ewitt, Tom, John and Kieran McK

everything it has become.

Robyn Healy- For her wise u advice and lengthy conversa

Lisa Varcoe- For her magic touch a genius ideas. For the design lay

# DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to availify for any other academic award: the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedure and guidelines have been followed.

Adele J. Varcoe 27th August 2009



A.J Varcoe

Master of Design

THE SKIN PROJECT

### Introduction

The Skin Project is a propositional e to temporarily modify their skin using a technique called Skin

Folding, How can we create the

modifying the materials we already applying the technique to family

wear? This project is the final outcome of my Masters, that begun was becoming the focus of my research document.

ith two simple vet fundamental

what does it mean to be dressed? been nick-named by the participants:

The first working title of my research

was 'The Merging of Clothing and The excitement and interest that the Body.' Whilst working with people projected onto the project led this title it was the character of the many to request if they could use Skir material that clothing was made from Folding to dress themselves. From that fascinated me. I was curious to this request I developed a Do-Itdiscover whether by changing the Yourself Skin Folding kit. Inside the character of the material of clothes kit there was very little information ou could change what clothes are. about the technique, encouraging I applied these experiments to my people to develop their own 'Folding body to examine if clothes made from style'. By minimizing the information materials such as liquid cosmetics, accessible to the participant I silicone, and resin made me feel any generated a lot of new information

Eventually these experiments led to not only transformed the character applied my technical skills and nowledge to my skin and used it to o my body, as I would with fabric participant – Phase two was when the on a mannequin. I held the folds in place with a liquid solution and the technique into something that I

material qualities of skin, I began research and at this point I changed questions: What are clothes? And, the title of my research to what it had 'The Skin Project'.

Tless aressed than clothes made from<br/>fabric and threads.towards The Skin Project. I<br/>discovered what people liked to fold,2. Research how they liked to fold it, and how thi s **Questions: on** treating the skin itself as a material. In the character of their persona. At this *being dressed*. fashion. clothing point the project was divided into two

"Fashion is a belief that is manifest pleat and fold the skin to re-fit itself — Phase one was when I dressed the through clothing." (Kawamura;

During my research I discovered the about my skin, but I was developing way that predicted my next move. difference emerged between the private/personal responses to the outline below. This 'meta-text' offers undressed. Whereas when one is in them to the group. the additional elements exist only in community, and people no longer text will tell a story while making an uide to that exegesis and explains a private environment without the members and friends. Skin Folding the way in which it operates as a reaction from the public one could During this final phase of my research Fashion is not visual clothing but is feel dressed in almost anything. It I realized the importance of the the invisible elements included in seemed that the people within an response from the public in the clothing.' environment were making fashion, making of fashion and in defining

# ound that participants could econsidering what they believed lothing to be and were embracing makes you feel dressed.

the sensation that came with the Fold. at – perhaps like the Emperor in the to feeling naked (ie as a way to be by Orlan that there was nothing story of *The Emperors New Clothes*. dressed). However, I also discovered illegal about wearing such eye

I presented a 'platform of relation' situation. If people within an applied the technique to every inch Each phase informed the other. As importance that the environment/ possibilities and embracing the clothing to be. clothing and dress. It demonstrates accessible to everyone. of my body. During this process I was with the rest of my research it was by people play in defining what clothing character transformation that came responding to happenings along the and dress can be. I found a marked with it. However towards the end of In this sense, fashion becomes through a fashion system one can To write the magazine I have adopted by the sense of the the session a few folders strayed into something that exists in people's be considered undressed. However a Fictocritical style of writing, defined other areas of the room where people minds and as a social agreement that once a provocative idea is adopted by by Stephen Muecke as follows: considered to be a method of dress. These phases of development are Skin Folding technique and the who had not experienced folding manipulates the way people respond a fashion system and is accepted by presented in the accompanying public/social responses to it. The before looked and laughed at them. to clothing. As Yuniya Kawamura people (such as a television presenter "Fictocriticism merges the traditional" To explore the Skin Folding technique exegesis document, which has been reactions from people within a public This transformed the way the folder has written: 'Fashion does provide who functions as a media role model), divisions between fiction, theory further and to learn more about the produced in a way that I discuss and environment can make one feel was feeling and quickly returned extra added values to clothing, but the idea is accepted by the greater and criticism into a single text. This

more so than the environment itself. what people believe dress and

consider Skin Folding as a method Through my research I came to people in a social environment react of dress within the fashion free understand being dressed as a naked and clothing as anything that

clothing to be.

the *Housing the Body Dressing* environment do not consider a new photographs onto separates in this is encouraged to visit the website by between dress, clothing and fashion, the Environment research gathering fashion proposition as being clothing, way. Later in 1996 a presenter on being presented with an abstract for and to implicitly question the beliefs presented platforms that people at can make the wearer feel undressed. programme 'Nulle part ailleurs' to order a free sample of Folding fashion manifests. the research gathering could choose In the reverse direction, however, was wearing one of these dresses Solution, to watch demonstrations which platform they would like to fashion can dictate how people within made by Issey Miyake with a life and to have their say. Like the take part in. During my Skin Folding a social environment will respond to sized nude torso printed on it. This magazine, the website is designed platform I observed people playing clothing. A method of dress presented is an example of how fashion can to position and expand the project with their skin, discussing folding as fashion changes what people transform the way people perceive within a public environment that i

people's imaginations and beliefs. see a provocation. Rather, they see fashion. The work of French performance I have presented my exegesis in the

artist Orlan offers an example of format of a fictional mainstream the way that fashion changes how to a new fashion proposition before confines of the home. People were sensation that is different to feeling it is considered to be fashionable. In position it alongside other fashion Lisbon in 1981, Orlan ran through practices. The fashion magazine crowded streets in an opaque black 'chasuble' bearing a life- sized communicate upcoming fashion However people were not wearing Along these lines, I started to think photograph print of her naked body. trends and predictions. People turn their Folded skin in public as they about Skin Folding as a way to A policemen directing traffic who to fashion magazines when they're feared that they would be laughed create a sensation that was different wanted to arrest her was persuaded seeking style advice and fashion that the sensation the wearer feels catching printed clothing, saying 'it and last until the next issue is released. To accompany the magazine

that without a garment going

To explore these relationships between fashion, dress and clothing, fashion magazine. This magazine form has enabled me to propose is commonly used as a tool to direction. Like fashion, magazines are fast paced, manipulative, disposabl

A moment that stands out in my mind that demonstrates this is when I presented a 'pletform of relation' is, on the contrary a mark of high situation. If neople within an commercialized the printing of com. Inside the magazine the reader the relationships discussed above

argument."(Muecke, 2002)

This style of writing has enabled me to sensationalize The Skin Project whilst exploring the implications of it becoming a universal and a popular actice of fashionable dressing. Thi tormat has allowed me the flexibility of writing about the project from a broader cultural perspective whilst sociating it with the creation and consumption of fashion. If, as I state above, fashion can dictate how people within a social environment will respond to clothing, then presenting The Skin Project as fashion is a way of testing the limits of this idea.

in Montreal. A series of people the people within that environment French televisions cult Canal Plus an online article, the opportunity and assumptions that contemporary similar qualities to The Skin Project, I

nd modes of enquiry. I have named these groups as: Fashioning Skin, Individual Transformation and The Collective. The diagrams below helped me to align the images of The Skin Project into its various concerns. The alignment helped me to understand my creative research as operating at a nexus of three clusters of projects and practitioners that I describe below.



Zurr) (fig. 3) all use human skin in their practice. Parbs and Russell

explore the material qualities of human skin by blistering, burning and scratching its surface to create fabric prints and garment shapes. Fashion Designers Issey Miyake (fig.4), Walter van Beirendonck (fig.5) and Viktor and Rolf simulate the body in new non-standard clothing materials an reposition the garment back ont body to create new experien reated silicone stick on lumps for his collection *Kiss the Future*. The umps merged with the skin and transformed the body shape of the

The early experiments of The Ski Project also utilized non-standard 4. Issey Miyake, Plastic Bustier, 1983 xplore what clothes are. They

<

challenged the sensation of dress and

Beirendonck, Kiss the

Individual transformation

 ssell,
 bodily manipulation, seeing her body
 n

 as an ever-changing costume. In 1990
 or

 Orlan began her ongoing performance
 n

 The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan.
 or

 Where she undertook seven cosmetic
 a

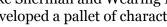
1. Tiffany Parbs, Blister 2. Ariana Page Russell, Where she undertook seven cosmetic surgical proceedings to present herself as and ever- changing art object, she says "I want to show you inside and outside at the same time during my operations. I think of the body as a costume and I get a lot of pleasure out of changing it. It's the same as changing your appearance. Saint Orlan, The Skin Project is temporary modification to the e to demonstrate the endless possibilities of my skin for identity transformation, and to change it as often as I change my clothe

> Like Sherman and Wearing I ha developed a pallet of characters that

are documented through film and **Collective** 









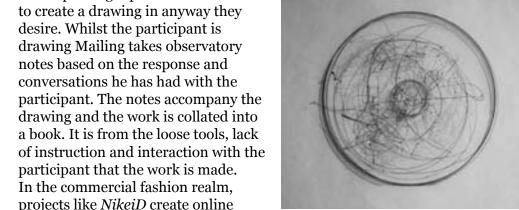


participation to generate new information by giving peopl a technique and a loose set of instructions. This process has been invaluable 6. Cindy Sherman, Untitled (# 205), 1989 Like July, Mailing and Calle it h. been public participation that has

## been a key tool in generating nev

information towards my research and that has developed the proje lurther.

The Skin Project is informed by,



9. Jason Mailing, The Vorticist- Drawing by Adele Varcoe, 2009

as a sensation that is different to feeling naked. There are an infinite number of ways that one can feel different to feeling naked, and this was highlighted by the frequent comments from participants abo how it made them feel different. I started to explore the nuances of this feeling different through the creation of different characters.

> As such. I created a wardrobe of characters through various foldings of my skin. These characters appear in the magazine as various contributors page 8). Each contributor was created by re folding my skin when embarking on a new article.

> The editor of the magazine is Adele Varcoe (page 4). This is the only place throughout the magazine where my 'real' name is mentioned. It is also the only article in which I am present

without my skin folded. For the rest skin as a material by applying the of the magazine I go by the alias name technique to the skins of family became apparent that people who **Conclusion** that was developed during my Skin first group of people as my 'subjects', shared akin personality traits. The always a new fold that was 'in' and Generally, people understand clothing fashion system embraced by population of the syst

my research candidature. Another set of challenging questions that compiled into a Do- It- Yourself Skin magazine, but are condensed in a arose toward the end of my research Folding kit that was distributed to section called 'Faces'. Here you are candidature appear towards the end a number of people over a period presented with a handful of people of the magazine in a protest against the fold. These questions came from people who questioned if Skin Folding Skin Folding and to discover new should be considered clothing and a ways that Skin Folding could be intermeted. Barticipants were

The early stages of Skin Folding are discussed in an article titled 'L.E. Varlo folds everything!' (Page 24) This article discusses how I used in Folding as a tool to develop understanding of the varying haracteristics of my skin and how I developed this way of treating my skin into a technique that could be used as a method of dress. From he information gathered through my early Skin Folding experiments I generated more information on

fold. This information was later writings appear throughout the t of time. The kit was constructed to who took part in the project that were generate new information towards dressed by me. interpreted. Participants were required to use the kit on their skin and to submit photographs of their within a fashion article titled The Folding results (page 34). From the Future of Fashion: New Sensations. nformation generated from the kit t became apparent that the face Fold. I responded to this information future. This article can be found by using it to dress myself and others. The face highlighted the ansformative effects the technique had on the character of the wearer's persona. Every time the skin is folded in a new way, a new character was born. I discuss this further in the article titled Life Swap (page 36).

the materiality of clothing further article and the next and to document I have positioned The Skin Project This article discusses the future ossibilities of fashion and how The Skin Project might be part of that at theskinproject.com. Here the reader can click on links and make envisage how The Skin Project could comments about the future of fashion.

of folds achieved over time. The of dressing. progression of the fold and how new

which again directs the reader to

small happenings that occurred

comments can be added.

Skin Folding in the long run (page 44) Skin Project proposes an alternative a provocation but, rather, to see material qualities of skin. Further more on the effects Skin Folding importance of touch in our lives and clothes are made from. It enables By treating The Skin Project as a n people to experience a sensation of fashion I was able to explore the idea

people through the developmental process have been collated on the that fed back into the project. of the kits showed me what people would like to Fold and suggested how the Skin Project could appeal theskinproject.com where further, to the broader community. Pu participation also demonstrated the Skin Folding not only changes the Advertisements in FFM have been way you look, but it also changes the

It became clear that one can achieve during my research candidature. Advertising is something that is very a sensation of feeling dres. prominent within the making of modifying their skin, and that being fashion and is a tool that is commonly dressed is a sensation that is different to feeling naked. Therefore it follows used to communicate ideas and that clothes can be almost anythi products to large audiences. The Skin Project explores advertising to that makes one feel dressed.

<sup>1.</sup> exist within a public environment Through my early research and be communicated to a universal discovered that it is not only the 'In or Out' explores the variety audience as the new fashionable way character of the material that dresses us, but the environment or soci situation we are in.

this by situating a provocative idea like The Skin Project as an accepted and dress in terms of garments or media. I wanted to test the idea that fabric that are added to the body. The people might come to no longer see

> of fashion as a collective agreement that exists in people's minds, and as people respond to clothing.

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