

CONCRETE FASHION: DRESS, ART, AND ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SPACE

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is an example of artistic research that explores the border between fashion design and contemporary art, in order to place situated bodily practices within the larger field of exploration and ideology, and to discover new formats. The activities engaged in explore the dressed body as a contemporary art medium, and the performances are carried out in public space and within everyday life. The research utilizes 'the itinerary', put forward by Certeau, as a metaphor for its prevailing methods.

Three extensive art projects are presented within the dissertation: *THREE*, the *Mirror Brooch*, and *Transformers*. The first project concerns exhibition of the intermediate art form of the dressed body in the institutions of art, in this example, the gallery space; the second involves the presentation and use of the *Mirror Brooch* and examines art as an everyday life experience; and the third entails performances, staged in various locations and featuring the Transformer Jackets, and which are viewed as explorations into public space. The relationship between experience, on one hand, and representation and documentation, on the other, is treated as a translation; a translation meant to be 'haunting', and one which feeds energy back into the ongoing artistic process. The conclusion is that, both, performances and translations can be used to strengthen identity and engagement in public space.