graceful dancing, especially the prince who keeps her at his side as a constant companion, making boy’s clothing for her so she can go horse riding with him. Alas, his love for her is that of an adult for a child, and when the time comes for him to take a bride, he travels to a neighbouring kingdom to seek a princess bride.

The Little Mermaid’s chances of an immortal soul fade and she knows that her sacrifice has been in vain; that she would be claimed by the sea and her body would dissolve into foam. Her sisters attempt to save her, offering their beautiful long hair to the sea witch in exchange for her life. Again the Sea Witch’s bargain is cruel and tortuous: the Little Mermaid would have to kill the prince with a magic knife and have his blood splash on her feet for her legs to morph once again into a fish tail. The Little Mermaid loves the prince and, as there is now no chance of an immortal soul, sees no point in killing him, choosing instead to accept her fate, throwing herself into the sea. She does not die, however, her spirit rising to the Daughters of the Air who strive for

immortal souls through 300 years of good deeds. The Little Mermaid's suffering has been rewarded with the potential to 'create an immortal soul' for herself and she floats away on a rose-coloured cloud (Ash and Higton 1992).

8.5 Appendix 5

<p>The first two images on the 1920s pattern line describe the beach participant divide between the functional bathing suit of the seaside holidaymakers produced for the whole family in the form of Daisy bathers and the elegant swimsuit fashioned for promenading, captured in an ‘artist’s impression’ by the Parisian correspondent for <i>The Draper of Australasia</i>.</p>	
<p>Illustrations and colour plates are two of the earliest forms of communicating fashion ideas in journals and magazines and lead to the central image of the Jantzen ‘Diving Girl’, an iconic image associated with the modern girl zeitgeist, a concept communicated through mass media mediums including: film and fashion magazines; newspaper; and billboards. Jantzen swimsuits were mass produced at affordable prices with a market appeal generated by idealised images of a youthful, athletic woman. It was an alternative to the sophisticated French woman as the fashionable ideal.</p>	

The 'Diving Girl' describes an accessible ideal, unlike the next image of Hoyningen-Heuné's less attainable model wearing a Lanvin swimsuit which was published in French *Vogue* and targeted the sophisticated, urbane woman with a high disposable income. The 'Diving Girl' was a media tart, saturating all possible media sources to ensure a level of public awareness for the Jantzen swimsuit that extended beyond the exclusive beach set to eager beach participants everywhere. Fashion magazines represented a smaller market with a limited circulation.



From 1929, the Speedo brand in Australia developed a practical swimsuit, recommending it to the 'modern girl' in early advertisements. It targeted the athletic swimmer's need for freedom of movement 'and consequent maximum speed', while at the same time appealing to the sunbaker desirous of 'maximum body exposure to tonic sunshine'. These qualities marked Speedo's early contribution: creating a connection between fashion and sport; tapping into the desirability of fitness through swimming, and creating a reputation as a sports performance brand.



Collectively, the images and themes surrounding the swimsuit in the 1920s illustrate its transition to a universal styling, naturalized through editorial and advertisements. In the early 1900s, it was actresses and performers in vaudeville, musical theatre, and early silent movies who titillated spectators with tantalizing views of the body exposed in swimsuits, at times in dubious skits. The swimsuit had moved onto participation sites where everyone had the opportunity to reveal their bodies in open-air theatres at the beach and pool.

<p>The first image on the 1930s pattern line is the July 1932 British <i>Vogue</i> cover, which features a model wearing a streamlined swimsuit, swim cap suited to serious swimming, and sitting poised with a beach ball. Created by Edward Steichen, the first photographic fashion cover displays an edgy realism, with the model – an athletic modern woman – stripped to the bare essentials. Rather than depicting a beach belle in an elegant pose, it has been styled to position the swimsuit as a functional garment, subtly infusing it with fashionability by the association with <i>Vogue</i>, the ‘fashion bible’</p>	
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<p>In the same year, Dolores del Rio introduced the two-piece swimsuit in the movie <i>Flying Down to Rio</i> with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, splintering the swimsuit pattern and disseminating bodily ideals and new fashions in swimsuit design. Hollywood stars in swimsuits produced an effective and glamorous method of endorsing both the product and the movies they starred in.</p>	
<p>French designer Jacques Heim's two-piece ensembles are next on the pattern line. Heim was one of the first designers to embrace the two-piece and was known for his pareo and sarong styles, which have become staples in the resort wardrobe. His inclusion recognizes the role of the French fashion designer.</p>	
<p>The final image for the 1930s is a promotional poster for Australia featuring an exuberant model sporting a fashionable peephole swimsuit striding out with the wind in her hair, connecting the swimsuit to a sporty, outdoors lifestyle.</p>	

Bodily spectacle was the common thread for promoting the swimsuit, fashion brand, the star, film, or a country.

<p>Marking the start of a new decade for the swimsuit, is the Horst P. Horst cover for British <i>Vogue</i> in June 1940, which features Swedish gymnast and dancer turned model Lisa Fonssagrives. The cover celebrated the control of a disciplined body, fine-tuned to perfection. With the body fashioning the letters of <i>Vogue</i>, it uses a contemporary approach to fashion photography and sends a message to readers that the swimsuit was suited to an athletic and lithe wearer.</p>	
<p>The next image of Claire McCardell's innovative, draped wool jersey swimsuit extends the idea of the swimsuit fusing with a sleek body to produce a high-performance sports model. Fashion photographer Louise Dahl-Wolf's cropped image focuses on the part of the body that directly connects with the swimsuit, with glimpses of a background seascape made possible by the model's pose. Both these fashion images contrast with the theatrical Hollywood approach to the swimsuit as seen in promotional posters of pin-up stars like Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth. The intention of both this study and the Venn diagram is to establish the historical links between fashion and the swimsuit through sport and active glamour, not the artificial 'cheesecake' glamour of the movie studio.</p>	

<p>The central image on the '40s pattern line is a group of carefree models gambolling on the beach in two-piece swimsuits designed by Ben Turner for the Turner Parachute Company of Sydney. It is representative of an emerging Australian style that was youthful and body-baring, at home in beach environments, and an early example of an Australian two-piece swimsuit style.</p>	
<p>Micheline Bernardini wearing the iconic bikini designed by Louis Réard for its 1946 Paris launch is the next image on the timeline and marks an important mid-20th century swimsuit event. Modelled by a cabaret performer, it proved more a publicity stunt than a promotion of a new style.</p>	
<p>But, the bikini had the essential ingredient of any new fashion item: novelty. Fashion photographer Toni Frissell was the first to have an image of a bikini published in a fashion magazine, when <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> published it one year after its launch. Pictured left, fashion model, Dovima soaks up the sun in a bikini that would still be considered brief today.</p>	

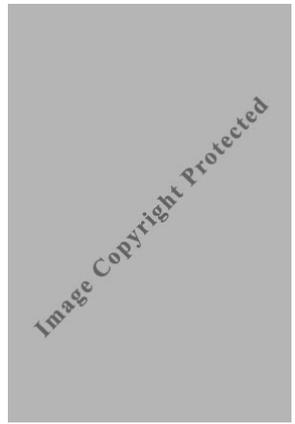
Reflecting on the decade, it was the fashion photographer's approach to recording the swimsuit that communicated ideas about the type of physically sleek participant suited to this garment, with the photographers focusing the lens on the body beneath.

<p>A promotional poster for the film <i>Million Dollar Mermaid</i> kicks off the 1950s pattern line by acknowledging a specific type of active glamour that was associated with Hollywood through the Busby Berkeley aquacade. Like Kellerman, Esther Williams used her swimming and diving skills to communicate an athletic bodily ideal to a global audience with sporty theatricality.</p>	
<p>In Australia in the same year, Paula Stafford was creating her version of the bikini, which is worn in this image with vitality and relaxed confidence, describing a bodily freedom that could be experienced on Australian beaches.</p>	
<p>Another Australian designer who was creating innovative swimsuits was David Waters for the Watersun label with a fun two-piece swimsuit in a striking geometric print. Stafford and Waters did not have the advantage of a large manufacturing base or access to the variety of textiles swimsuit companies in the United States had, their businesses relied on creating designs that targeted less inhibited beach participants who wanted practical glamour in a less stitched-up swimsuit, often produced in unlikely textiles such as tea towels and tablecloths. By the early 1960s, Stafford and Waters were exporting their swimsuits to a broader global community for early adopters of a more relaxed style of swimsuit.</p>	

<p>Australia's established swimsuit company Speedo had by this decade established a global reputation for producing 'the real swimmer's uniform', carving a niche for Australia as a nation of elite athletes and cutting-edge swimsuit designers. Speedo developed Nylon Tricot as a high performance alternative textile used in the manufacture of competitive swimwear.</p>	
<p>New film genres emerged towards the end of the 1950s promoting bodily spectacle in the swimsuit that were very different from the glitzy Williams' water spectacles. With tussled hair and smouldering gaze, 'sex kitten' Brigitte Bardot popularised the daringly brief bikini in a distinctly French style.</p>	
<p>Fashion magazines offered other angles to the swimsuit, often shooting on location in tropical locales with Frissell, Dahl-Wolf, and Norman Parkinson capturing models in action poses. Helmut Newton's photo shoot for the inaugural issue of <i>Vogue</i> Australia in 1959 takes a unique approach to the outdoors. The model is partly submerged, with concentric circles of water surrounding her, suggesting she has just risen to the surface. The swimsuit is sleeved and tightly structured in a neutral creamy white, barely contrasting with the blonde paleness of the model and creating a sculptural effect. Captured in a vast isolated</p>	

space, the model compels the viewer to focus on the bodily form, devoid of peripheral distractions. In Australia, without the impediment of centuries of tradition, the swimsuit found a participation site where it could evolve to fit a watery paradise valued by the local participants.

Bridging the late 1950s and early 1960s is the film swimsuit worn by two very different models: the ‘girl next door’, Sandra Dee; and Ursula Andress, the sultry femme fatale. In the decade from Williams to Andress, the swimsuit is illustrated by a diverse palette of film ‘types’ glamorising their svelte bodies with solid doses of fantasy.



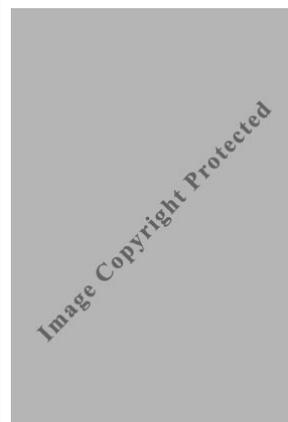
<p>Placed next on the 1960s pattern line is the Speedo 1964 Australian Olympic swimsuit marking the technological advances to performance swimsuits. It contrasts with Rudi Gernreich's monokini launched in the same year, which was more a gimmicky fashion fad and received considerable more media coverage than a wearable swimsuit.</p>	
<p>The Gold Coast Meter Maid tapped into the newsworthy angle of bikini-clad girls in a very public arena, changing the participation sites where the swimsuit could be worn.</p>	
<p>Sex sells and large West Coast manufacturers, led by Cole of California, launched the plunging see-through net v-front 'Scandal Suit' with a promotional campaign featuring a model on a brass bed at the ocean's edge with the caption, 'Isn't it time somebody created an absolutely wild scandal for nice girls?' (Lencek and Bosker 1989: 124). Mainstream swimsuit design was tapping into the sex appeal of Hollywood glamour.</p>	

The Scandal Suit was not for everyone and Australian brand Maglia offered a sporty alternative in the form of a one-piece maillot that was similar in styling to the Speedo but had a racy side stripe. The model strides along purposefully, cementing the link between athleticism and the swimsuit, while moving toward the end of the decade and the final image of another triumphant Speedo Olympic swimsuit.



Whether brief bikinis, topless bathing suits, sheer or functional maillots, the 1960s designers and manufacturers blended them all, offering wearers any number of combinations as long as they conformed to a body aesthetic that was more lean than athletic. Plump Meter Maids or overweight Bond girls would have been scandalous.

The 1970s marked an escalation in the pursuit of the perfect body through dieting, gym, and sport. Lean, leggy girls manifest in graphic form in a 1972 Maglia advertisement, wearing both bikinis and maillots, stripped of the internal structuring that bolstered, flattened, and generally helped the wearer conform to a semblance of a bodily ideal. Textiles championed by Speedo for performance purposes were



<p>filtering into the fashion swimwear market, offering leisure participants new, lightweight styles that revealed more of the underlying body than ever before.</p>	
<p>Australian icon Bondi Beach jostled for attention when bikini bottoms suggested it was the place to be!</p>	
<p>Other beaches and countries such as Brazil sold a lifestyle to participants with ever reducing coverage to entice emboldened participants to capture the perfect tan. Sporting a Tanga for a <i>Sports Illustrated</i> cover in 1975, Christie Brinkley is representative of a new breed of celebrity fashion model that has moved beyond the fashion magazine to new lucrative media markets, in the process extending the scope and scale of the swimsuit landscape</p>	
<p>Fashion magazines created new narratives, as witnessed in Deborah Turbeville's swimsuit shoot for <i>American Vogue</i> in the same year. The swimsuits are tame by comparison to Brinkley's Tanga; however the sexual innuendo and gender taboos it presumably transgressed were too much for some</p>	

readers.	
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Speedo continued to infiltrate the elite sports market with their Olympian style marking out the swimmers' territory and national identity through graphic prints. The swimmers took to the blocks branded for a global community: for the Australians it was repeat images of the Australian map; for the Americans, the recognisable stars and stripes of their national flag.

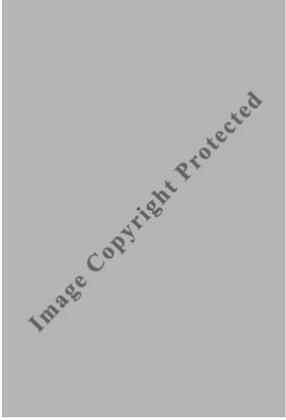
As the '70s came to an end, the swimsuit body had been slimmed and trimmed through a variety of active leisure pursuits, including dancing, tennis, and swimming. The swimsuit could now be the foundation garment that took you from one sporting activity to the next as seen in the styling in the Brain Rochford maillot.

<p>Bondi is mapped onto the pattern again at the beginning of the 1980s with two buffed Bondi lifeguards draped around a beach babe in an off-the-shoulder maillot. Have they saved her from treacherous rips? Or is she a predatory female fishing for beefcake? Either way, captured in a fashion spread for British <i>Vogue</i>, it cements a connection between Australia, the swimsuit, and fashion.</p>	
<p>Swimsuit editorial in fashion magazines emphasised the sporty as opposed to the sexy, with the Speedo swimsuit diving into the fashion system. Captioned in <i>Vogue</i> Australia as being worn by the ‘All-Australian’ girl, images of models in motion, leaping through the air, connect the swimsuit to fashion through an active glamour. A number of swimsuit editorials emphasise the importance of the ‘Aussie Cossie’ to participants who, as Australians, are naturally associated with a beach lifestyle.</p>	

It is not a quantum leap to imagine an Australia inhabited by bronzed gods and goddesses when the media used images of MacPherson and Bondi lifeguards to create

style narratives. Kee's collaboration with Speedo to create fashion swimsuits with distinctively Australian themes contributed to perceptions of the environment that bred sun-loving outdoor folk who also had a laconic sense of self-parody.

The 1990s pattern line pins the swimsuit to fashion. Kennedy reports that it was the decade where travel and exotic holidays were 'within the reach of a much larger percentage of European and North American households', resulting in swimwear ranges being included by designers in their collections (Kennedy 2007: 258). An analysis of swimsuit editorial from 1990-2 in the previous chapter illustrated the techniques used to transform the swimsuit from functional to fashionable, moving it beyond the beach and onto the catwalk. Reviewing the swimsuit themes from American, Australian and British *Vogue* over ten years. (1990-2000), plots key themes: classic black, exotic destinations, sporty performance style and Hollywood glamour influenced in part by lingerie.

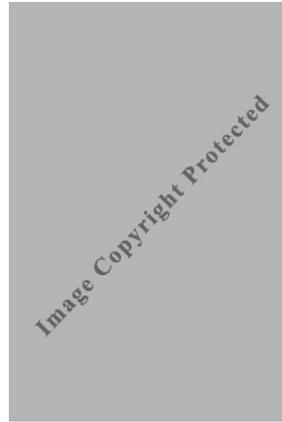
<p>Fashioning the body through fitness and sport were regular features in the beauty pages. These images depict a slice of Australian beach life in <i>Vogue</i> Australia. In the first image, a model torpedoes up from the surf surrounded by a montage of snapshots depicting the next generation of beach participants. The next shows athletic model in Speedos and diving boots from an American <i>Vogue</i> shoot. It is evidence of Australia's continued inclusion in the evolution of the swimsuit expressing its national style and the performative body.</p>	 
<p>The central image of the Chanel eye-patch bikini is a nod to a kitsch designer's take on the swimsuit, harking back to the Gernreich monokini. In the 1960s, Gernreich was challenging traditional notions of gender, experimenting with how the body was exposed, while in the 1990s Chanel's offering was more about the consumption of recognisable designer luxury goods.</p>	

<p>Ideas about Australia and designer fashion led to the inclusion of Zimmermann on the pattern line. It represents a company that moved the Australian style forward, tapping into seasonal trends to create a diverse range of fashion-oriented designs in one-pieces and bikinis, linking the design and function.</p>	
<p>The 1980s had seen a trend for wearing lingerie, particularly corsets, as outer wear epitomised by Madonna wearing a Jean Paul Gaultier bustier for the 'Blond Ambition Tour' in 1990. The decade ends with a whimsical bridal bikini by YSL, a fluffy concoction that has little to do with the swimsuit and is really about generating publicity for the label in a catwalk piece that is unlikely to be worn by any participants.</p>	

The swimsuit had become, like other garments, open to design interpretation that was not necessarily sporty or connected to the beach or its original purpose.

The noughties pattern line is all about Australia in one form or another. Tigerlily and Zimmermann are fashion swimwear labels; just two of a now very large pool of designers that create successful swimwear ranges for local and global markets. Zimmermann's inclusion recognises the company's visionary approach, which tapped into elements of Australian beach culture while conforming to the seasonal demands of the fashion system. Tigerlily represents the new breed of designer and company that is initially driven by celebrity with founders whose core skills are not fashion design and manufacture. Their continuing existence in a tough and competitive market where participants can make or break a label is due to the quality of the product and the company's ability to run an economically viable business. Company founder Johdi Meares sold the Tigerlily brand to Billabong International in December 2007 for an undisclosed sum and Vanda Carson reported that the label 'was a good fit for Billabong, which is focusing its business on the United States market', stating that 'the United States generates more than half of the group's total sales' (Carson 2007). The inclusion of Tigerlily in the Billabong stable, a now global entity, reinforces the influence and appeal of Australian swimwear design and products for a worldwide market.

The next image is a swimsuit from Collette Dinnigan's 2007 cruise collection; a sophisticated and glamorous swimsuit with a quirky design feature in the form of an Australiana flower print. It is a subtle reference to Australia in a collection of exclusive, luxury garments for the high-end global market. Dinnigan represents Australian designers who conform to a traditional, centralised fashion system by showing their collections in major fashion hubs.



The final image is a Speedo swimsuit, which was the result of a collaboration with Rei Kawakubo from Comme des Garçons in 2007. Speedo has proved a stayer in a fickle industry and remains quintessentially Australian, although many are unaware of the now internationally-owned company's origins. The maillot swimsuit has changed little over the last 90 years and invention has been achieved through the use of creative colour, print, or textile innovations. It is a classic swimsuit template for designers like Kawakubo to imprint with their signature styles.



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