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Insubordinate Costume

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PhD

Declaration of Authorship

I, Susan Marshall, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____ Date:

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Abstract

Working as a costume designer/maker I became increasingly interested in the agency and power of costume and the different ways costumes can transform the performing body, override fixed boundaries and subvert the traditional hierarchies of the theatre where the costume designer/maker is typically required to accommodate the wishes of the director or choreographer. The costumes in this study are the antitheses of subordinate costume, which is often dictated to by practicalities, or placed within the confines of text, directorial notions, predefined choreography or the passive function of dressing actors. In this research, I examine historical and contemporary examples of *scenographic costume*: the type of costume that creates an almost complete stage environment by itself, simultaneously acting as costume, set and performance. With reference to theories of play and creativity, I explore the way costume can be used as a research tool and investigate how playing with my modular *Insubordinate Costumes* enables different creative interpretations and offers diverse dramaturgical possibilities. The term *Insubordinate Costume* evolved from my research and is used to reflect the defiant, rebellious and unruly nature of costume when it flouts practicalities and textual confines to embrace the role of protagonist. In order to explore the agency of my *Insubordinate Costumes*, I developed flat-pack modular pieces which can be constructed in different ways and organised workshops with both single performers and small groups in order to analyse a range of different approaches to performance making. The rule of play is essential to the approach to these costumes, both in the playful essence of the costume and in the way the body interacts with it. Although the modular pieces are always the same, the resulting sculptural forms created by each performer have always been unique, as have their performances.

Figure 1 Susan Marshall Flatpack Modular Insubordinate Costume 2018 (source: Author)

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Introduction to the Research

Working as a costume designer/maker for many years I have become increasingly interested in the agency and power of costume and the different ways costumes can transform the performing body, override fixed boundaries and subvert the traditional hierarchies of the theatre where the costume designer/maker is typically required to accommodate the wishes of the director or choreographer who often want complete control over their artistic ideas. The costumes in this study are the antitheses of subordinate costume, which is often dictated to by practicalities, or placed within the confines of text, directorial notions, predefined choreography or the passive function of dressing actors.

With reference to historical and contemporary examples, and through my practice research, I aim to prove that costume has agency and the ability to generate performance. Play, in its different forms, is central to my research and is a recurrent theme which can be observed throughout all my chosen examples and in my own designs and workshops. Looking at theories of play and creativity (Huizinga, Vygotsky, Lindqvist), I contextualise and analyse the pivotal role of costume in performance where costume defines the performance and frequently requires the performers to find a creative approach to space, form and movement. I will refer, briefly, to phenomenology and theories surrounding the body, but my main interest is in the performativity of the costume rather than anthropocentric phenomenological findings, as this places the emphasis on the actor. Through the process of practice and the reading of New Materialism theories, the notion of Jane Bennet's 'thing power', and the idea that an *assemblage*[1] of human and non-human elements has the ability to make something happen, became increasingly important to my research. The agentic power of the inanimate costumes in synergy with the playfulness of the animate performers is a crucial aspect of my practice.

In order to explore the agency of costume in my work, I developed flat-pack modular costumes which can be constructed in different ways allowing for diverse creative interpretations. Once built, the costumes form three-dimensional shapes which can be worn and played with in various modes, and which constrict natural movement to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the initial construction. Workshops were organised with both single performers and small groups in order to analyse the different ways my modular scenographic costumes can lead to dramaturgy, and investigate how the performers perceive, interpret and interact with the costumes through play.

The rule of play is essential to the approach to these costumes, both in the playful essence of the costume and in the way the body interacts and plays with it. Although the modular pieces are always

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[1] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari wrote about the concept of assemblage in 1980 in their book *A Thousand Plateaus*. Jane Bennett further discusses the meaning in *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2010).

the same, the resulting sculptural forms created by each performer have always been unique, as have their performances. The costumes remain the focal point throughout my research and are the tool with which I study the impact play has on the relationship between the costume and the creativity of a performer.

My research is located within the context of performance-defining costume which includes, among others, Loie Fuller, the Ballets Russes and Oskar Schlemmer's 'Das Triadische Ballett' in the early part of the twentieth century, Leigh Bowery in the 1980s and more recent examples that illustrate the blurring of boundaries between the disciplines of fashion, dance, performance and theatre in the 21st century. Although it could be argued that experimental and conceptual costume existed before modernism and the early 20th century Avant Garde, and that Kathakali and Noh costumes are performance-defining, my research is positioned within the twentieth and twenty first centuries with a bias towards predominantly European, Russian and modern Japanese designs as these are the examples that are most indicative of *scenographic costume* as I define it in this context.

I differentiate between historical and contemporary examples of performance-defining costume which I refer to as *scenographic costume* and my own practice research which I refer to as *Insubordinate Costume.* I use the term *scenographic costume* to identify the type of costume that performance theorist Patrice Pavis describes as constituting 'a kind of travelling scenography, a set reduced to a human scale that moves with the actor' (Pavis 2003, 177) or what costume theorist Donatella Barbieri refers to as a 'three-dimensional world for the body in movement that tells a story' (Barbieri 2012), where each costume creates its own world. For Pavis, costume becomes 'an environment for the performer' (Pavis 2003, 178) which appropriates space and acts as a catalyst for creative ideas. (Marshall 2020). In the context of this research, I define *scenographic costume* as costume that:

- o is used as a research tool or makes a strong artistic statement.
- o is the starting point of a performance.
- o generates an almost complete stage environment by itself, simultaneously acting as costume, set and performance.

Although my modular costumes fulfil this definition of *scenographic costume*, I will differentiate by classifying them as *Insubordinate Costume*, a term which evolved from my theoretical and practice research and is used to reflect the defiant, rebellious and unruly nature of costume when it flouts practicalities and textual confines to embrace the role of protagonist and act as an impetus to creativity, theatre making and dramaturgy. The examples of *scenographic costume* I analyse in this study meet these conditions for *Insubordinate Costume* but, for clarity, I will mark the distinction between previous examples and my own innovative work.

My work is placed firmly in the context of an active community of costume designers and theorists exploring the potential of costume in performance, each with their own area of interest and expertise. My unique research has been inspired and influenced by the artistic practice of *scenographic costume* creation and by the relatively recent field of academic enquiry into the agency of costume by theorists such as Donatella Barbieri, Sofia Pantouvaki and the Critical Costume network[2] but it offers a new and important contribution to both areas. Thus far, there has been no comprehensive practice or academic study surrounding modular costumes and their ability to generate performance through play. I have made a positive contribution to this field of costume research by presenting my theoretical and practical research at two Critical Costume conferences as well as writing peer-reviewed articles for both the 'Theatre and Performance Design' journal (Marshall 2020) and the 'Studies in Costume & Performance' journal[3]. In the following chapters I demonstrate how the *Insubordinate Costume* modules enable a different creative strategy and offers diverse dramaturgical possibilities in order to prove my hypothesis that costume has agency.

In Chapter 1, 'Contextualising Scenographic Costume', I give a brief history of clothing, fashion and theatre costume and discuss how *scenographic costume* differs from these and how it has been experimented with in theatre, dance, performance and fashion, both as an artform and as a form of research. In Chapter 2, 'Play and the Scenographic Costume', different examples are placed within the context of various aspects of play to illustrate how *scenographic costume* can be frivolous or serious, purely aesthetic or used to explore social, cultural and political issues. Chapter 3, 'Playing with Insubordinate Costumes', focuses on my practice research and Chapter 4 looks at the findings and conclusions I derive from the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops and performances.

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[2] The Critical Costume research platform was founded by Rachel Hann and Sidsel Bech in 2013 'to promote new debate and scholarship on the status of costume in contemporary art and culture' (Hann 2017, 1).

[3] To be published December 2021

Chapter 1: Contextualising scenographic costume

1.1. Costume Analysis

Costumes fulfil a fundamental function in the theatre but, in the past, have frequently been taken for granted unless they contravened the expectations of audience or critics. Designs are often dictated to by practicalities, or placed within the confines of text, directorial notions, predefined choreography or the passive function of dressing actors but in recent years 'a new emphasis has been placed on the importance of costume' (Marshall 2020: 166).

In 2010, Aoife Monks suggested in her book *The Actor in Costume*, that, unlike other aspects of the theatre, very few books had been written about theatre costume from a scholarly point of view as costume was considered to be somewhat frivolous, 'far too trivial or playful for serious scholarship' (Monks 2010, 10). Much has changed since Monks wrote this and, as editors Sofia Pantouvaki and Peter McNeil note in their introduction to *Performance Costume: New Perspectives and Methods*, costume is not

> seen anymore as being "in service of" performance in a subordinate role, but rather as a central contributor to an often-renewed sense of collective practice, proposing new directions in turn, to the making of performance itself. There, costume becomes a catalyst as well as a subject and object of study [where] costume as a field and disciplinary practice is finding new theoretical tools and investigative frameworks (Pantouvaki & McNeil 2021: 2).

Costume analysis is an expanding area of interest which is developing its own philosophy many years after Elizabeth Goepp's seminal 'An essay toward a philosophy of costume' was published in 1928:

> Books in plenty have been written on the costume of the stage, of course; on its history, its construction, its traditions, its contribution to and dependence on pictorial art. But few deal with that quality of costume which makes it theatrical material, the stuff of which drama is made. Costume has, or should have, a philosophy of its own, as certainly as architecture has; and theatrical costume more particularly than social costume, although the social tendencies influence both (Goepp 1928, 396).

In their editorial for Volume 1 of *Studies in Costume and Performance*, Donatella Barbieri and Sofia Pantouvaki write that, although Elizabeth Goepp had already called for costume to have a philosophy of its own,

> the philosophical and scholarly attention that costume deserves, albeit finally emerging as a vibrant area of research, is still in the early stages of development [ ] being often subsumed into others' work and dissolved into a range of other different scholarly priorities (Barbieri and Pantouvaki 2016, 3-5).

Why costume has not, until recently, been considered a serious subject worthy of academic contemplation, is open to discussion but, as Barbieri and Pantouvaki continue, part of the problem could be

> that the changing meaning of the word 'costume' has hindered early scholarship on the subject, contributing to the lack of a distinct perspective from which to research (Barbieri and Pantouvaki 2016, 4).

When Goepp wrote her essay in 1928, the term costume 'could be applied either to clothing for the distinct moment of performance, or to that worn offstage in the everyday of social life' (Barbieri and Pantouvaki 2016, 3). Historical, social, theatrical, the word costume has varying connotations, but the focus of my research concerns theatrical costume and, more specifically, *scenographic costume* in performance, looking at how it is possible to have an aesthetic drive to theatre making and dramaturgy.

In this chapter I define the meanings of clothing, costume and *scenographic costume* and discuss the position of costume and costume designers/makers within the traditional hierarchies of the theatre, illustrating how *scenographic costumes* differ. Furthermore, I explore the reasons why *scenographic costumes* were designed and made by artists, fashion designers and choreographers and look at the nature of costume design, artistic control and the concept of *Gesamkunstwerk*[4] as, frequently, there is a strong conceptual element to *scenographic costume* which is not purely aesthetical.

The examples of *scenographic costume* in performance that I give are those which are most relevant to my research and which I consider to be indicative of my definition of *scenographic costume* (see page 17). I am interested in the type of costume which is used as a research tool or which makes a strong artistic statement, costume that engenders a performance and generates an almost complete stage environment by itself. These examples are predominantly twentieth and twenty-first century European, Russian and Japanese although it could be argued that experimental and conceptual costume existed before modernism and the early 20th century Avant Garde, for example in seventeenth century masque costumes. I have also chosen not to include traditional Asian and African costumes even though they are frequently performance-defining, as intercultural performance theorist Patrice Pavis describes in his book, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film*:

> Certain forms of traditional Asian dance, such as Balinese dance or Beijing Opera, concentrate such a degree of richness into their décorcostumes that any

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[4] The term *Gesamkunstwerk*, translated as 'total work of art', was introduced by Karl Friedrich Eusebius Trahndorff in his 1827 essay Ästhetik oder Lehre von Weltanschauung und Kunst. Wagner used the term in his 1849 essays 'Art and Revolution' and 'The Artwork of the Future' to advocate the synthesis of all elements of performance.

> characterizing of the stage space is rendered superfluous, and the space remains
> empty to accommodate the choreography (Pavis 2003, 177).

Here Pavis uses costume designer Claude Lemaire's term *décorcostume* to denote the highly decorative costumes which hold a central role in certain traditional dance forms and render any form of stage design unnecessary. These costumes are scenographic in a decorative sense rather than being a provocative statement, so, although this description of autonomous costumes could also be applied to my examples, I will not discuss the statuesque Kathakali or Noh costumes in this research as these are traditionally-worn costumes rather than unique performance pieces. Likewise, I will not discuss clown costumes, even though they habitually use costume and prosthetics which force the body to move in a certain way. Future research into performance defining scenographic costume could include traditional costume but for this study I have limited my examples to costume as a form of artistic research.

1.2. A brief history of clothing and fashion

New research and archaeological discoveries continually add to knowledge and alter our perspectives. Research published in a 2011 article in 'Molecular Biology and Evolution' discusses the origin of clothing lice and estimates that some form of clothing could have been worn as early as 170,000 years ago (Toups *et al.* 2011, 29). In 2016 scientists discovered a 50,000 year old bone needle in the Denisova Cave, Siberia (The Siberian Times, 2016), indicating that sewing was already being used to make items of clothing. 82,000 year old shell beads were found in the Grotte des Pigeons, Morocco in 2007 (Bouzouggar *et al.* 2007), whereas the oldest surviving dyed textile examples to be discovered to date are 30,000 year old wild flax fibres from the Upper Palaeolithic era, uncovered during an excavation in Dzudzuana Cave, Georgia. The fibres appear to have been spun and dyed using different plants and roots to produce yellow, red, blue, turquoise, violet, black, grey, brown, green, and khaki which 'may indicate that the inhabitants of the cave were engaged in producing colorful textiles' (Kvavadze *et al.* 2009). It may be deduced therefore that, aside from covering our bodies and protecting us from heat and cold, clothes have also been used to adorn and manipulate the body for thousands of years. Paraphrasing Adam Smith, the 18th century economist and moral philosopher, in his article 'All in the best possible taste: Adam Smith and the leaders of fashion', Craig Smith writes: 'human desire for ornament is ubiquitous and has no limit' (Smith 2016, 597).

A distinction should be made between clothing and fashion as clothing is not necessarily associated with fashion and the word fashion is not used exclusively to describe apparel. Fashion, unlike theatre costume, has been analysed extensively. Academics and philosophers such as Anne Hollander, Elizabeth Wilson, Georg Simmel, Gilles Lipovetsky and Roland Barthes have attempted to define the precise nature of 'fashion' and the point at which the fashion for fashion began. In his book *Fashion: A Philosophy*, Norwegian philosopher Lars Svendsen differentiates between pre-Mediaeval

clothing styles, where 'one long-lasting aesthetic norm was replaced by another' (Svendsen, 2006, 22), and fashion, which he claims can 'be considered as a mechanism or an ideology that applies to almost every conceivable area of the modern world, from the late medieval period onwards' (Svendsen, 2006, 11), a phenomenon which he suggests could be connected to the 'growth of mercantile capitalism' (Svendsen 2006, 21).

The 1574 Elizabethan sumptuary laws, introduced to curb extravagant spending and impede wealthy merchants to dress like the aristocracy, illustrate the link between fashion, wealth and social class as they determined what fabrics and colours different classes were allowed to wear:

> None shall wear in his apparel: Any silk of the color of purple, cloth of gold tissued, nor fur of sables, but only the King, Queen, King's mother, children, brethren, and sisters, uncles and aunts; and except dukes, marquises, and earls, who may wear the same in doublets, jerkins, linings of cloaks, gowns, and hose; and those of the Garter, purple in mantles only (Proclamation 1574).

The penalty was a fine or imprisonment. The price of silk or velvet, as well as many of the dyes such as Tyrian purple or indigo would have been out of reach of all but the very wealthy but simplified styles in cheaper fabrics filtered slowly down through all walks of society, as can be observed in woodcuts of the Cries of London, 1600 (Shesgreen 1992, 281-2). Fashion is frequently placed within a social and cultural context. In '*The Theory of Moral Sentiments'*, 1759, and '*Wealth of Nations'*, 1776, Adam Smith examines the link between social class and fashion, considering the rich and famous to be trend-setters:

> It is from our disposition to admire, and consequently to imitate, the rich and the great, that they are enabled to set, or to lead what is called the fashion (Raphael and Macfie 1976, 64).

Technological innovations throughout history have led to huge changes in weaving, sewing and dyeing techniques, particularly after the advent of the industrial revolution and the invention of the Jacquard loom in 1804, the sewing machine in 1846, and synthetic dyes in the mid-1850s. Gradually clothing production moved away from domestic dressmaking and private tailors towards low-cost, factory-made garments, making fashions more accessible to the less wealthy. Class distinction between rich and poor, was still noticeable in dress however, particularly because, at the same time as manufacturing gained momentum, the clothing industry saw the birth of *haute couture* fashion which is usually accredited to The House of Worth, founded in Paris by Charles Frederick Worth in 1858 (Trubert-Tollu, Tétart-Vittu and Olivieri 2017). Furthermore, while exclusive *haute couture* fashions were sewn and embroidered by working class women who would never earn enough to afford the one-off, hand-made garments they created, sewing and embroidery skills were seen to be a necessary, 'ladylike' prerequisite for the upper classes.

In the 21ˢᵗ century fashion is big business although an interesting change is occurring as greater attention is being placed on ecological and environmental issues, both politically and socially. The fashion industry is beginning to make long-overdue adjustments in order to become more sustainable and more ethical, with many companies and brands utilizing, at least in part, recycled materials or new textiles made from natural fibres such as discarded orange peel, pineapple and nettles, and taking more care of human rights and supply chain transparency. Today the clothing industry is multifaceted, comprising *haute couture* and *prêt-à-porter* designer fashions, high-street fashions, streetwear and sportswear. *Haute couture* is still out of reach for all but the very wealthy but the boundaries between different types of fashion are no longer clearly defined. Today, fast fashion can see affordable copies of runway styles in the shops within a week or two of the shows, many top designers now collaborate with high street brands and sportswear companies to produce a more affordable range of clothes and their collections are frequently inspired by streetstyle. As Elizabeth Wilson writes in *Adorned in Dreams*: 'Fashion, in a sense is change, and in modern western societies no clothes are outside fashion' (Wilson 2003, 3).

In 1759, Adam Smith wrote about the collective nature of fashion, suggesting that conformity was safer than radical experimentation:

> A man would be ridiculous who should appear in public with a suit of clothes quite
> different from those which are commonly worn, though the new dress should in
> itself be ever so graceful or convenient (Raphael and Macfie 1976, 197).

This is perhaps no longer relevant in today's society where there is greater freedom of choice and styles differ significantly, however, what we wear can still indicate our participation in a certain group and our perception of ourselves. 'Clothes are a vital part of the social construction of the self' (Svendsen 2006, 19). In her book *Seeing Through Clothes*, historian, Anne Hollander discusses the performative nature of clothing as 'dress is a form of visual art, a creation of images with the visible self as its medium' (Hollander 1993, 311) which, according to José Teunissen, writing in *Not a Toy: Fashioning Radical Characters,*

> characterises contemporary (avant-garde) fashion and performance art in its
> research into the body, its relationship to 'the individual', to the world around it, and
> the experiments with which it is attempting to reinterpret and redefine this
> relationship (Teunissen 2011, 15).

The subject of clothing and fashion is complex and open to interpretation. Clothes are used to clothe, to adorn and to express personality but throughout history they have also been used to change, constrict, manipulate, emphasise, or exaggerate parts of the body. As Koda writes, in his book *Extreme Beauty the Body Transformed*:

> The physical areas of the body have been variously and strategically adjusted.
> They have been constricted, padded, truncated, or extended to achieve fashion's

goal through subtle visual adjustments of proportion, less subtle prostheses, and, often, deliberate physical changes (Koda 2001, flyleaf).

Extreme fashions have often been linked to constriction of movement, particularly in women's clothing before the beginning of the 20th century. Corsets, crinolines and footwear, such as the Venetian *chopine*, restricted movement and many scholars have argued that this could be seen

as a way to control [a woman's] morality, since mobility was directly associated in many cultures and times with the potential for unrestrained sexuality (Koda 2001, 141).

Interestingly, the *chopine* were worn both by the nobility and by the city's courtesans.

As an antithesis to the freedom of movement, taken for granted in contemporary society, theatre, performance and fashion designers have taken inspiration from certain elements of extreme historical fashion which had become obsolete. Corsets, panniers, crinolines, footwear and prosthetics have all been reworked with both conceptual and aesthetic criteria.

1.3. Theatre costume

According to the Oxford English dictionary, the etymology of the word costume comes, via French, from the Italian word, *costume*, which means fashion or custom. Although the tendency today is to associate 'costume' with the theatre and fancy-dress, it also has historical and social connotations. 'Costume' can be used to describe clothing of a particular period, traditional, national or regional dress and, until the beginning of the twentieth century, was synonymous with everyday apparel.

The book *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice* is written from the two perspectives of a costume designer, Ali Maclaurin, and a theatre scholar, Aoife Monks, who analyse the use of costume in various contexts and interview a range of theatre practitioners to gain their insight on different aspects of the subject. In her introduction, Monks notes that there are 'multiple ways in which costume works at the theatre' (Maclaurin and Monks, 2015, 2). Costume is not used just to provide visual pleasure, it 'plays an intricate role in organising the relationship between the actor's body and the character's body' (idem, 4) can create social or historical identity, present power structures, play with, stereotypes, 'situate performers within a series of aesthetic and spatial structures' (idem,1) and 'offer new visions of embodiment' (idem, 4). Furthermore, Monks draws attention to the fact that

the systems through which costume is produced, as well as how it is worn, tell us much about the politics and meanings of the theatre event (idem, 4).

Before the end of the 19th century the use of theatrical costumes in Western theatre productions can be roughly divided into two genres: modern or historical costume. Modern dress productions, which Ali Maclaurin broadly defines in her chapter, 'The Stage Picture', as typical from 1500 to 1800,

use clothing of the same era as the play's audience, regardless of the time in which the play may have been set or written. In doing this, they are able to tap into the audience's understanding of its own dress codes (Maclaurin and Monks 2015, 36-37).

In his critical essay, 'The Diseases of Costume', Barthes notes that theatre costume can be a powerful form of communication:

In all the great periods of theatre, costume has a powerful semantic value; it was not there only to be seen, it was also there to be read, it communicated ideas, information or sentiments (Barthes 1972, 42).

Lublin also writes about the importance of social semiotics in character recognition in *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage*:

The theatre far more than the rest of society, respected the social semiotics whereby the audience could understand the characters on sight (Lublin 2011, 56).

The use of historical costume in British theatre became increasingly popular throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Inspired by books such as Joseph Strutt's *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England, from the Establishment of the Saxons in Britain to the Present Time*, 1792, and James Robinson Planché's *History of British Costume*, 1834, actors such as David Garrick and Edmund Kean sought to recreate more accurate reproductions of historic dress. Strutt's and Planché's books were illustrated with engravings of period clothing researched through antique manuscripts rather than primary source material.

Historical accuracy greatly improved with clothing historian Janet Arnold's in-depth research and analysis of original garments from museums and private collections. This led to the publication of a series of books called *Patterns of Fashion*, in the 1960s, which describe and illustrate in detail the fabrics, cut and construction of clothes from different periods in history. It is unusual for theatres to create exact replicas of historic dress using period techniques and fabrics as this would be time-consuming and expensive. However, from 1997 to 2005, Shakespeare's Globe in London undertook several 'original practices' productions under the artistic direction of Mark Rylance and costume designer Jenny Tiramani which aimed to recreate the costumes, settings, props and music of theatre productions in the original Globe during Shakespeare's lifetime. All items of clothing, from doublets, breeches, shirts and ruffs to corsets, skirts, hats and even underwear were woven, dyed, cut and hand-sewn using traditional methods and artisan expertise to produce historically accurate costumes (Karim-Cooper 2013; Marshall 2018, 76-77). The 'original practices' productions were perhaps more a scholarly study or historical re-enactment than a practical design choice. Tiramani maintains, in an interview with Ali Maclaurin (Maclaurin and Monks 2015, 22), that the actors enjoyed wearing these costumes however, according to Bridget Escolme writing in The Routledge Companion to Directors' Shakespeare,

the clothing gave rise to objections by actors for its impracticality (ties and loops caused problems during quick changes that Velcro has since been invented to solve), and by audiences for its bright cleanness [which] did not conform to the taste for the subtle and the muted, characteristic of much late twentieth-century theatre design. These clothes refused to signify the pre-consumerist functionality or faded grandeur offered by many heritage sites. They were newly made clothes (Escolme 2009, 210).

1.4. The organisation of costume-making in the theatre

Although drawings and descriptions of early costume designs can be found quite easily, it is much more difficult to glean information about the invisible, and usually anonymous, craftspeople behind the creation and care of stage costumes. 'Undoubtedly the single most important document of early modern English theatre history' (Cerasano 2005), Philip Henslowe's diary, offers evidence of the daily workings and expenses of an Elizabethan theatre and constitutes, perhaps, the first significant description of a theatre wardrobe department.

In their book, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass note the importance, and relative expense, of costume in Medieval guild pageants and on the Renaissance stage. Henslowe's diary and the surviving papers of his step son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, (Ioppolo, no date; Henslowe 1961) indicate that costumes were a major investment for theatre companies, with Alleyn spending £20 10s. 6d. on a 'black velvet cloak with sleeves embroidered all with silver and gold' at a time when a play would have cost about £6 to buy (Jones and Stallybrass 2001, 178). The costumes were a valuable asset for the theatre company and would have been used to portray different characters in different productions. Jones and Stallybrook suggest that 'a labor force grew up around the theatre because of the value of its clothes' (Jones and Stallybrass 2001, 178).

In Elizabethan theatre, the costumes were kept in the *tyreinge* (attiring) house (Henslowe 1907, 5) and were looked after by a *tyreman* or *tyrewoman* (Greenstreet 1889, 275-6) who, like Richard Kendall of 'the company of players of Salisbury Court [had] served [their] apprenticeship to a tailor' (Crosfield 1935, 135). Natasha Korda notes, in her article 'Household Property/Stage Property: Henslowe as Pawnbroker', that documented evidence from Henslowe's Diary proves that Henslowe

> employed women to make costumes, specifically head attire. There are two payments of twelve shillings to one Mrs. Gosson for *headtyers*[5] in December 1601 (Henslowe 1961, 95) and February 1601/2 (Henslowe 1961, 104), and one of ten shillings to a Mrs. Calle for 'ii *cvrenets* for *hed tyers* for the corte'[6] in January 1602/3 (Henslowe 1961, 118), (Korda 1996).

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[5] headdresses

[6] Two coronets for headdresses for the court

It would appear from entries in Henslowe's diary and papers, that Henslowe 'appointed a man to the seeing of his *accomptes*[7] in *byinge*[8] of Clothes' (Henslowe, 1907, 89) and that, as Gerald Eades Bentley notes in *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642*, some costumes were ordered from master tailors while others were sewn by wardrobe keepers who bought the materials and made the costumes themselves

> pd at the *apoymttment* of the *companye* the 3 of novmbz 1602 vnto the *tayller* for the *mackynge* of the *sewte* of *oserocke*[9] (Henslowe 1961, 224).

> pd vnto the *tyer* man for *mackynge* of the *devells sute & sperethes* & for the witche for the playe of the iij brothers the 23 of octobz 1602[10] (Henslowe 1961, 219).

Susan Brown's analysis of the account books of Drury Lane and Covent Garden indicates the continued importance of costumes in the theatre in the 18th century as well as the link between Georgian Playhouses and urban trade and manufacturing:

> The materials of stage production were recognized as forms of property. Covent Garden's vast wardrobe was used by John Rich as security to obtain a mortgage in 1744 […] Men's and women's costumes were managed by their own wardrobe-keepers who supervised several assistants as well as a staff of dressers. In addition to the work of designing and constructing specific items of clothing, they also looked after repairs and alterations, as well as maintaining their respective inventories (Brown 2010, 62, 65).

As in the Elizabethan theatres, some of the costumes were made by the wardrobe department while others were bought second-hand and specialist costumes and accessories were ordered from external craftspeople. Brown notes that:

> Over forty artisans and retailers supplied Covent Garden with materials and services related to the wardrobe [and that] theatrical tailors appear to have supervised the design and construction within the workshops of the wardrobe department as well as off-site at their own premises (Brown 2010, 63,66).

The 19th century saw the rise of theatrical costume companies as it become increasingly more common for theatres to contract out labour (Brown, 2010, 69) and rent costumes. 'Nathan's, established in 1790, was the leading house for historical costume as well as supplying Court dress, military uniforms and fancy dress' (Victoria and Albert Museum 2016). Angels was established in

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[7] accounts

[8] buying

[9] 'paid, by appointment of the company the 3rd of November 1602, unto the tailor for making Oserocke's suit.' 'Marshal Osric' (sometimes spelt 'Oserocke' or 'Oserecke') was a play written by Thomas Heywood and Wentworth Smith in 1602.

[10] 'paid unto the tyerman for making the devil's suit and spirits and for the witches for the play of the Three Brothers on the 23rd of October 1602'

London in 1840 (Angels 2018). The Eaves Costume Company was founded in New York in 1863 (New York Public Library archives no date). By 1910, Marie Muelle was so famous in Paris that she was Léon Bakst's preferred costumier for his Ballets Russes designs (fig. 2).

Figure 2 Left: Léon Bakst's costume for Nijinsky in 'Le Dieu Bleu' 1912 (source: Public Domain) Right: Nijinsky as The Blue God in 'Le Dieu Bleu' 1912 costumier Marie Muelle (source: Public Domain)

In her 1918 *Confessions of an Opera Singer,* Kathleen Howard enthuses:

> Marie Muelle is now the first operatic costumer of the world. This reputation she has built unaided through her own unfailing energy. Through her rooms pass the most fabulous-priced opera singers, the greatest actors, the stage beauties, famous managers, producers, and designers, the ladies of the great world seeking costumes for wonderful private fêtes—and gentlemen seeking the ladies—all the varied crowd of many nationalities to whom the old childish pastime of 'dressing up' is a business or a pleasure (Howard 1918, 176).

It is evident from this that not all costume-makers lived in obscurity, but it is probable that the seamstresses sewing the costumes were working long hours for a meagre wage, as were seamstresses in general. An 1843 parliamentary commission on child employment in trades and manufacturing, which interestingly included women in its report, describes in detail the working life and conditions of milliners and dressmakers:

> The age at which young women usually commence the millinery business is
> fourteen; they begin first as apprentices, the ordinary term of apprenticeship being
> two years…It is estimated that there are in London, in the millinery and dress-
> making business, at least 1500 employers, and the number of Young People
> engaged [ ] in the whole 15,000; but this does not include journeywomen who work
> at their own houses, of whom also there are great numbers…In many
> establishments the hours of work, during the season, are unlimited, the young
> women never getting more than six, often not more than four, sometimes only
> three, and occasionally not more than two hours for rest and sleep out of the
> twenty-four; and very frequently they work all night (House of Commons 1843,
> 114).

The organization of costume production in the 21st century is either in-house or external. The
costume designer either works closely with the wardrobe department or theatrical costume company
to oversee the designs or, for smaller companies, the costume designer may also take on the role
of costume maker.

1.5. The use of scenographic costume in theatre, dance, performance art and fashion

My thesis is concerned with *scenographic costume*, a unique anomaly that overlaps the boundaries
of fashion, theatre, dance and performance. *Scenographic costume* takes many forms – costume,
object, scenography, sculpture, fashion - and defies precise definition. However, historical and
contemporary examples all have a common factor: the costumes are the primary driving elements
of the performance. Modern film productions will not be included in this study as film has a bigger
budget and the possibility to use special effects to enhance the costumes and makeup. Likewise,
this study will not directly broach the subject of bondage as not relevant in most cases, even though
bondage clothes can also be seen to constrict movement and alter the body.

It is important to note that there is a strong conceptual element to *scenographic costume* which is
not merely aesthetic. *Scenographic costumes* contravene norms, expectations and preconceived
ideas, they cannot be ignored or disassociated from the performance to which they are integral.
They may have their own aesthetic but there is frequently a conceptual component to their design
that illustrates a social or political comment or questions bodily and gender norms. *Scenographic
costume* has historical precedents which are emblematic of the rapidly changing society at the
beginning of the 20th century.

The first known example of performance-defining scenographic costume, as I intend it in this thesis,
was Loïe Fuller's dress in the 'Serpentine Dance' (fig. 3), which she developed during the 1890s.
Since then, it has been a phenomenon that has continued to appear sporadically in different forms
throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, with the principal focus being on experiment and enquiry.
Often associated with the major avant-garde artistic movements of the early 20th century, such as

the Bauhaus, Cubism, Russian Constructivism and Futurism, and to developments in modern dance explored, among others, by Martha Graham and Alwin Nikolais, the advent of experimental theatre practices meant that audiences no longer had historical, semiotic or aesthetic points of reference with which to understand the costumes. *Scenographic costume* was used as a research tool to question aspects of modernity, industrialisation and the role of humankind in the new mechanised world, as well as to explore form, movement and emotion. In his book, *Fashion: a Philosophy*, Lars Svendsen associates fashion with modernism stating that they share a common characteristic: 'the break with tradition and an unceasing endeavour to reach "the new"' (Svendsen, 2006, 10) although the irrational nature of fashion 'consists of change for the sake of change [whereas modernity strove towards] increasingly rational self-determination' (Svendsen 2006, 24).

Figure 3 Loïe Fuller dancing by Samuel Joshua Beckett c.1900 (source: Public Domain)

Germane to my thesis is the distinction between narrative costume and *scenographic costume* and, therefore, to differentiate between characterisation and style. In their book, *Futurist Performance*, Kirby and Kirby differentiate between characterisation and style in costume (Kirby and Kirby 1986, 92) noting that a distinction should be made between costumes whose designs are dictated by a narrative requirement and those whose design reflects Futurist concepts. Citing Fortunato Depero's 1924 production of 'Macchina del 3000' (fig. 4), they state that

> the appearance of actors pretending to be robots should not be mistaken for a significant innovation in acting or costuming. It is a question of characterization rather than style (Kirby and Kirby 1986, 92).
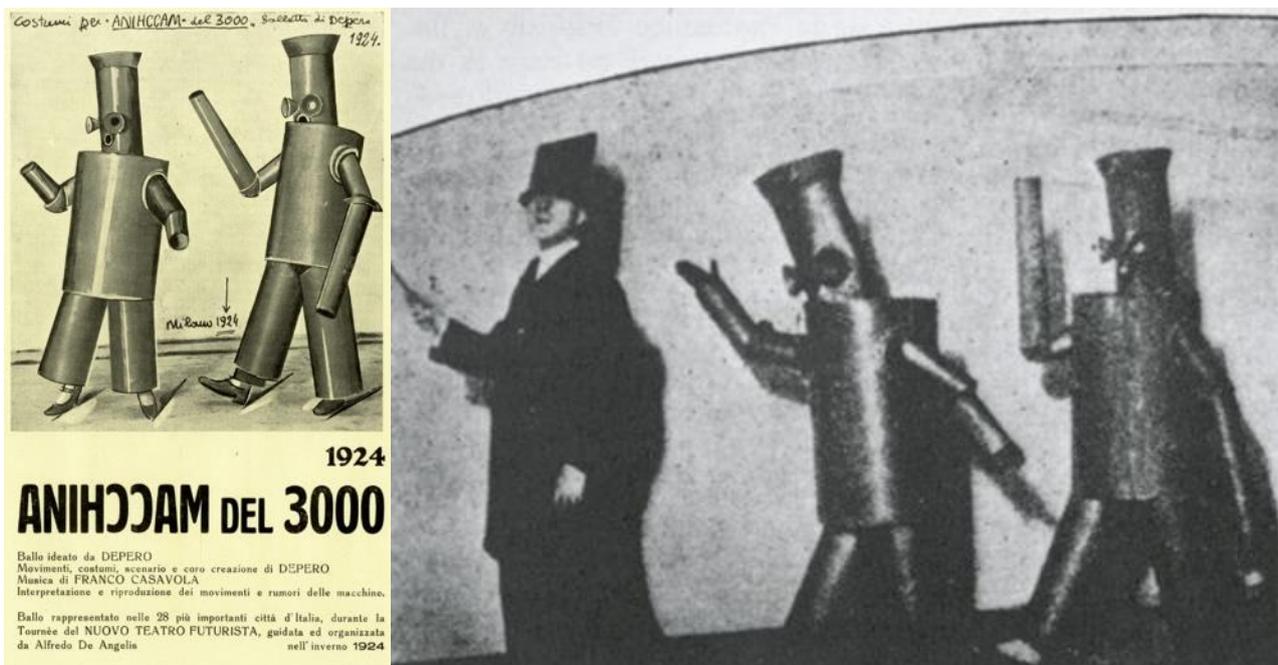
Figure 4 Left: Fortunato Depero press release for 'Macchina del 3000' 1924 (source: Public Domain). Right: Costumes by Depero for his ballet 'Machine of 3000' (source: Public Domain)

Depero's costumes transform the human body, constricting and altering the movement of the actors but they are a characterisation required by the script rather than being an innovative example of Futurist style. Likewise, a distinction should be made between *scenographic costume* and illustration style, which is not always indicative of the final outcome. My research will make a clear distinction between characterisation and style as the *scenographic costumes* under consideration are all examples of conceptual design where the costume is the fulcrum of the whole performance rather than a narrative or directorial requirement.

Figure 5 Kazimir Malevich's costumes for 'Victory over the Sun' 1913: 'an Attentive Labourer', 'Enemy', 'Reader', 'Sportsman' (source: Public Domain)

The use of *scenographic costume* in verbal theatre is unusual, with two notable examples being Kazimir Malevich's 'Victory over the Sun', 1913 (fig. 5) and Hugo Ball's 'Sound', 1916 (fig. 21). There is, however, a particular affinity between dance and the use of *scenographic costume*, probably as dance is most closely associated with movement and experimentation between body and space.

Pablo Picasso's 'Parade', 1917, Oskar Schlemmer's 'Triadic ballet', 1922, Martha Graham's 'Lamentation', 1935, Alwin Nikolais' 'Allegory', 1959 and 'Sanctum', 1964, Robert Rauschenberg's 'Pelican', 1963 and Michael Clark's 'No Fire Escape in Hell', 1986, are all examples of work by designers and choreographers that have pushed the limits of costume design and dance to new and experimental levels.

Since the 1960s there has also been a significant association between *scenographic costume* and performance art, where artists such as Louise Bourgeois and Rebecca Horn have used costume in order to explore questions of gender and identity. Contemporary *scenographic costumes* continue to question issues such as gender and bodily norms as well as consumerisation and I will return to these issues further on in the chapter.

Leigh Bowery's self-created alternative personae and radical characterisations in the 1980s have exerted an enormous influence on both performance and fashion. The book *Not A Toy: Fashioning Radical Characters* contains scholarly essays and images which illustrate contemporary 'radical characters' and 'the growing influence of today's Character culture in Fashion' (Granata et al. 2011). José Teunissen's essay, 'Beyond the Individual, Fashion and identity research', puts forward the theory that: 'Avant-garde fashion, like art, is increasingly becoming a reflection of the repressed tensions and discrepancies that mark contemporary culture' (Teunissen 2011, 18) which would seem to corroborate fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli's much quoted phrase: 'In difficult times, fashion is always outrageous' (Hutchings 2017).

The perceptible link between fashion and the theatre is borne out in countless examples for 'Actors have been (and still are) particularly important figures for the display of fashion…and have played a key role in the promotion and invention of fashion' (Monks 2010, 36). Since the 1980s the boundaries between fashion, dance, performance and theatre have become increasingly indistinct, and there are examples of *scenographic costumes* being used in all disciplines. Fashion shows are becoming ever more theatrical, often showing concept pieces alongside more wearable clothing, and many fashion designers such as BodyMap, Rei Kawakubo (fig. 6), Issey Miyake, Walter van Beirendonck and Hussein Chalayan, have designed costumes for dance productions where the costumes exert an enormous influence on the dancers' movements. Fashion, like other artistic media in the 21st century, is frequently conceptual:

> At the same time that the fashion world has accommodated increasingly conceptual designs, the arts have seen a compatible assimilation of some of the

most fundamental issues addressed by fashion: the body, gender, personal narratives, and the mechanism of commerce and production (Koda 2001, 10).

Figure 6 Rei Kawakubo costumes for Merce Cunningham's 'Scenario', 1997 (source: Mollyali CC BY-NC 2.0)

Teunissen too believes that fashion has become more conceptual, with designers such as Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons (fig. 7), Alexander McQueen (fig. 8) and Martin Margiela explicitly uprooting traditional ideals of beauty and bodily norms.

> Instead of beautifying the body and clothing it with identity and personality, [fashion designers] are searching for the ominous, unsettling fantasies and meanings that the clothed human figure can also communicate (Teunissen 2011, 15).

In her book, *Experimental Fashion*, Francesca Granata likens 'the constant play with garments' traditional function, and its attendant disruptions of expectations…to carnival humour and its temporary disruption of hierarchies' (Granata 2017, 101). The use on the fashion runway of scenographic creations, which often conceal body and face, means that the focus is placed firmly on the garment rather than on the beauty of the model. This

> provides designers with a perfect system for expressing their vision without interference - freeing them from supermodel personalities upstaging the designs, from depicting a certain ethnicity or gender, or limiting the performance to a specific time or place (Gregg Duggan and Hoos Fox 2011, 9).

Figure 7 Comme des Garçons 'Body Meets Dress, Dress meets Body' S/S 1997 (source: Rhododendrites CC BY-SA 4.0)

Image removed due to copyright
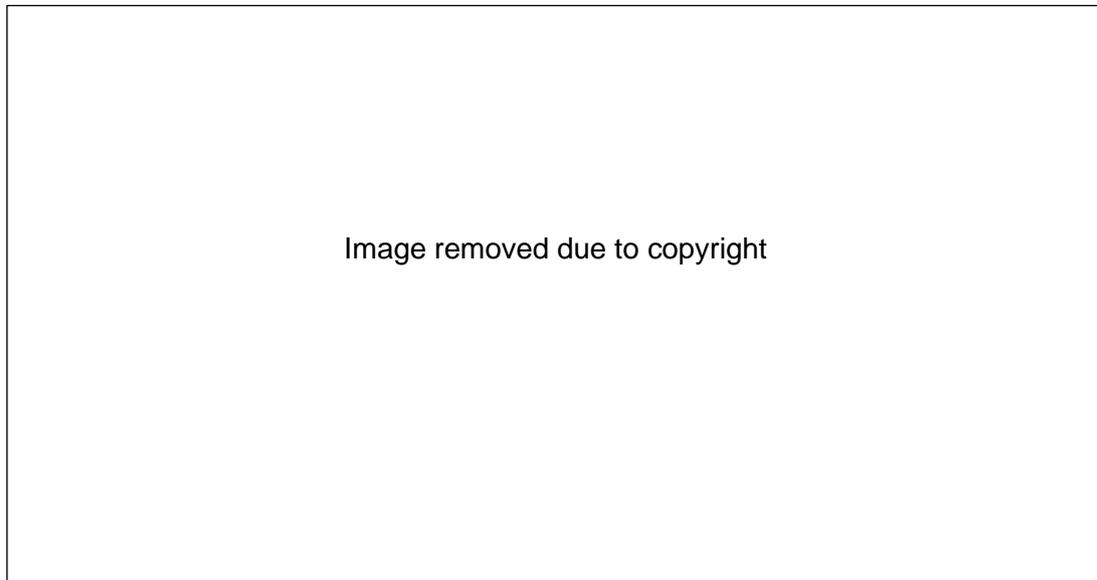
Figure 8 Alexander McQueen A/W Ready-To-Wear Collection 2009 (source: firstview.com)

Ginger Gregg Duggan and Judith Hoos Fox's essay, 'Characters on Parade: contemporary character design invades the catwalk', highlights branding as a fundamental feature of fashion 'promoting the brand, generating editorial attention and press, and ultimately driving sales' (Gregg Duggan and Hoos Fox 2011, 9). Fashion shows now present *scenographic costumes* for effect, in much the same

way that costume was used in the Theatrical Reviews of the 1920s – the Folies Bergère with designs by Erté, 1924, the Ziegfeld Follies, 1920 and Alles aus Liebe 1928.

In an interview with the BBC, Craig Green acknowledges the importance of creating strong, attention-grabbing visual images:

> We don't sell the pieces with wooden elements, for example, but a lot of those more extreme kind of sculpture pieces end up as part of museum collections. We make those pieces because it's about creating a world or a strong visual, but then we also sell jackets and shirts and things that are more accessible for people (McIntosh 2018).

Gregg Duggan and Hoos Fox argue that, through this combination of fashion and 'contemporary Character design', which I would redefine as a form of *scenographic costume*, a new art form has emerged which although 'devoid of traditional narrative elements - most notably a plot - [is] firmly rooted in the world of performance and theatre' (Gregg Duggan and Hoos Fox 2011, 9).

1.6. Scenographic costume as artform

My curiosity in *scenographic costume* and costume as a three-dimensional artform began in the 1980s on discovering Schlemmer's Triadic Ballet and the 'punk' choreography of Michael Clark, where the symbiosis between costumes and performance created a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art). I am particularly interested in the power of costume as a research tool and the different ways costumes can lead to dramaturgy as well as the possibility it offers to subvert traditional hierarchies and override fixed boundaries. My research has led me to look at who designed/designs *scenographic costume* and try to answer the questions 'why?' and 'what is the purpose?'

I argue that *scenographic costume* is an artform in its own right, a type of three-dimensional moving sculpture created from a variety of materials - papier-mâché, wood, plastic, rubber, textiles - and usually crafted by a designer rather than by a dressmaker. After an in-depth survey of the use of *scenographic costume* in theatre, performance and fashion since Loie Fuller, I noted that the costumes were designed predominantly by artists (Picasso, Malevic, Exter, Schlemmer, Depero, Bourgeois), choreographers (Graham, Nikolais), performance artists (Leigh Bowery, Nick Cave, Lucy and Bart) and fashion designers (Rei Kawakubo, Alexander McQueen, Craig Green) who used *scenographic costume* as a research tool. Many of these frequently worked in the theatre but were not specifically trained as costume designers or scenographers.

In an interview for the Financial Times in 2013, dancer and choreographer, Michael Clark, explained why, at the beginning of his career in the 1980s, he preferred to work with friends who were fashion designers and artists rather than trained theatre designers:

I wanted to collaborate with people who had ideas on the same level as me, who weren't just going to be told what to do. Like set designers, or costume designers. I wanted people who were going to challenge me as well (Jobey 2013).

Figure 9 Michael Clark and Ellen van Schuylenburch in a publicity shot for 'Do you me? I Did' 1984, costumes: BodyMap (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Richard Haughton)

Finding theatre designers too accommodating, Clark preferred strong visual images which could inspire his choreography: platform shoes, prosthetics, backside-baring costumes with exaggeratedly long sleeves by BodyMap (Fig.9), polka-dot costumes by Leigh Bowery. Playful, fun and often consciously outrageous, the costumes frequently had an impact on the dancers' movements and inspired Clark's choreography.

Interestingly, looking back with maturity, he has acknowledged, in an article entitled 'Why the Wild Boy of Dance, Michael Clark, Has Toned down His Act', that the visual elements of his early performances frequently upstaged his choreography:

To be honest, it annoyed me that people would talk about the costumes and the props and not about the actual dance. I was trying to help people see what was underneath all that (Jinman 2018).

Figure 10 Michael Clark 'New Puritans',1984 costume: Leigh Bowery (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Richard Haughton)

Although the idea of using challenging costume designs was extremely appealing to Clark, the actual result was irritation at the fact that the costumes received more press coverage than the choreography. The visual impact of the costumes for Clark's productions such as 'New Puritans', 1984 (fig. 10), 'not H.AIR' (1985), 'our caca phoney H. our caca phony H.' (1985) and 'No Fire Escape in Hell' (1986), contravened the expectations of the audience and critics and provoked the subsequent interest in the flamboyant and provocative design choices. Clark's comments perhaps illustrate that he, like many other directors and choreographers, would actually prefer to have greater control over a production. After many years' experience as a costume designer/maker, I would suggest that costume designers are generally 'accommodating', it is an unwritten part of the job description. In the traditional hierarchy of the theatre, the costume designer/maker is typically required to accommodate the wishes of the director or choreographer who often want complete control over their artistic ideas.

1.7. Scenographic costume and body politics

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, *scenographic costume* was constructed and used as a form of research and experimentation by artists, designers and choreographers who strove to find new modes of artistic and corporeal expression, frequently with an underlying social or political agenda. The Russian Constructivists, the German Expressionists, the Futurists and the Bauhaus

were all interested in *scenographic costume* as it offered the possibility to experiment with, and question, the new age of Modernism and industrialisation. By altering the natural shape of the body the performer took on a wholly different, more mechanical, appearance which, in turn, transformed their movements in the surrounding space. Many of the costumes, such as Picasso's Cubist costumes for the French and American managers in 'Parade', 1917 (fig.11), and Lavinia Schulz and Walter Holdt's Expressionist dance costumes for 'Springvieh', 1922, and 'Technik', 1924 (fig. 12), reflected the artistic styles and interests of their designers.

Figure 11 Picasso's Cubist costume for the American manager in 'Parade', 1917 (source: Public Domain)

Figure 12 Lavinia Schulz and Walter Holdt's costume for 'Technik', 1924 (source: Public Domain)

Scenographic costume has continued to be used as a platform for social, cultural and political comment and as a way to subvert norms and conventions. In her article 'Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice', Joanne Entwistle writes about the subversive nature of clothes in certain situations:

> Bodies that do not conform, bodies that flout the conventions of their culture and go without the appropriate clothes are subversive of the most basic social codes (Entwistle 2000, 323).

Clark, in an interview for the Financial Times, also recognises the power of dressing to express:

> The body can be political, too. And I think the way people chose to dress was, for a lot of us, the only way we could express how we felt…How could you deny that what people wear means something? (Jobey 2013).

With the rise of second-wave feminism in the 1960s

> feminism inverted and converted the old metaphor of the 'body politic', found in Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Machiavelli, Hobbes and many others, to a new metaphor: 'the politics of the body'. In the old metaphor of the body politic, the state or society was imagined as a human body…Now, feminism imagined the human body as itself a politically inscribed entity (Bordo 1993).

As Kathleen Lennon and Susan Bordo note, the body is never neutral: 'The body as lived is always a body in a situation, a body always subjected to culture' (Lennon 2010) and 'a site of struggle' (Jaggar and Bordo 1989, 28). This focus on the body resulted in artists and designers, such as Leigh Bowery, Rei Kawakubo and Lady Gaga, creating new forms of *scenographic costume* that play with notions of normality and diversity. Questions surrounding body and gender norms are relevant to questions about modern society, aestheticism, anti-aestheticism and the grotesque. If 'the unexpected, surprise and astonishment, are an essential part and characteristic of beauty' (Baudelaire 2006, 41), Baudelaire's phrase, 'Le beau est toujours bizarre' (Baudelaire 1868, 217) could be a *leitmotif* for many *scenographic costumes* whose aesthetic is often deliberately 'bizarre', questioning the traditional ideals of beauty. Fashion designer Alexander McQueen once said: 'I think there is beauty in everything. What 'normal' people perceive as ugly I can usually see something of beauty in it' (McQueen 2017). Lady Gaga can be seen as parodying the use of costume as a protest to dismantle the traditional ideas of glamour that are usually associated with pop and film stars.

Although this thesis does not focus specifically on the role of gender, the way that gender permeates various aspects of my research, not least from my own experience as a woman and as a costume designer/maker, should be mentioned. Entwhistle wrote: 'the body itself moves through time and space with a sense of itself as gendered' (Entwistle 2000) although, it should be noted, that the idea of only two genders is outdated and simplistic. Unlike Italian or French, where there is a minimum linguistic difference between the masculine and feminine versions of a person who designs or makes clothes (un sarto/una sarta in Italian, la couturière/ il couturier in French), in the English language the word tailor has different connotations to seamstress or dressmaker, implying greater specialisation and technical skills. Needlework - sewing, embroidery, knitting, weaving, lacemaking, mending - has been, and frequently still is, considered to be a feminine skill, passed down, in the home, from mother to daughter. Originally a domestic skill acquired by all classes, it became a profession for many poorer women working long hours in the home, in workshops or, after the industrial revolution, in factories. Until the reclamation of craft as an artform by women artists in the 1970s, the decorative arts were considered by most to be a lesser artform:

> The age-old aesthetic hierarchy that privileges certain forms of art over others based on gender associations has historically devalued 'women's work' specifically because it was associated with the domestic and the 'feminine' (Reilly 2015).

My research has yielded evidence of a gender difference in the predominant use of construction materials used by the designers of the more extreme *scenographic costume* in the early part of the 20th century. Most male artists used non-traditional materials such as cardboard, wood, papier-mâché and metal to make the costumes (Malevich, Picasso, Schlemmer), while women were more likely to have experimented with fabrics and textiles (Fuller, Schulz, Graham).[11] This may be linked to societal norms and the skill sets typically associated with each gender at the time as well as an interest in different themes.

In the 21st century there is no noticeable gender difference in the use of materials. However, in *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, Shirley Ardener argues that women occupy space in a different way to men and that

> it is not adequate to say that men and women merely have the same viewpoint [as] their social constructions and their experience must often (but not always) differ fundamentally if only as a result of their accumulated experiences and the way these will inevitably affect their perceptions. [Even where experiences are similar and] look superficially the same they cannot be, because differences in other elements will cause a 'shadow' effect or exert 'pull' and thus will affect their meanings, [therefore] one element in a cosmology can only be fully understood in relation to all the other constituents (Ardener 1993, 19).

Jean Grimshaw also talks about the way men inhabit space in a different way to women in *Women's bodies: Cultural Representation and Identity* and 'the ways in which men's occupation of the maximum possible amount of space around them may be oppressive and inhibiting to others' (Arthurs and Grimshaw 1999, 107). In relation to this, Julie Blair articulates the difficulty that social anthropologists face in trying to map the boundaries of different social systems as:

> The silence of sisters, mothers and daughters, which was interpreted as a tacit confirmation of the male models of the worlds they lived in, can no longer be seen as a gesture of affirmation. It might hide a secret or muted language […] through which another conceptual order of society may be approached (Blair 1993, 201).

'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (de Beauvoir 1988, 267) wrote Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex,* first published in 1948, launching the debate on the question of gender and first generation feminism. Commenting on Beauvoir's influential statement, Judith Butler wrote: 'As an

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11 One notable exception to this being Alexandra Exter whose costumes for 'Aelita' mixed heavily worked textiles with industrial materials.

intentionally organized materiality, the body is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention. In other words, the body is a historical situation' (Butler 1988, 521). In her article, 'Critically Queer', Butler talks about the performativity of gender stating that 'gender construction and destabilization' arise from a 'the ritualized repetition of norms' rather than being 'a choice', 'a role' or 'a construction that one puts on, as one puts on clothes in the morning' (Butler 1993, 21):

> Gender performativity is not a matter of choosing which gender one will be today. Performativity is a matter of reiterating or repeating the norms by which one is constituted: it is not a radical fabrication of a gendered self. It is a compulsory repetition of prior and subjectivating norms, ones which cannot be thrown off at will, but which work, animate, and constrain the gendered subject, and which are also the resources from which resistance, subversion, displacement are to be forged (Butler 1993, 22).

Butler is talking about social rather than theatrical performativity, but, in her article 'Debating critical costume: negotiating ideologies of appearance, performance and disciplinarity', Rachel Hann associates the subversive quality of costume with body politics and conscious performativity:

> Approached as an interventional practice, costume represents a potential strategy for subverting the ongoing repetitions of body politics. The theatrical charge of costume is innately related to its conscious 'othering' of the act of appearance. (Hann 2017, 5)

Performativity of gender is relevant to both *scenographic costume* and the question of play: few *scenographic costume*s, such as Nick Cave's 'Soundsuits' (Fig. 52), are gender neutral, some, like Schlemmer's Triadic ballet costumes (Fig. 28), suggest binary gender to our innate preconceptions while others, such as Leigh Bowery (Fig. 37), exaggerate gender or question body norms.

As aforementioned, prosthetics which modify and alter the natural shape of the body for aesthetic purposes have played an important part in the history of women's fashion. Through *scenographic costume*, fashion and body art, however, prosthetics are now being used to question and subvert gender and bodily norms as well as aesthetics. In her book *Experimental Fashion, performance Art, Carnival and the Grotesque Body*, Francesca Granata discusses, with reference to Godley, Kawakubo, Bowery, Margiela and Lady Gaga, the ever-greater link between fashion, and the grotesque since the 1980s. She argues that

> the bodies and subjects circulating within fashion at the turn of the millennium are undisciplined ones that upset gender and bodily norms and rules of propriety and beauty. They can be read as provocations and attempts to escape what Michel

Foucault referred to as the 'anatomo-politics of the human body' (Granata 2017, 2).[12]

My own *scenographic costume*s begin life as deliberately gender-neutral, but, due to the nature of the study which asks performers to experiment and play with the costumes in order to develop a performance, the final outcome can be different to my original intention as the costumes take on a life of their own, independent of the costume designer. This is illustrated by a workshop I conducted with Giulia Moroni, a dancer/choreographer, where, at a certain point she wore the costume in such a way that it took on the distinct aspect of a Renaissance skirt.

The body is central to *scenographic costume*s; without the body of a performer costumes would remain static and lifeless. Bodily norms are also a central theme for the artists and performers experimenting with *scenographic costumes*. Jennifer Parker-Starbuck and Roberta Mock illustrate the importance of the body in performance theory:

> Bodies are the material through which theatre researchers most often discuss performance; they are scrutinised, critiqued, displayed, transformed, gendered, controlled and determined in critical reviews, historical accounts and theorisations of practices such as theatre, live art and dance. Whether performing or spectating, bodies are often the means for understanding how performance operates and makes meaning. The interdisciplinary nature of performance studies has encouraged theatre researchers not only to analyse bodies in spaces of performance but to consider how bodies might become or produce performance (Parker-Starbuck and Mock 2011, 210).

With *scenographic costumes* that constrict natural movement 'it is sometimes hard to distinguish clearly between what is achieved through the performer's body and movement of the performer's costume' (McKinney and Butterworth 2009, 6). When costumes are the inspiration behind a performance, the way the costumes are used may become very personal. The notion of costume as an extension of the performer's body and mind suggests a correlation between how the costume is used to create the performance and the identity of the performer themselves. There is 'an essential perceptual indistinguishability between the actor and their costume' (Monks 2010 11). A dancer will interact in a different way to an actor, but two dancers may also interact differently as individual experience and memory colour the perception and embodied experience of the performers. 'Placing the emphasis on the costume and the body as a text or narrative [means] that the performance is the costume and the body's responses to it' (Bugg, 2013, 97).

Extensive literature has been written on and around the subject of the body in relation to a broad range of topics including gender, image, embodiment, space and socio-cultural themes. The wide

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[12] Michel Foucault refers to the 'anatomo-politics of the human body' in, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1. *An Introduction* (New York: Random House, 1978), 139

array of scholars listed in the first two chapters of Helen Thomas's book *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* illustrates the overwhelming interest in theories of the body and performativity in sociology and cultural studies in recent years (Thomas 2003). Since the 1970s interest in the subject of embodiment has flourished as mind-body dualism, derived from Cartesian philosophy has been challenged by theorists. The phenomenological philosopher Merleau-Ponty suggests that, since experience consists of both mental and bodily experience, thought and perception are embodied and the body is fundamental in our perception of the world:

> We have relearned to feel our body; we have found underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body that other knowledge which we have of it in virtue of its always being with us and of the fact that we are our body […] we are in the world through our body, […] we perceive the world with our body. [P]erceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception (Merleau-Ponty 2013, 206).

In his book *The Moving Body* Jacques Lecoq, influential physical theatre teacher and founder of the Ecole Internationale de Théâtre in Paris, also notes the importance of the body in a learning experience when he writes: 'The body knows things about which the mind is ignorant' (Lecoq 2013, 8). The senses are personal fields, but each sense has its own mode of relating to the world around us. In his essay 'Eye and Mind', Merleau-Ponty describes the body as 'a thing among things…caught in the fabric of the world' (Merleau-Ponty 1964) which Italian linguist Patrizia Violi reiterates in her article 'How our Bodies Become Us: Embodiment, Semiosis and Intersubjectivity': although perception is uniquely personal 'the body is not an isolated entity, but the result of a complex set of interactions with the environment and with others, where intersubjectivity plays a crucial role' (Violi 2009, 57).

Violi questions the reductive use of the term 'the body' and notes that socio-cultural influences play a part in forming the persona:

> The diffuse use of the singular term 'the body' is revealing: it alludes to a non-gendered, pre-discursive phenomenon, hiding the concrete reality of the many different bodies all persons possess, with all their social, cultural, and discursive determinations (Violi 2009 158).

Everything exists within a context: social, cultural, political, spatial, temporal. The meaning of individual elements of an experience depends on their relationship to the whole experience. A person is an individual in the world, but at the same time, part of a bigger picture, not an isolated being immune to outside influences:

> Individuals, groups and cultures generate different worlds' (Ardener 1993) but 'bodies are always plural entities: always situated in a cultural environment where they interact with other bodies, always immersed in a complex world of intersubjective and inter-objective relationships that must be continuously interpreted, and out of which people must make sense' (Violi 2009, 60).

Interaction with others is a fundamental part of how our worlds are constructed and understood. The body 'is a nexus of lived and related meanings, related not only to present positions and intentions but to past and possible future ones as well' (Arthurs and Grimshaw 1999, 103). Our experience of the past, present and future, however, are only ever lived in the present. Memory, sensation and experience are embedded in social and cultural contexts and, as Rebecca Schneider writes: 'We understand ourselves relative to the remains we accumulate' (Scheider, 2012, 65). I would suggest that 'remains' can be both material and psychological. Memory is a fundamental part of who we are for

> phenomenology has taught us that perception has at its basis an obvious link between sensation and representation. In order to perceive, one has to find in one's memory…a representation (Féral 2012, 41).

As my study in *scenographic costume* inevitably involves the relationship between costume and performer, thereby body and object, I originally explored the possibility of using a phenomenological research methodology. I continually found this to be problematic however, since in that case, the onus would be on the performer and the performer's experience of wearing the costume, rather than on the costume itself, which has always been my intention. I also agree with Lakoff and Johnson who argue that a phenomenological approach is limiting in its efficacy as it is impossible:

> through phenomenological introspection alone [to] discover everything there is to know about the mind and the nature of experience…Phenomenological reflection, though valuable in revealing the structure of experience, must be supplemented by empirical research into the cognitive unconscious (Lakoff and Johnson 1999).

The costumes take precedence in my research and the body and embodiment are considered as a subsidiary factor, although fundamental to our perception of the world and our relationship to the objects around us. As a result of the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops and my practice research I became interested in certain aspects of New Materialism and Jane Bennett's 'thing power' (Bennett 2010) which I find more relevant to my research and which I discuss in my concluding chapter.

1.8. Scenographic costume in contemporary research

Since the publication of Monks' *The Actor in Costume* in 2010 there has been a noticeable development in the areas of both practical and theoretical costume research as the agency of costume has become increasingly recognized as a fundamental aspect of performance. New literature, including Barbieri's *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture, and the Body* (Barbieri 2017) and Pantouvaki and McNeil's *Performance Costume New Perspectives and Methods* (Pantouvaki and McNeil 2021b), as well as the *Studies in Costume & Performance* journal[13], founded

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[13] https://www.intellectbooks.com/studies-in-costume-performance

by Barbieri and Pantouvaki in 2016, demonstrate the wide interest and varied research undertaken in recent years.

At the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space in 2019, the Best Performance Design & Scenography Publication Award was awarded to Barbieri for her book and, as I wrote:

> It should be noted that this was the first time a costume-related book has won this prestigious scenography award at PQ. This is a significant step forward and indication that costume is finally being taken seriously and given a voice. It will be interesting to see how both practical and theoretical costume research evolves over the next few years and how costume will be presented and represented at the next Prague Quadrennial in 2023 (Marshall 2020).

The exhibitions 'Extreme Costume', curated by Czech costume designer Simona Rybáková at the Prague Quadrennial 2011 and Innovative Costume of the 21st century the Next Generation curated by Igor Roussanoff and Susan Tsu in Moscow in 2019[14] have also demonstrated the current interest in the agency and potential of costume, as does the World of Wearable Art international competition held every year in New Zealand[15].

The *Critical Costume* research platform was founded by Rachel Hann and Sidsel Bech in 2013 'to promote new debate and scholarship on the status of costume in contemporary art and culture' (Hann 2017, 1). Since then, the platform has flourished and grown exponentially, creating an international network of costume designers and disseminating new research in costume through its biennial conference and exhibition. Presenting my practice research at both the 2018 and 2020 conferences and exhibitions[16] gave me the possibility to place my unique research into a larger context and the opportunity to engage at a high level of critical enquiry. The scope of the research presented at the *Critical Costume* conferences is wide ranging and the costume exhibits prevalently experimental. Several designers such as Daphne Karstens (Fig. 29), Fruzsina Nagy (Figs. 26 & 27), Charlotte Østergaard (Figs 18/19) and Yuka Oyama (Fig. 35) explore the use of *scenographic costume* as an instigator of performance.

The title and theme of the 2020 Critical Costume conference and exhibition was the 'Agency of Costume'[17]. The conference was organised by Christina Lindgren and Sodja Lotker of the Oslo National Academy of the Arts who are running a four-year artistic research project in *Costume Agency*. Their

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[14] https://innovativecostume.secure-platform.com/a/page/entertainment/overview

[15] https://www.worldofwearableart.com/competition-2/

[16] The 2020 Critical Costume conference and exhibition entitled *Costume Agency* was held online during the Covid epidemic: https://costumeagency.com/project/susan-marshall/.

[17] https://costumeagency.com/critical-costume-2020-conference/#videoL
https://exhibition.costumeagency.com/

research goal is to explore the full performative potential of garments holistically within the complex system of body-garment-action-context [with a] partly phenomenological and partly socio-political' approach. (Lindgren and Lotker 2019).

Although their phenomenological approach differs from my research, Lindgren interviewed me about my *Insubordinate Costume* research for the *Costume Agency* website[18] as our focus on the performative potential of costume is similar:

> The future of scenographic costume remains to be seen, but recent trends would indicate that the contemporary use of scenographic costume is being employed to explore and research the pertinent questions of the twenty-first century in much the same way as the artistic movements of the early twentieth century investigated the possibilities of the costumed body as a scenic element in examining questions of embodiment, modernity and power. (Marshall 2020)

In this chapter I have contextualised the place of *Scenographic Costume* within the history of clothing, fashion and theatre costume and outlined themes such as body, gender and identity which I will elaborate on in the next chapter. I argue that *scenographic costume* has the possibility to instigate a performance through various means but that, in all the examples I give, the common factor is its usage as a method of research. By placing costume as the point of departure for a performance, instead of a script or choreography, the normal hierarchies of the theatre are subverted and destabilised. This can lead to difficulties as actors, directors and choreographers battle to domesticate this unknown element. As aforementioned, reflecting on his early shows, Michael Clark felt that the *scenographic costume*s detracted from the performance in some way and that the audience were distracted from his choreography by the costumes. If, however, *scenographic costumes* are the focal point of a production, rather than a decorative element, they *are the performance*. In the following chapter I will investigate how the element of play, in its many forms, is fundamental to the creation process in using *scenographic costume* to generate a performance.

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[18] https://costumeagency.khio.no/?page_id=357

Chapter 2: Play and the Scenographic Costume

2.1. Play

Play, in its different forms, is central to my research. The element of play, visible in Schlemmer's Triadic Ballet or Michael Clark's early work, is a recurrent theme which can be observed throughout all my chosen examples. In this chapter, I place historical and contemporary instances of *scenographic costume* within the context of different aspects of play, to demonstrate how *scenographic costume*, positioned as the primary creative motivator, can be used as a creative research tool to explore social, cultural and political issues.

2.2. Play as research, play as discovery

In her article 'Playful invention, inventive play' in the *International Journal of Play*, Monica M. Smith writes about the *Invention at Play* exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington which 'provided visitors with opportunities to learn how play fosters creativity and invention' (M. M. Smith 2016, 246). With reference to Fergus Hughes book *Children, play, and development* and Robert Weisberg's book *Creativity: Beyond the myth of genius*, Smith describes the characteristics of creativity:

> Creativity can be described in three dimensions: (a) a personality characteristic - attitudes toward oneself and the world characterised by mental flexibility, spontaneity, curiosity, and persistence; (b) an intellectual process - a way of thinking, an approach to problem-solving that includes making unusual connections or associations; relying not only on conscious linear thought, but also on intuition and imagination…generating rich visual images; asking original questions; and (c) a resulting creative product and original contribution to the appreciation understanding or improvement of the human condition (Hughes 2010; Weisberg 1993; M. M. Smith 2016, 246)

Smith continues by asking: 'Why do humans play? What are the practical functions of play? How is play linked to child development? [and notes that] some consensus has emerged: play in all its forms shapes habits, knowledge, and skills that form a basis for lifelong talents (Bekoff 1998; Pellegrini

and Smith 1998; P. K. Smith 1982; M. M. Smith 2016, 247). Importantly she states that humans 'retain many childlike characteristics during adulthood [and that] this retention of juvenile attributes has been linked to brain plasticity (Bjorklund 1997), species adaptability (F. R. Wilson 1998) and creativity (S. M. Smith and Ward 1999; M. M. Smith 2016, 247).

The nature of creativity has been studied at length by scholars trying to pin down its elusive qualities, but many theorists, including Fröbel, Dewey, Maslow and Piaget consider the concept of play as fundamental to creativity as it fosters creative solutions. In *Psychological Types,* Jung wrote that 'the creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves' (Jung 1921 123). David Hockney, who has written several books on his artistic philosophy, believes that 'without a sense of play there's not much curiosity either; even a scientist has a sense of play. And that allows for surprises, the unexpected, discoveries' (Hockney 1993, 133). Play is intrinsically linked to experiment, exploration, research, discovery and learning for children and adults alike.
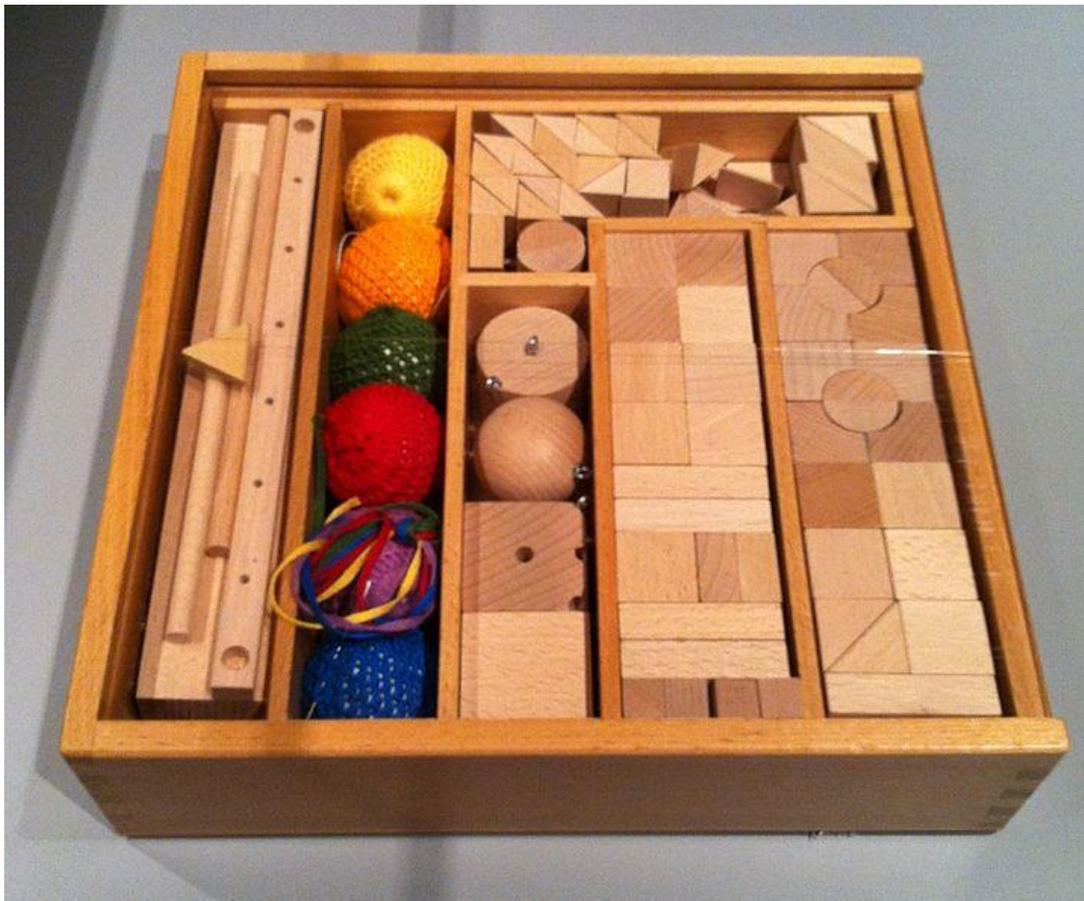
Figure 13 Fröbel's 'Play Gifts' (source: CC BY-SA 3.0 Kippelboy)

Although by no means the first preschool in Europe[19], the first *kindergarten* was introduced by educationalist Friedrich Fröbel in 1837[20]. Fröbel's *kindergarten*, a garden of children where each child could be nurtured and encouraged to grow, was centred around his belief that play is fundamental to child development as it encourages exploration, imagination and invention.

As an aid to learning through creative play, Fröbel identified and created twenty 'play gifts' (fig. 13) and 'occupations' that help develop skills and become progressively more complex as the child grows and develops. The 'play gifts' included balls on string and wooden building blocks of different shapes, the 'occupations' weaving, threading and paper-folding. William Nicholas Hailmann, who introduced *kindergartens* into the United States, translated Fröbel's book *The Education of Man* and annotated:

> The distinction between the gifts and occupations, though never clearly formulated by Fröbel, is very important. The gifts are intended to give the child from time to time new universal aspects of the external world, suited to a child's development. The occupations, on the other hand, furnish material for practice in certain phases of skill…The gift gives the child a new cosmos, the occupation fixes the impressions made by the gift. The gift invites only arranging activities; the occupation invites also controlling, modifying, transforming, creating activities. The gift leads to discovery; the occupation, to invention. The gift gives insight; the occupation, power. The occupations are one-sided; the gifts, many-sided, universal. The occupations touch only certain phases of being ; the gifts enlist the whole being of the child (Fröbel and Hailmann 1887, 287).

The modular *Insubordinate Costumes* of my practice research share similarities to Fröbel's 'play gifts' as they are simple repetitive shapes that encourage open-ended play where the potential combinations are seemingly endless. By playing with the modular costumes, exploring and investigating their mechanisms, performers discover the different creative possibilities that they offer. The performer, in a primary collaboration with the costume, discovers its latent potential, without any prejudgement or prescribed narrative context. The costume, and its obstructions, leads, or rather, demands, a heuristic process: improvisation, exploration, play. Creative play is the central feature of my costumes, which are neither decorative nor narrative but modular puzzles without a single solution.

Although some researchers, such as Teresa Amabile (Amabile 2006) have put forward the theory that constraints reduce creativity, a greater consensus among scholars holds that, conversely, some form of constraint, as opposed to absolute freedom, aids creativity. (Boden 1995; Stokes 2005;

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[19] Preschools focusing on childcare and education were founded by Johann Friedrich Oberlin and Louise Scheppler in Strasbourg, France in 1779, by Princess Pauline zur Lippe in Detmold, Germany in 1802, by Robert Owen in New Lanark, Scotland in 1816, Samuel Wilderspin in London in 1819 and Countess Theresa Brunszvik in Hungary in 1828.

[20] Fröbel opened his preschool in 1837 but named it kindergarten in 1840.

Csikszentmihalyi 2009; Biskjaer, Onarheim and Wiltschnig 2011) As Margaret Boden writes: 'constraints, far from being opposed to creativity, make creativity possible. To throw away all constraints would be to destroy the capacity for creative thinking' (Boden 1995). Alongside the 'embracement of constraints', Biskjaer, Onarheim and Wiltschnig note that 'the role of motivation [and] playfulness [are] key to achieving a highly creative result' (Biskjaer, Onarheim and Wiltschnig 2011). My case study research will involve building and playing with my modular *Insubordinate Costumes*, whilst my praxis research aims to demonstrate that it is possible for there to be an aesthetic drive to theatre making and dramaturgy, and that a sense of play is essential to the outcome. I argue that an element of play and/or playfulness is visible in all *scenographic costume* and draw my own research questions from this heritage.

I have taken Loïe Fuller as the first example of the use of costume instigating a performance (figure 3). She has been described as 'a progenitor of modern dance' (Garelick 2007, 9) and a pioneer of theatrical lighting, however she is equally important in the history of costume. The flowing silk robes with the gargantuan, extended sleeves that she manipulated with long poles, paved the way for the experimental costume designs of the twentieth century, which form the basis of my study, together with more recent examples in theatre, performance and fashion. Her distinctive robes evolved from an accidental discovery while preparing her costume for the hypnotism scene of a play called 'Quack M.D.'. Fuller had been given a white, Indian silk skirt that was much too long and had to be pinned to a bodice rather than worn at the waist. In her book *Fifteen years of a dancer's life* she describes how, in order to avoid stepping on the fabric, she 'raised her arms aloft [and] continued to flit around the stage like a winged spirit with the audience exclaiming "It's a butterfly!", "It's an orchid!"' (Loie Fuller 1977, 31). 'Quack M.D.' was not successful but the idea for her Serpentine Dance was born from further experiments by manipulating the fabric and playing with different coloured lights in front of a mirror:

> I had discovered something unique, but I was far from imagining, even in a daydream, that I had hold of a principle capable of revolutionising a branch of aesthetics. I am astounded when I see the relations that form and colour assume (Loie Fuller 1977, 36).

In 1986, twenty avantgarde costumes by the mask dancers, Lavinia Schulz and Walter Holdt, were found in boxes stored in the attic of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, together with drawings, personal notes, choreographic notations and photos of the costumed performers, taken by Minya Diez-Dührkoop in 1924 (MK&G 2012). The costumes (figs. 14 & 15) formed part of a memorial exhibition organised by the museum director and art historian, Max Sauerlandt, in 1925, one year after the violent, untimely deaths of Schulz and Holdt, and were then placed, uncategorised, into storage where they remained until 1986, untouched and undiscovered and thus saved from being classified as degenerate art by the Third Reich (Jockel & Stöckemann 1989, 56).

After training in painting, music and dance, Schulz studied 'lessons in the expressionistic art of the stage' (Jockel & Stöckemann 1989, 57) at the Kunstschule Der Sturm, founded by Herwarth Walden in Berlin in 1916. Her teacher, Lothar Schreyer, who later ran the stage workshop at the Bauhaus from 1921 to 1923 before Oskar Schlemmer took over, described Lavinia Schultz as 'a brilliant person with wild passion, tamed only by the breeding of art' (Jockel & Stöckemann 1989, 57). In 1919, Schulz followed Schreyer to Hamburg where she began to experiment with full body masks and where she met Walter Holdt, who was to become both her artistic partner and, in 1920, her husband.
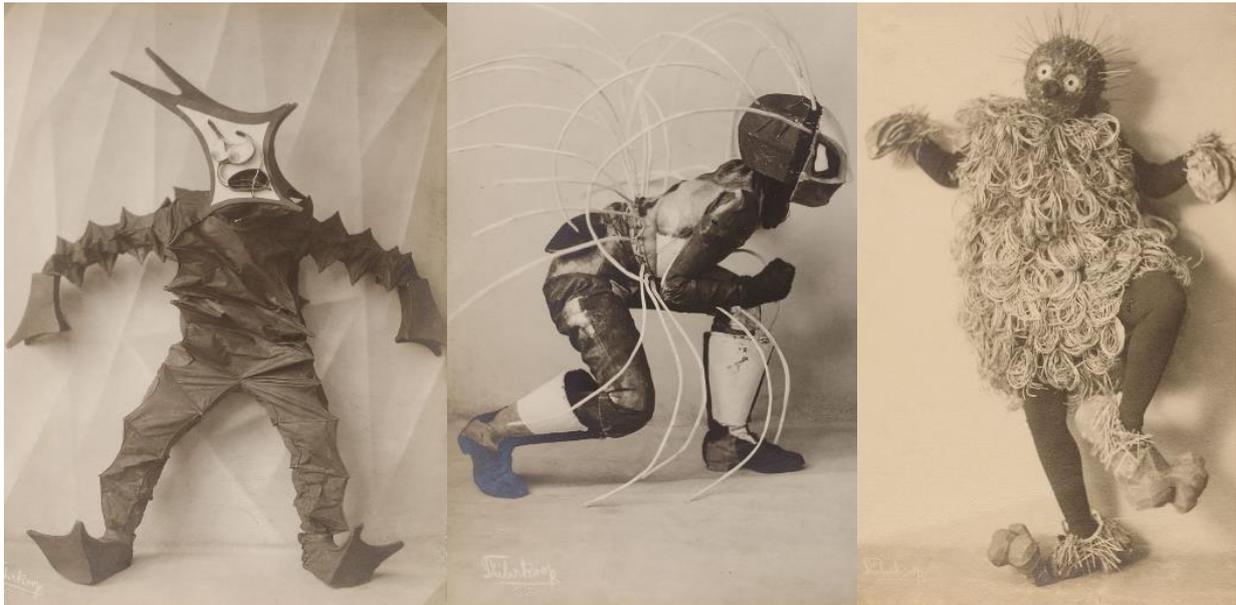
Figure 14 Lavinia Schulz and Walter Holdt 'Springvieh', 'Toboggan', 'Bibo'. Photos by Minya Diez-Dührkoop, 1924 (source: Public Domain)

Figure 15 Lavinia Schulz and Walter Holdt 'Springvieh', 'Toboggan', 'Bibo' circa 1923 (source: Public Domain)

Becoming increasingly more eccentric and insular, Schulz and Holdt left Schreyer's theatre company and, borrowing money from her parents, Schulz set up her own workshop, described by Sauerlandt as:

> A large room in one of the most despicable lodgings on Lübecker Strasse: a bedroom, a bedroom, and an atelier at the same time, filled with a jumble of colourful cloth, cardboard, paper, rope, and colours, and laying and standing and hanging down from the ceiling all around were the strangest inventions of form and colour, as strange as their names: Springvieh, Bibo, Toboggan (Sauerlandt 1925, 23).

From the signed designs, paper patterns, letters and notes held in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe archives, it would appear that Schulz was the creative force behind the extraordinary costumes that she and Holdt produced and danced in between 1919 and 1924. At first sight, the full body masks, made from papier-mâché, fabric, cardboard, wire and recycled objects, recall both Schlemmer's costumes for the 1922 'Triadic Ballet' and the distorted, highly subjective characteristics of Expressionism. Although their friend, the musician Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt described the costumes as 'expressionist primitive animals' (Stuckenschmidt 1979, 36) Schulz distanced herself from the Expressionism movement, stating: 'Expressionism is no solution; Expressionism works with industry and machines' (Jockel & Stöckemann 1989, 61). Schulz and Holz's inspiration came, instead, from Norse mythology and the mediaeval, Islandic *Poetic Edda* and *Prose Edda* which they treated as their holy scriptures.

Schulz and Holdt developed an artist/performer *Gesamtkunstwerk* ethos which led to them living every aspect of their life as research into costume and expressive movement. According to Jockel and Stöckemann, 'deprivation, pain and heaviness [were] a prerequisite for [their] spiritual-artistic creation' (Jockel & Stöckemann 1989, 64). Although suffering extreme economic hardship, Schulz and Holdt always performed for free as Schulz believed that: 'you cannot sell spiritual things for money. Spirit and money are two hostile poles, when you sell spiritual ideas for money, you have sold the spirit for money and lost the spirit'[21] (Jockel & Stöckemann 1989, 61). Barely surviving and living in abject poverty in a basement flat, Schulz and Holdt spent their days wearing 'grey jerseys [and] dancing, practicing, working on the masks, putting them on and taking them off' (Stuckenschmidt 1979, 36). When asked by Stuckenschmidt why she didn't use lighter materials, Schulz replied 'Material should not be easy; art is heavy and should work hard, otherwise it's no good' (Stuckenschmidt 1979, 36).

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[21] Unnumbered, undated note written by Lavinia Schulz and held in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe archives in Hamburg.

Figure 16 Jessica Bugg Emotion Collection, 'Black Point Dress' 2011, photo Roy Shakespeare (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Jessica Bugg)

Many contemporary designers of *scenographic costume* use play as a research method. Jessica Bugg's 'research and practice is concerned with developing methods for embodied clothing design and communication that are informed by interdisciplinary practice at the intersection of fashion, fine art and performance' (Bugg 2013b). Her academic interests have their basis in fashion but illustrate the interdisciplinarity that has arisen in recent years and the close links that have been forged between fashion and the performative arts. Her background research and design examples are relevant to my area of interest; however, her premise is different as her costumes develop from working closely with a dancer who experiments with movement as Bugg adapts and alters her designs (fig. 16). As such, costume and choreography are inextricably linked and the process of development is simultaneous rather than the costume being the starting point.

Giulia Pecorari 'explores the hidden potential of materials and their meaning for performance, and how these materials can be used to extend and express the human condition' (Pecorari 2016a). She has an MA in Costume Design for Performance from London College of Fashion and is one of a new generation of highly original costume designers to have graduated from University of the Arts London or one of the Dutch art schools where the onus is on experimental creativity. Her work is interdisciplinary, 'closer to a piece of art or a performance in itself, [where] the costume and performer [ ] become an extension of each other' (Pecorari 2016b).

Figure 17 Giulia Pecorari 'The Non-existent Knight' 2009 (Permission to reproduce these images granted by Giulia Pecorari)

'The Non-Existent Knight' (fig. 17), Pecorari's MA final project, whose title is taken from the novel of the same name by Italo Calvino, is a complex structure which resembles an oversized mediaeval suit of armour. The huge overlapping telescopic pieces extend and contract which change shape and give the impression that there is no performer inside

> an inanimate form in an empty landscape, suddenly starts to take shape as though coming into being. The movement articulation creates a dialogue between performer, costume and space that evokes a reality which hangs in the balance, in continuous evolution, exploring ideas of existence and nonexistence (Pecorari 2016b).

In 2018, I had the opportunity to experience *scenographic costume* in the role of performer as opposed to designer as I organised, and participated in, a workshop at Goldsmiths with Danish visual artist/costume designer, Charlotte Østergaard, and American somatic dance/theatre artist, Sally E. Dean. Through play, Østergaard and Dean explore:

> the relationship between how the costume moves/shapes the body and how the body moves/shapes the costume [in order to produce] a choreographic work where the costume and choreographic material co-create both the movement and the costume itself' (Charlotte Østergaard 2018).

Østergaard's costumes (fig.18) are webs of stretch fabric which bind tightly to parts of the body while leaving long strands of trailing elastic which can be attached to pillars, metal bars or other performers. Wearing them, the sensation is one of constriction, both in the tightness of the bindings and in the inability to escape the restraining cords. Østergaard and Dean asked the performers to stretch the costumes to their limits, to intersperse periods of trying to break free with periods of vigilant repose.

Figure 18 Sally E. Dean and Charlotte Østergaard's 'Traces of Tissue', workshop at Goldsmiths 2018 (source: Author)

Figure 19 Sally E. Dean and Charlotte Østergaard's 'Traces of Tissue', Prague quadrennial 2019 (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Dean, Østergaard and Agnes Saaby Thomsen)

The resulting effect was one of strange creatures, part human, part wild animal living between hope and hopelessness. This impression fits with the themes of the final site-specific performance *Traces of Tissues* (fig. 19) which was performed at the Prague Quadrennial in 2019 in the context of a triangle of tall steel pillars, a memorial to the 45,500 Jews deported from Prague of whom approximately 89 percent died (Pařík 2010).

A description of this production and other examples of scenographic costumes at the Prague Quadrennial can be read in my article 'Following the threads of scenographic costume at PQ19' in volume 6 of the Theatre and Performance Design journal [22] (Marshall 2020, 165-181).

2.3. Play in a social, cultural and political context

Francesca Granata, in her book *Experimental Fashion: Performance Art, Carnival and the Grotesque Body*, states that 'reality is socially and culturally constructed' (Granata 2017, 107). I would suggest that play is also subject to social and cultural mores.

In his seminal work of 1938, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, Johan Huizinga analyses the characteristics and significance of adult play, relating it to, among other things, language, knowledge, philosophy, poetry and art. He calls social manifestations of play 'higher forms of play [as opposed to] the primitive play of infants and young animals.' (Huizinga 2016, 7). He claims that '[t]he great archetypal activities of human society are all permeated with play from the start [and that] pure play is one of the main bases of civilization' (idem 4-5). Huizinga's great archetypal activities - language, myth and ritual - are also closely linked to the origins of theatre.

Huizinga regards play as a cultural, rather than biological, phenomenon. 'It is 'played out' within certain limits of time and place' (idem, 10) and, therefore, although 'play is not 'ordinary' or 'real' life…rather a stepping out of 'real' life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own' (idem, 8), external cultural influences have an impact. The use of *scenographic costume* throughout the twentieth century, can frequently be examined in a cultural context as it reveals, and comments on, contemporary social, political and aesthetic influences.

Although Huizinga writes about play-forms in the arts, he considers play to be most evident in music, poetry and dance as, for him, the 'plastic arts' are limited by their material form and therefore do not possess the adequate freedom that play requires. He makes no reference to the playful Dadaists or the Bauhaus Theatre and has a highly conservative opinion of twentieth century art in general, which he describes as turgid and excrescent. He states that 'a convulsive craving for originality distorts the creative impulse' (Huizinga 2016, 202) implying, I would suggest erroneously, that there is a right and a wrong way to be creative. The varied and innovative artistic movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have pushed boundaries and explored new meanings of creativity.

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of political and social instability and change which gave arise to numerous avant-garde literary and artistic movements, many of whom proclaimed their

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[22] Susan Marshall 'Following the threads of scenographic costume at PQ19'
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mWIGkfxbQIFSX7ihmWIBMNlqddlQnTx2/view?usp=sharing

own manifesto for change: the Futurists, the Dada Movement, Surrealism, Russian Constructivism, the Bauhaus. As M.F. Agha wrote in an article about Surrealism:

> periods of trouble are notoriously a fertile ground for the movements which, in one way or the other, enable people to forget the exterior world. These 'escape' movements are responsible for some of the greatest achievements in the field of arts and letters (Agha 1936, 129).

Performed twice at the Luna Park Theatre in Saint Petersburg, the Russian avant-garde futuristic opera 'Victory over the Sun' (figure 5) was conceived at the first All-Russian Congress of Futurists, organised by (and only attended by) Kazimir Malevich, Mikhail Matyushin and Alexei Kruchenykh. Following this, on December 1st 1913, Malevich and Matyushin proclaimed in the St. Petersburg newspaper 'Day' that: 'The Futurists…want to transform the world into chaos, to smash the established values to pieces and from these pieces create new values' (Kruchenykh et al. 1995, 67). 'Victory over the Sun' would, they believed, help to create new values for a new world. Mikhail Matyushin wrote the music/sound and poet Alexei Kruchenykh wrote the libretto about the capture and domination of the sun. The libretto was written in 'experimental "zaum" language – a kind of primeval Slavic mother-tongue, mixed with birdsong and cosmic utterances' (Wainwright 2014). The abstract scenography and gigantic sculptural costumes were designed by artist Kazimir Malevich. Kruchenykh described the scene in 'Our Arrival':

> Malevich's sets consisted of large planes – triangles, circles, and parts of machines. The cast was in masks resembling gas masks of the period *Likari* (actors) were like moving machines. The costumes, designed by Malevich again, were cubist in construction: cardboard and wire. This altered the anatomy of a person – the performers moved as if tied together and controlled by the rhythm of the artist and director (Kruchenykh et al. 1995, 67).

According to Nina Gourianova, writing in *The Aesthetics of Anarchy: Art and Ideology in the Early Russian Avant-Garde*: 'In the deliberate transcendence of genre and eclectic theatricality of 'Victory', there is a touch of variety theatre, the circuslike, buffoonish grotesque' (Gourianova 2012, 127) where 'the sense of absurdity resists the persistent routine of aesthetic, social and ideological dogmas and values by means of parody, of dissonance, of the philosophical 'openness' of nihilism' (idem 125). The 'complete disintegration of idea, text, and traditional staging' in 'Victory over the Sun' did not mean that there was 'a complete dissolution of narrative' (idem 125) but rather a new type of theatre.

According to Michael and Victoria Kirby, Italian Futurist performances 'are dismissed for political reasons, even though few of them were political in any way and none was explicitly Fascist' (Kirby and Kirby 1986, 5). However, when discussing the Italian Futurist Movement, it is impossible to ignore the political ideologies of many of its members and their later links to fascism. When on February 20th, 1909, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti published 'The Futurist Manifesto' in Le Figaro, he

wrote 'We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness' (Marinetti 1909). Desiring to destroy the old and embrace new technology, machines and modernity, the Manifesto advocated a series of actions which are difficult to accept in today's society: aggression, speed, the glorification of war, the destruction of museums and libraries and a fight against moralism and feminism.

The Futurists applied their principles to the fields of poetry, painting and sculpture, as well as all aspects of performance, theatre and cinema. Theatrical experimentations in scenography and costume design reflect the Futurists' interest in dynamic movement and machinery. 'Theoretical and practical aspects of Futurist costume design and acting primarily focus around two concepts: the integration of the performer with the setting and what could be called the mechanization of the performer' (Kirby and Kirby, 1986, 97). Depero described various objects that could be used to transform the human body 'headlight – eyes / megaphone – mouths, funnel – ears / in movement and transformation / mechanical clothes' (idem, 210).
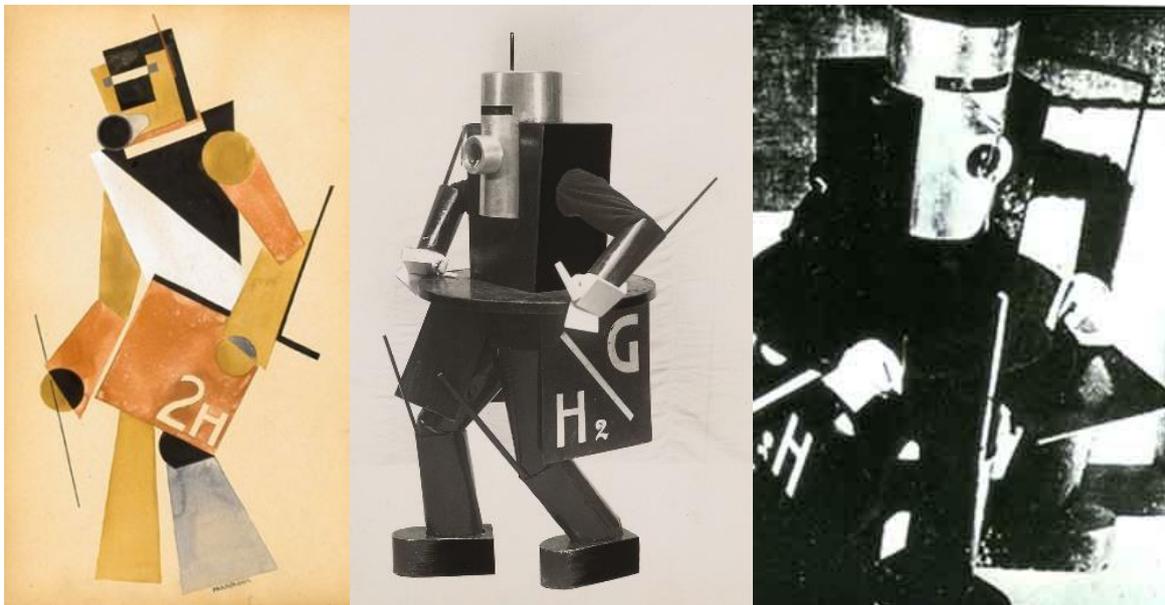
Figure 20 Ivo Pannaggi's costume design for 'Ballo Meccanico Futurista' 1922 (source: Public Domain)

Vinicio Paladini and Ivo Pannaggi's 'Ballo Meccanico Futurista' 1922 (fig.20)

> performed by three Russian dancers to the varied noise rhythms of two motorcycles…dramatized the dilemma of a proletarian worker torn between his attraction for a machine and for a woman. This struggle pitted the values of mechanical virility against 'feminized' tradition and sentiment, although the woman, like the 'machine' and the robot-man, wore a costume made of cardboard, shiny polychrome papers, and other colored and metallic materials (Poggi 2008).

The costumes designed by Ivo Pannaggi, although not truly mechanical, satisfy Prampolini's call for 'unity of action between man and his environment' (Prampolini 1924) as they were conceived as part of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork) which included scenography, costume and sound.

Inspired by Edward Gordon Craig's Über-marionette and his article 'The Artists of the Theatre of the Future' (Craig 1908), Prampolini wrote two manifestos which described his ultimate aim to completely remove performers from the stage. In 'Futurist Scenography', written in 1915 and published in 1922, and 'Futurist Scenic Atmosphere' 1924, he wrote that 'in the final synthesis, human actors will no longer be tolerated' as 'the intervention of the actor in the theatre as an element of interpretation is one of the most absurd compromises in the art of the theatre' (Prampolini 1922, 1924). Depero resolved the problem of the human form by using marionettes in 'Plastic Dances' 1918, a series of five short performance pieces.

The Dada movement was at the opposite end of the political spectrum from the Futurists. Strongly anti-war and anti-violence, Dada was formed in Zurich, during the First World War, by a diverse group of artists of varying nationalities, including Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Jean Arp, Marcel Janco, and Sophie Taeuber, who had chosen to live in Switzerland for its neutrality. At a conference held at the Weimar Congress of 1922, poet Tristan Tzara stated: 'The beginnings of Dada were not the beginnings of art, but of disgust'[23] (Rubin 1968). Through its apparently nonsensical artforms, Dada protested against 'nationalist politics, repressive social values, and unquestioning conformity of culture and thought' (MoMA 2018), upending and subverting bourgeois conventionality and traditional aesthetical ideals.

Arp wrote in his essay, 'Dadaland:

> Revolted by the butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts. While the guns rumbled in the distance, we sang, painted, made collages and wrote poems with all our might (Arp 1948, 86).

The focal point for the artists of the Dada movement was the Cabaret Voltaire, opened by Hugo Ball and Emmy Henning in February 1916 'with the object of becoming a centre for artistic entertainment' (Ball 1996, 70). It was here that Hugo Ball performed his sound poem, 'Karawane', dressed 'like a magical bishop' (idem, 71) that so constricted movement he had to be carried on and off stage. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Karawane remains a rare example of the use of *scenographic costume* in spoken theatre (fig.21):

> I had made myself a special costume for it. My legs were in a cylinder of shiny blue cardboard, which came up to my hips so that I looked like an obelisk. Over it

[23] 'Conference sur Dada,' delivered at the Weimar Congress of 1922, published in Men (Hanover), January 1924, pp. 68-70; English translation, 'Lecture on Dada', in Robert Motherwell (ed.), *The Dada Painters and Poets* (NewYork, 1951), pp. 246-5 1.

I wore a huge coat collar cut out of cardboard, scarlet inside and gold outside. It was fastened at the neck in such a way that I could give the impression of wing-like movement by raising and lowering my elbows, I also wore a high, blue-and-white-striped witch doctor's hat (Ball 1996, 70).

Figure 21 Hugo Ball reciting his Sound Poem 'Karawane' 1916 (source: Public Domain)

Another artist of the Dada Movement who experimented with costume was Sophie Taeuber-Arp, described by Jonathan Jones in The Guardian as being

one of the most radical – but far from best known – women in modern art [who] played a founding part in the movement that blew conventional notions of art, craft, and culture itself to smithereens (Jones 2016), also performed at the Cabaret Voltaire. As well as training in textile design, Taeuber-Arp studied dance with Rudolf von Laban at the Ecole Laban in Zurich and, although she would later concentrate on other artforms, dance and Laban's choreographic notations would later influence her abstract painting. Taeuber-Arp learned dance with Laban not as chance improvisation but as a creative game with variable rules that unfolds in time and space as a unique, moving, ephemeral sculpture (Vachtova 1977).

Figure 22 shows Taeuber-Arp and her sister in dance costumes inspired by Hopi kachina dolls. Her work is playful, moving seamlessly between different artistic disciplines. In a letter to her goddaughter in 1937, she wrote:

I think I have spoken enough to you about serious things; which is why I speak [now] of something to which I attribute great value, still too little appreciated —

gaiety. It is gaiety, basically, that allows us to have no fear before the problems of life and to find a natural solution to them[24] (Lanchner 1981, 18).

Figure 22 Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Erika Taeuber in costume 1922 (source: Public Domain)

Inspired by Cubism, Futurist dynamism, Malevich's Suprematist art and Russian Constructivism, Alexandra Exter was an original and eclectic avant-garde Ukrainian artist and theatre designer. In 1924, she designed the costumes for one of the first science fiction films, 'Aelita: Queen of Mars' (fig. 23).

'Aelita', which was based on a Tolstoy novel and directed by Yakov Protazanov, was filmed three years before Fritz Lang's more famous 'Metropolis'. Although often presumed to be an example of Socialist propaganda, Scifist argues that it was actually 'a daringly critical and multi-layered satire on the concept of the popular revolution' (Scifist 2014). Exter's playful designs utilised industrial materials alongside heavily worked textiles to produce a series of sculptural costumes for the inhabitants of Mars, light years away from the Russian proletariat pictured at the beginning of the film.

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[24] 'Regula zur Konfirmation' (1937), in Zweiklang: Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Hans Arp (Zurich: Verlag der Arche, 1960), cited in Lanchner, page 18

Figure 23 Alexandra Exter costume drawing and stills from 'Aelita, Queen of Mars' 1924 (source: Public Domain)

Closely associated with the Dada Movement, Surrealism was described by M.F. Agha, in an article entitled 'SURrealism or the Purple Cow' in the 1936 November issue of American Vogue, as being 'nothing but Dada with a dash of Freud' (Agha 1936, 129). In the 1968 catalogue to the exhibition 'Dada, Surrealism, and their Heritage', William S. Rubin noted that both Dada and Surrealism had an 'overriding commitment to social revolution' but that the 'chaotic state' in Dada became more 'systematized' with Surrealism (Rubin 1968, 63). Surrealism began in the interwar period of relative peace which was characterised by political, economic and social turmoil. Michael Gill describes surrealism as 'less a polemical platform than a bag containing most of the major preoccupations of the time' (Gill 1990, 359).

Like Dada and Futurism, Surrealism had its foundations in a literary movement. First used by Apollinaire in 1917 to describe the Ballet Russes production of 'Parade' (see Apollinaire's programme notes on pages 86 & 87), the word 'surrealism' was later adopted by André Breton and formalised as a movement in his Surrealist Manifesto of 1924 where it was defined as:

> Pure psychic automatism [ ] based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association heretofore neglected, in the omnipotence of dreams, in the undirected play of thought[25] (Rubin 1968, 64).

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[25] From André Breton's 'Le Manifeste du Surréalisme , 1924 quoted in Rubin 1968, 64

Surrealist artists, such as Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy and Rene Magritte, combined dreamlike imagery with a realistic painting style which heightened the bizarre 'surreal' quality of their paintings. Dalí, famous for his own idiosyncratic style of dress, frequently experimented with the absurdities of costume and fashion which he believed were 'equally rooted in fantasy and disdainful of the role of reason as his art' (Radford 1997, 170).
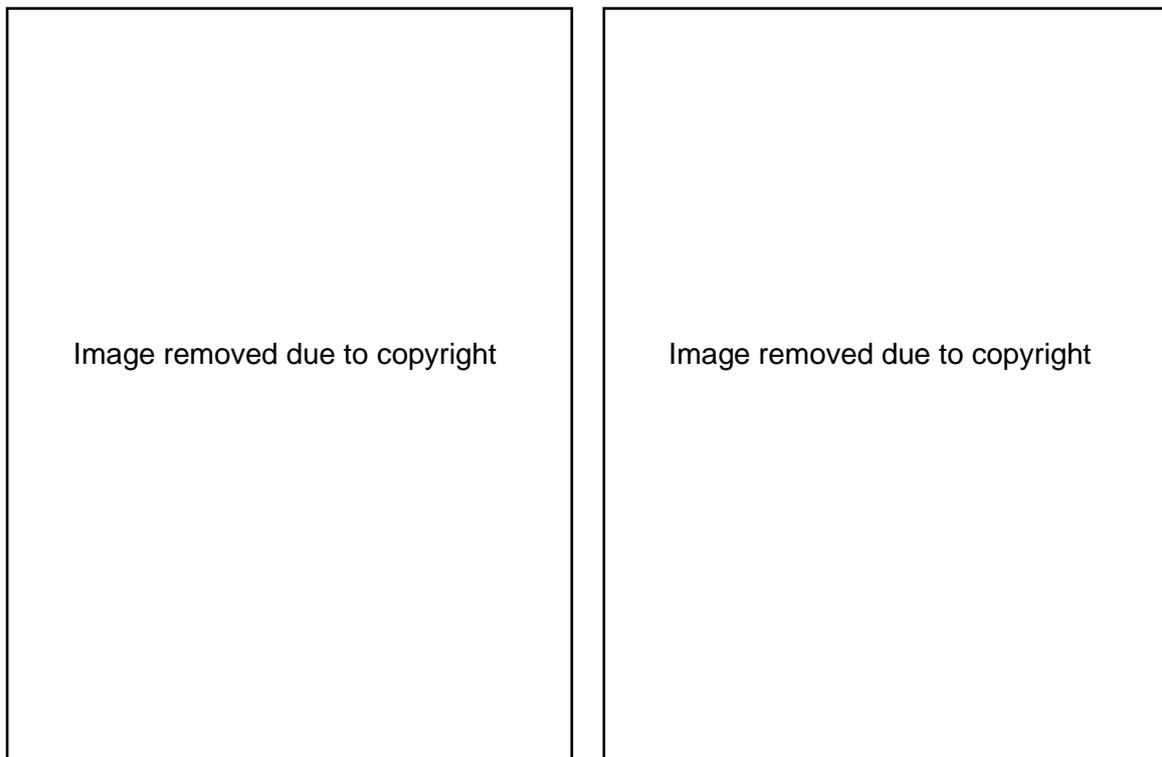
Figure 24 Charles Henri Ford, costume Salvador Dali 1937, photo Cecil Beaton (source: Vogue)
Figure 25 Elsa Schiaparelli 'Shoe Hat' 1937, photo Georges Saad (source: L'Officiel De La Mode)

Figure 24 illustrates Dalí's sense of playfulness and the absurd in his costume for Charles Henri Ford, photographed for Vogue in 1937 by Cecil Beaton. Ford can be seen wearing giant white gloves and a black body suit hung with smaller white gloves. His interest in fashion led to a collaboration with Paris-based, eccentric Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli. An article by Steff Yotka in Vogue describing the 2017 Dalí Musuem's exhibition, 'Dalí & Schiaparelli, In Daring Fashion,' is entitled 'Dalí and Schiaparelli Invented the Art-Fashion Collaboration' (Yotka 2017) Citing Dalí and Schiaparelli's 'art-meets-fashion projects', Yotka notes that, eighty years on, artists and fashion houses continue to collaborate and that 'the irony - the mix of high and low materials, and the multimedia promotional materials that they pioneered—are still used by artists and designers today' (Yotka 2017).

Dalí and Schiaparelli collaborated on many, now famous, garments and accessories in the late 1930s, including the 'Shoe Hat' 1937 (fig. 25), the 'Desk Suit' 1937, the 'Lobster Dress' 1938 and

the 'Tears Dress' 1938. In her article 'Avant-garde Cuts: Schiaparelli and the Construction of a Surrealist Femininity', Marylaura Papalas pinpoints the correlation between play and creativity in Schiaparelli's work, and its close association with Surrealist concepts:

> One particularly important surrealist device at which Schiaparelli excelled was spontaneous playfulness, and the idea that life should be fun and full of ludic experiences, something exhibited by the Desk Suit, whose sewn-on drawers, some of which are pockets, could be confused with those drawers that are just decorative. Playing with the surface of reality, in this case potentially tricking and confusing the viewer, is an important recurring theme that defines her work (Papalas 2016, 509).

Figure 26 Fruzsina Nagy, Silence Regulation costumes, 2018, sound dimming sponges and egg-boxes, red Lego pieces, photo Márton Kovács (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Fruzsina Nagy and Márton Kovács)

Contemporary Hungarian costume designer Fruzsina Nagy who directs or co-directs productions, describes her costumes as 'the whole performance…the main characters, and the most important elements' (Nagy 2020). Her costumes are playful but have a social-political undertone. The costumes for 'The Issue' (fig.26), designed for the experimental choral ensemble Soharóza, represent 'an abstract living picture of the current state of Hungarian society and its region through short stories that take place in a typical environment of our urban life: the bureau office' (Nagy 2020) whereas the costumes for the Taboo Collection (fig.27), performed at the Prague Quadrennial in 2019, are inspired by various taboo themes:

> 'Selfie death. Bomb on a plane. Paedophilia. Menstruation. Sex dream. Aggressions of our inner selves. Things you are not supposed to talk about at a dinner table…taboos from our suppressed subconscious…inspired by the human

body, gender roles, sexuality, different kinds of deaths and even children's fears' (Halas and Nagy 2019)[26].

Figure 27 Dóra Halas & Fruzsina Nagy, Taboo Collection 'Wicked Wicked Wicked'. (Source: Author)

2.4. Playworlds

Perhaps particularly relevant to the theatre is the idea of, what play theorist Gunilla Lindqvist calls, a 'playworld' (Lindqvist 1995). Lindqvist is talking about child's play but the concept is not dissimilar to the concept of *oikos*[27]*,* discussed by Bonnie Marranca in her book *Ecologies of Theater* (B Marranca 1996) where she likens the theatre environment to an ecosystem, a fine balance of different organisms that create a whole world.

In his article 'Imagination and Creativity in Childhood', published in the Journal of Russian and East European Psychology, Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, discusses the developmental psychology of children who consolidate and elaborate their experiences through play in order to construct new realities:

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[26] A description of this production and other examples of scenographic costumes at the Prague Quadrennial can be read in my article 'Following the threads of scenographic costume at PQ19' in volume 6 of the Theatre and Performance Design journal (Marshall 2020, 165-181) https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mWIGkfxbQIFSX7ihmWIBMNlqddlQnTx2/view?usp=sharing

[27] Oikos in Greek can be translated as *home* or *place to live.*

> A child's play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions he has acquired. He combines them and uses them to construct a new reality (Vygotsky 2004, 11).

The idea of entering a different reality is also described by John Berger in his essay 'Ev'ry time we say goodbye' where he writes about how a narrative can engulf us completely in its own world:

> When we read a story, we inhabit it. The covers of the book are like a roof and four walls. What is to happen next will take place within the four walls of the story. And this is possible because the story's voice makes everything its own (Berger 1992, 15).

Likewise, as in a book, a 'playworld' or 'new reality' is created in the theatre. I argue that *scenographic costume* can also be considered a 'playworld' in itself, 'a kind of travelling scenography' (Pavis 2003, 177) a 'three-dimensional world for the body in movement that tells a story' (Barbieri 2012). Each costume creates its own world, 'an environment for the performer' (Pavis 2003, 178) which appropriates space and acts as a catalyst for creative ideas.

Granata writes about 'the invisible life of objects [where] the world of things can open itself to reveal a secret life' (Granata 2017, 91). In a costume-orientated performance the costume as object becomes the costume as subject. The costume is given poetic space which, as Bachelard wrote, transforms it into something more than an object: 'To give an object poetic space is to give it more space than it has objectivity; or, better still, it is following the expansion of its intimate space' (Bachelard 1994, 202). Embodied space situates us in the world and colours our perception of it. As Ardener says in her introduction to *Women and Space*, 'behaviour and space are mutually dependent. [Space] exerts its own influence [and] defines the people in it [but at the same time] people define space' (Ardener 1993, 2-3).

One notable example of *scenographic costume* becoming a playworld is Schlemmer's 'Triadic Ballet', 1922. Schlemmer himself acknowledged the importance of play to his work. In speaking about the Bauhaus Theatre in a lecture-demonstration at the Bauhaus in 1927, later published as an essay under the title 'Theater' (Bühne) in the book *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Oskar Schlemmer said:

> From the first day of its existence, the Bauhaus sensed the impulse for creative theater; for from that first day the play instinct [der Spieltrieb] was present. The play instinct, which Schiller…calls the source of man's real creative values, is the unselfconscious and naive pleasure in shaping and producing, without asking questions about use or uselessness, sense or nonsense, good or bad (Schlemmer 1961, 82).

Schlemmer pronounced the emblems of the 1920s to be abstraction and mechanization, technology and invention, and stated:

One of the emblems of our time is mechanization, the inexorable process which now lays claim to every sphere of life and art. Everything which can be mechanized is mechanized. The result our recognition of that which cannot be mechanized. [ ] The theatre, which should be the image of our time and perhaps the one art form most peculiarly conditioned by it, must not ignore these signs (Schlemmer 1961a, 17-18).

Figure 28 Oskar Schlemmer 'The Triadic Ballet', 1922 (source: Public Domain)

The designs for the Bauhaus theatre, and most notable for the Triadic ballet (fig. 28), defined the choreography completely. The human shape was abstracted and forms were reduced to symbolising types of human character – serene, tragic, funny, serious. Schlemmer wrote:

Man the human organism, stands in the cubical, abstract space of the stage. Man and space. Each has different laws of order. Whose shall prevail? Either the abstract space is adapted in deference to natural man and transformed back into nature or the imitation of nature. This happens in the theatre of illusionistic realism. Or natural man in deference to abstract space is recast to fit its mould. This happens on the abstract stage' (Schlemmer 1961a, 22-23).

It is important to note that Schlemmer did not consider the costumed figures of the Triadic Ballet to be an attempt at mechanisation or dehumanisation but rather, as Anna Kisselgoff wrote in 1982 in the New York Times, as 'an abstraction of man' (Kisselgoff 1982, 11). Although the figures, wearing padded cloth and papier-mâché costumes coated with metallic or coloured paint, were completely

disguised they retained a recognizably human, gendered form, albeit exaggerated. In his work with the Bauhaus, Schlemmer strove to free the performer from physical limitations.

> The endeavour to free man from his physical bondage and to heighten his freedom of movement beyond his native potential resulted in substituting for the organism the mechanical kunstfigur: the automaton and the marionette…An equally significant aspect of this is the possibility of relating the figure of natural 'naked Man to the abstract figure, both of which experience, through this confrontation, an intensification of their peculiar natures. Endless perspectives are opened up: from the supernatural to the nonsensical, from the sublime to the comic (Schlemmer 1961a, 28-29).

The characteristic quality of the Bauhaus Theatre was space, the concentration on, and theory of, the figure moving in space. The costume designs dictated how the figures moved in space. With rigid padding the costumes restricted the dancers to purely upright movement, performers were forced into a marionette-like dance by the constraining shapes of their clothing, the human form became a moving structure, a sculptural perception of motion.

American architect Howard Dearstyne studied at the Bauhaus under Mies van der Rohe, Wassily Kandinsky, and Josef Albers from 1928 to 1933 and subsequently wrote a book entitled *Inside the Bauhaus*. Chapter 14 is dedicated to The Bauhaus Theatre. Although Dearstyne was not involved in the theatre workshop, he did attend Schlemmer's performances, which he described in detail, and which give a clear idea of the experience:

> No word was spoken, no story suggested by sign or gesture, no human emotion communicated to the audience, no story suggested by sign or gesture, no human emotion communicated to the audience...The performances consisted solely of bodily movements synchronized with music, a form of the dance. The movements were abrupt, staccato, angular – more mannequins in Schlemmer's paintings, divested of their human identity and wholly of their individuality by being encased in costumes which converted them into assemblages of geometric shapes such as cylinders, cones, spheres, or disks. Schlemmer did not believe in total abstraction, the elimination of all reference to the human being. His continuing objective was to 'place the human figure in space,' to create compositions, whether moving or static, or half-human, half-geometrized forms put in just relation to each other and to the real or imaging space in which they existed or seemed to exist. The person must remain the central subject in art, shaped for this role by generalization and sublimation (Dearstyne 1986 174-5).

A newspaper review by critic of the 'Triadic Ballet' noted that the fundamental aspect of the performance was play and that any deeper meaning should not be sought:

> He who seeks 'something' behind all this finds nothing, because there is nothing behind it. Everything is in what one perceives with his senses! No feelings are 'expressed' but rather, feelings are aroused…The whole thing is play, emancipated and emancipating play…pure absolute form, just as in music ('dt' review in Dearstyne 1986, 178-9).

The cultural and political upheaval in Europe acted as an impetus to choreographers and designers at the beginning of the century. But with the rise of fascism in Germany, and the closing and abolition thereby of the Bauhaus by the National Socialists, German theatre and dance was separated from its revolutionary heritage, until the 1960s and the experimental Dance Theatre of Wuppertal.
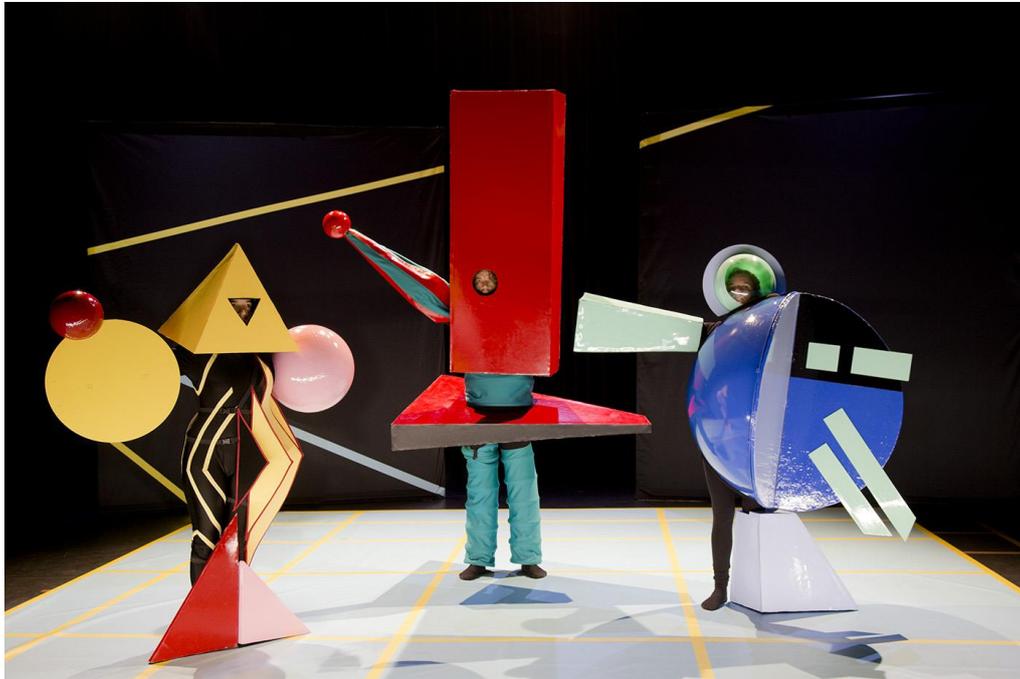
Figure 29 'Het Grote Kleurenballet' design Daphne Karstens, photo Frank Wiersema (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Daphne Karstens and Frank Wiersema)

The original 'Triadic Ballet' was performed for the last time in Paris in 1932 before the National Socialists banned Schlemmer's work in the theatre in 1937, categorising it as *Entartete Kunst* (degenerate art). Schlemmer's work does, however, continue to inspire contemporary designers, such as Daphne Karstens, whose costume designs for 'Het Grote Kleurenballet' (fig. 29)[28] were influenced by the 'Triadic Ballet'.

Describing how her designs influenced the performance, Daphne wrote:

> Each shape influenced movement differently and was used to establish the characters. During the length of the play, the costumes developed more and more until the performers became full geometric creatures. At the start of the piece the performers followed strict rules for movement and tried hard to 'stay between the lines'. This evolved throughout the performance until they were not limited anymore by the set rules and the movement limitations of the costumes. Eventually, each shape was taken off and used to create an abstract composition of colour and shapes on stage. (Karstens 2020).

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[28] Het Grote Kleurenballet (Translation: The Big Colourballet)
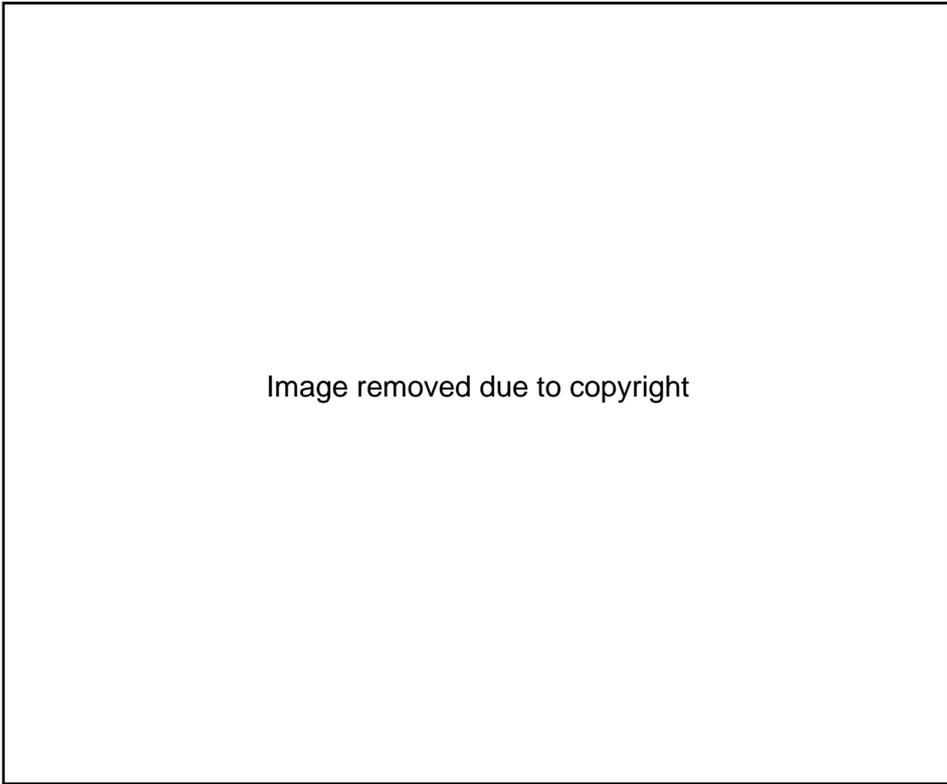
Figure 30 Alwin Nikolais 'Allegory' 1959 (source ArchPapers)

Alwin Nikolais was an American choreographer, designer and composer who 'mixed light, sound, and dance for years before the term 'mixed media' occurred to anyone' (Benson 1970) and believed in *Gesamkunstwerk*, a total work of art which he himself undertook in all but the dancing. An article in the New York Times in 1970, entitled 'Choreography, Music, Costumes, Sets, Etc., Etc.', described this aspect of his work

> music is by Alwin Nikolais. The sets are by Alwin Nikolais. The costumes are by Alwin Nikolais. The lighting effects are by Alwin Nikolais. The projections are by Alwin Nikolais. The dancers are members of the Alwin Nikolais Dance Theater (Schonberg and Nikolais 1970).

Looking at an overview of *scenographic costume* in the age of internet, it is difficult to imagine that different designers may not have known each other's work. Although it is possible to draw similarities between the costumes for the 'Triadic Ballet' and Alwin Nikolais's designs, according to Nikolais's assistant for forty years, Ruth E. Grauert, in her essay 'Nikolais and the Bauhaus': 'Nikolais was adamant that he was not a Bauhaus product' (Grauert 2000). The collection of essays by Gropius, Schlemmer, Moholy-Nagy and Farkas Molnar in *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, originally published in German in 1924, were translated and published in English in 1961, two years after the first performance of Nikolais's 'Allegory' (fig. 30) but it was probable that Nikolais had encountered Bauhaus notions in his youth studying dance under Hanya Holm and Truda Kaschmann, both former

students of Mary Wigman, and may have been subconsciously, if not consciously, inspired by them (Grauert 2000).
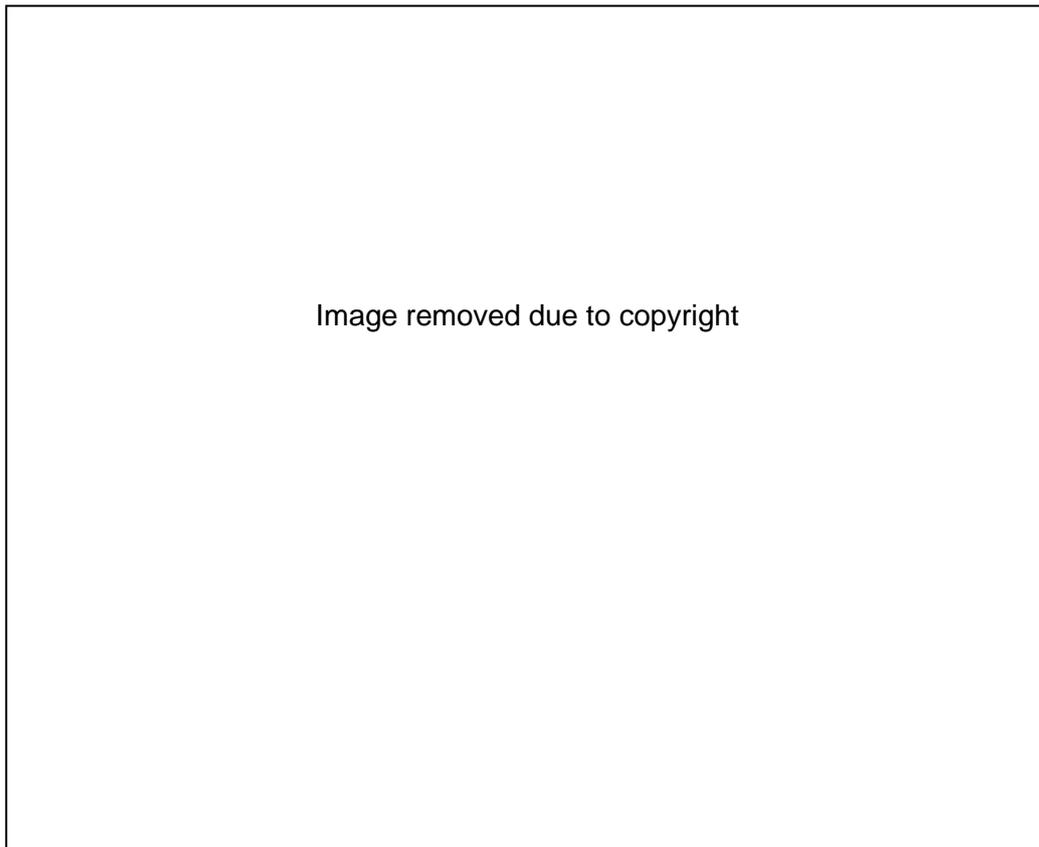
Figure 31 Alwin Nikolais 'Sanctum' 1964 (source ArchPapers)

In the 1950s Nikolais named his work firstly as 'The Theater of Sound, Light and Motion' and subsequently as 'Total Theater' before settling on the eponymous 'The Alwin Nikolais Dance Theater' (Grauert 2000). Here similarities can again be noted between Nikolais's work and the Bauhaus Theatre as Nikolais's idea of 'Total Theater' finds a parallel in Moholy-Nagy's 'Theatre of Totality', described in his essay 'Theatre, circus Variety' although Grauert suggests that 'the coincidence of labels is perhaps just that because both Moholy-Nagy and Nikolais were describing similar processes' (idem). When Nikolais describes his work as 'a polygamy of motion, shape, color and sound— the basic art of the theater' (Schonberg and Nikolais 1970), it recalls Moholy-Nagy's description of the 'Theatre of Totality'

> the Theater of Totality with its multifarious complexities of light, space, plane, form, motion, sound, man - and with all the possibilities for varying and combining these elements - must be an ORGANISM (Moholy-Nagy, 1961, 61).

Moholy-Nagy's theory of the 'Theatre of Totality' being a cohesive organism is reflected in Nikolais's idea of the performer in costume as being a minor, if important part of the whole production:

My costumes are part of a total stage design, action or painting. The idea is not to see each body separately. My stage designs are a theatrical abstraction of the way I see man – not as an ego, but as part of a socio-economic mechanism, an agreeable but not a central part…I have often been accused of dehumanization of the dancers. It's not that, it's de-egoization [ ] Man has to learn to design himself into the total environment, to see himself as a relatively minor part of the whole universal thing (Norell et al. 1967, 136).

Nikolais's productions, such as 'Allegory' or 'Sanctum' (figs. 30 & 31), can be seen as 'playworlds' where each element forms part of an aesthetic entity: 'everything was used to create patterns in space and time' (Schonberg and Nikolais 1970). Design elements were integral to a performance and Nikolais frequently formulated the choreography after asking dancers to play and experiment with costumes and props costumes which extended their bodies, and therefore affected movement.

One never knows what kind of oddball costume will send Nikolais off. He will try anything out with his dancers. Sometimes it works, sometimes not. 'Get into this costume', he will say, flourishing a tube of plastic or whatever. 'Get into it and see what you can do in it.' He will have his company improvise for hours in the costume. 'That's good. That's good. Who can find anything else to do? Maybe if you lean this way and move that way'…Closed in their structures, the dancers execute elaborate geometric designs, using the equipment itself as part of their bodies. The structures vibrate with a life of their own…'I have tried to make my dancers conscious of _their physical, sculptural look', he says. 'For dance is as much visual and sculptural as it is movement alone' (Schonberg and Nikolais 1970).

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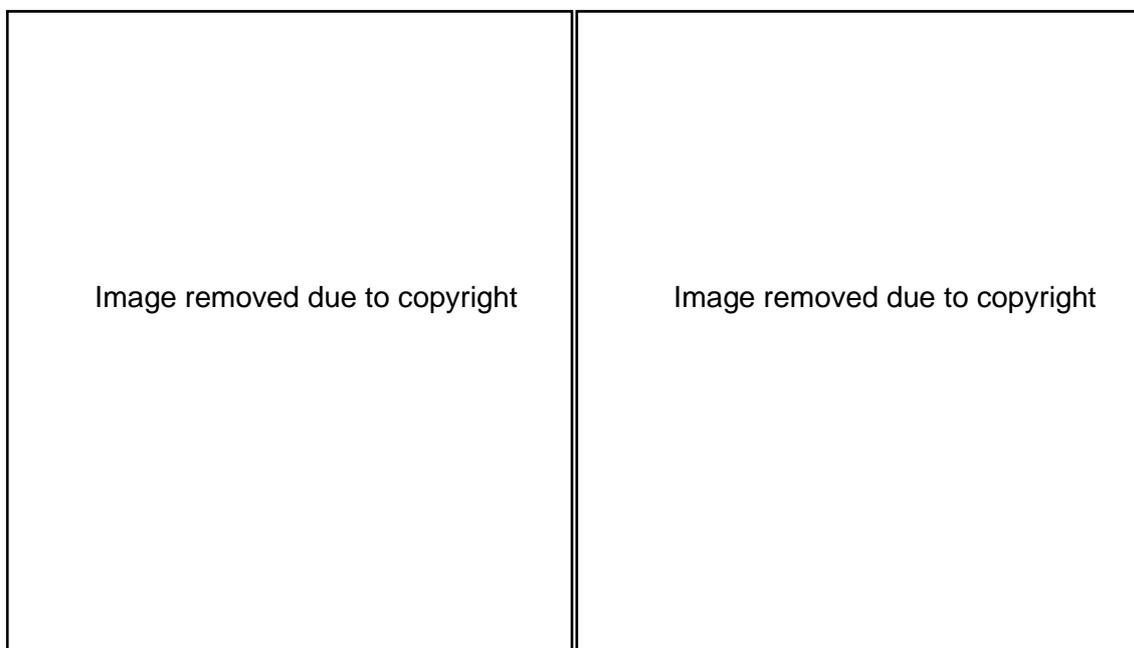
Figure 32 Robert Rauschenberg 'Pelican' 1963 (source: www.tate.org.uk)

Robert Rauschenberg's 'Pelican', 1963 (fig. 32), is a further example of the use of costume as a 'playworld'. Rauschenberg had collaborated in performances with Merce Cunningham and John

Cage since their meeting in 1952 but 'Pelican' was his first experience as a choreographer. Rauschenberg designed, choreographed, created the soundtrack - 'a collage of sounds ranging from radio, television, and film to music by George Frideric Handel and Franz Joseph Haydn' (Robert Rauschenberg Foundation 2019) - and danced in 'Pelican'. The performance took place in a roller-skating rink called America on Wheels and formed part of an evening of performances by the Judson Dance Theater at the Pop Art Festival in Washington, D.C.

The artist, who is often associated with the Neo-Dada Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, is famous for his 'Combines', artwork which combined paint, everyday objects and non-traditional materials. His costume designs for 'Pelican', which consisted of 'roller skates and huge, spoked sails made from parachutes' (Tomkins 1965, 230), reflected the eclectic nature of his artwork and his interest in 'a more spontaneous, unplanned sort of choreography, letting the specific environment in which they find themselves dictate what they do at each performance' (idem).

Figure 33 Iris Woutera de Jong, Deform Amoibe, 2019 (source: Author)

Figure 34 Deform, year 2019, material textile, pvc, artist Iris Woutera de Jong, photohgrapher Leonor von Salisch (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Iris Woutera de Jong and Leonor von Salisch)

Contemporary designers, Dutch visual artist Iris Woutera de Jong and Japanese-German artist Yuka Oyama, both create playworlds for their performers. The 'Deform' costumes (figs. 33 & 34) by Iris Woutera de Jong were created by sewing long strips of vinyl plastic onto stretch fabric. This resulted in an 'extraordinarily mesmeric... writhing living organism in constant metamorphosis' (Marshall 2020) which can be entered by one or more performers. Woutera writes that a 'Deform' costume

provides a movable space, in which remarkable forms can be created. A performer plays with the material which in turn reacts to his / her movement. The organic flow refers to forms in nature, such as plants, fishes, or a gently swaying sea anemone. With Deform the body can freely experiment on every sensory impulse. The person inside the cocoon is anonymous but expressive by movement. It is about the resourcefulness of the body and the discovery of new movement patterns. The boundary between human, object and nature seems to blur. For the performers, the sculpture feels soft and familiar on the inside. The viewer experiences the spectacle on the outside as something more surreal (Woutera 2015).

Figure 35 Yuka Oyama, Helpers -Changing Homes, Motorbike 2018 & Colouring Pencils, 2018, cardboard, bamboo, textile (Permission to reproduce these images granted by Yuka Oyama and Alex Efimoff)

Yuka Oyama developed the research project 'Helpers – Changing homes' (fig. 35) from personal experience as a long-distance commuter between Berlin and Oslo. She started to question: 'What makes a place your home? How do you conceptualise this if home is constantly changing? How do you fill the void of a home you have moved away from?' Oyama interviewed different participants to understand which objects helped them feel at home then 'created a portrait of each person as a shelter resembling their objects made out of cardboard boxes [and] orchestrated a filmed performance, where they enacted movements of a hermit crab, a creature who regularly swaps its shell–or home—for a new one in order to grow' (Oyama 2018).

2.5. **Play and apparent frivolity**

Figure 36 Luisa Casati wearing (left) a Léon Bakst design and (centre & right) Paul Poiret creations (source: Public Domain)

Insubordinate *scenographic costume* has a strong aesthetic element to it which may at times appear frivolous. Looking closely at the context in which they were produced and their conceptual reasoning, however, they frequently reveal their subversive nature. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the extraordinary and eccentric Marchesa Luisa Casati was patron to the arts, on which she spent most of her vast, inherited fortune. Featuring in artwork by Augustus John, Giovanni Boldrini, Romaine Brookes, Kees van Dongen, Giacomo Balla, Fortunato Depero, Léon Bakst and Man Ray, to name but a few, Casati is quoted as having said 'I want to be a living work of art' (Ryersson and Yaccarino 2004, ix). She flouted the social, moral and sexual norms of the period and, through her unconventional lifestyle and dressing up (fig. 36):

> 'questioned stable identities, gender codes, and standards of beauty [as well as] the boundaries between art and life, reality and make-believe' (Ryersson and Yaccarino 2004, 253).

> For her dressing up was the chief embodiment of her creative vision, a type of living theatre, where there was no discernible difference between costumes and clothes. In her own way, she anticipated Lady Gaga. She transformed her body and her face in a never-ending process, creating meaning somewhere between playfulness and artistic research (Serafini 2015).

Leigh Bowery, like Casati, also lived his life as a work of art and used experimental costume as a form of visual communication both in the costumes he designed for Michael Clark and in the outfits

he created for himself for his appearances on the London club scene. The maxim for his own club, Taboo, which ran on Thursday nights between 1985 and 1986, was 'dress as though your life depends on it, or don't bother' (Tilley 1997, 53) and Bowery would create a different outfit every week where, as fashion designer Rifat Ozbek said 'he always outdid himself' (Swindells and Burston 2016). His designs evolved throughout the 1980s and early 90s and became more and more surreal as:

> Bowery evolved from a fashion designer into an aesthetic revolutionary…Bowery was not simply dressing up; it was his lifestyle and commentary on the mundane, a joke about appearance. His collections or 'looks' were based on himself manipulating his body with clothing and make-up. Working outside the comfort zone, he developed a clothing aesthetic that few would dare follow. Original, provocative, evolutionary; Bowery manipulated clothing to totally change one's appearance, like a form of cosmetic surgery…His dress style hailed from club culture, and the concepts of dressing up and masquerade (Healy 2002).

Figure 37 Leigh Bowery Session II/Look 9/1989, Session III/Look 11/1990 and Session IV/Look 17/1991 from the book 'Leigh Bowery Looks' by Fergus Greer (Permission to reproduce these images granted by Fergus Greer)

A series of photos by Fergus Greer illustrate the larger-than-life characters Bowery created by modulating and exaggerating parts of his body through costume (fig.37). Bowery wrote in his diary, quoted in Sue Tilley's book *The life and Times of an Icon*:

> I think that firstly individuality is important, and that there should be no main rules for appearance and behaviour. Therefore I want to look as best I can, through my means of individuality and expressiveness (Tilley 1997, 97).

> Sometimes playful, sometimes sinister, wearing a mask or heavy clown make-up, the characters are recognizably human but question conventional ideals of beauty. '"If people are laughing at me, that's fine", he said. "I invented the joke"' (Swindells and Burston 2016).

> Boy George…observed: 'The rest of us used drag to hide our blemishes and defects, he made them the focal point of his art.' Nicola [Bateman, Bowery's wife, agreed] 'Initially, he just wanted to shock. He often used to say: 'That'll spook 'em.' But it was never without an aesthetic point of view'' (Ellen 2002).

The *scenographic costumes* of fashion designers Alexander McQueen (fig.8), Gareth Pugh and Craig Green, performance artists Nick Cave and Pyuupiru and performer Lady Gaga (fig. 38) all reflect playful, and apparently frivolous, characteristics inherited from Bowery's work and his continuing influence on the fashion world and in contemporary performance art cannot be underestimated.

Figure 38 Pyuupiru 'Planetaria Mercury' 2001 photo Wataru Umeda (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Pyuupiru and Wataru Umeda), Gareth Pugh, 2007 (source: CC BY 2.0 Rebecca Cotton), Nick Cave 'Soundsuit' (source: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 Sanpani) and Lady Gaga (source: CC BY 2.0 Michael Spencer)

The project Urban Camouflage, which Sabina Keric and Yvonne Bayer began in 2007 also appears frivolous but Keric and Bayer use *scenographic costume* to comment on consumerism and commercialisation and 'question how to camouflage oneself and one's identity in the commercial space' (Bayer and Keric 2010).

Wearing three-dimensional costumes (fig. 39) made from items found in large superstores – yellow Ikea bags, paper folders, work gloves – and without asking for permission, Keric and Bayer blend into their surroundings in order to gage public reaction. 'The customer expects nothing out of ordinary

in a world of brands and price labels. Our project exceeds the limit and enters the world of commerce without any permission' (Bayer and Keric 2010).

Figure 39 Urban Camouflage Sabina Keric & Yvonne Bayer 2007-2010 (Permission to reproduce these images granted by Sabina Keric & Yvonne Bayer)

Robin Lasser and Adrienne Pao have collaborated on the Dress Tent project since 2004, playing with 'the idea of what it would be like to have a woman be completely self-sufficient, where she can carry her home on her back and travel anywhere in the world' (Teicher 2016). The oversized Dress Tents (fig. 40), which they describe as 'wearable architecture' (Lasser and Pao 2018), are constructed and photographed in carefully chosen settings which create a scenographic background. At first sight, the gigantic dresses can be seen as light-hearted, frivolous and playful but first impressions belie a deeper meaning, as Pao explains:

> We want to take these ideas of female politics, land politics, and female iconography that have been embedded in our cultural history and play with them. We want to take these ideas and talk about them, but make them funny and open and invite people in. Sometimes that's an easier way to discuss something that might be challenging (Teicher 2016).

Pao acknowledges the influence of visual artist Lucy Orta in their work, and similarities to Orta's 1990s 'Refuge Wear' project (fig.41), in particular 'Habitent' and 'Body Architecture', can be noted.

Figure 40 Lasser and Pao 'Ice Queen: Glacial Retreat Dress Tent', 2008 (source: Permission to reproduce this image granted by Lasser and Pao)

Figure 41 Lucy Orta 'Lucy Orta 'Body Architecture – Collective Wear 4 persons' 1996 (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Lucy and Jorge Orta)

Unconventional Belgian fashion designer Walter Van Beirendonck was one of the Antwerp Six, 'Belgium's Most Influential Avant-garde Fashion Collective' (Arslanian 2016) in the 1980s. Like Bowery, his conceptual, art-meets-fashion designs, with humoristic elements that often border on the absurd in much the same way as the artwork of the Dada and Surrealist movements. His themes cover issues such as ecology, war, and AIDS, frequently setting out to shock and jolt the fashion world into having a social conscience.

> Inflatable balloon masks printed with the words 'Blow Job.' Horn prostheses on models' foreheads. Hairy T-shirts. Vests with wings. Tulle sculptures shaped like clipped trees. Blow-up doll bodysuits with long, snaky phalluses. Those are just some of the wearable oddities that have sprung from the fertile mind of Walter Van Beirendonck, who's been pushing the boundaries of fashion for thirty years…he's bridged the gap between art and fashion, proving that garments could also express extreme concepts, and he's always done so with ample humor…'I introduce irony in my work to show the variety of the world' (Saad 2011).

In 2007 Van Beirendonck and Dirk Van Saene were invited to design the 'Surreal Things – Surrealism and Design' exhibition at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. According to the exhibition website, they 'fused extraordinary objects – never before seen together – into a contemporary Surrealist experience' (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen 2007), very much in line with Van Beirendonck's work ethos, where Surrealism plays an important role.. In an interview with Shirine Saad for Hint Fashion Magazine, Van Beirendonck said:

> I am fascinated by the work of the Surrealists…I do like this unreal world that they
> are referring to. My combination of subjects and words and images could be similar
> to their approach (Saad 2011).

An example of this can be seen in the fashion show for the Winter 2017/2018 collection 'Zwart' (fig. 42) where models wore oversized gloves directly reminiscent of Salvador Dali's 1937 costume for Charles Henri Ford (see figure 24).
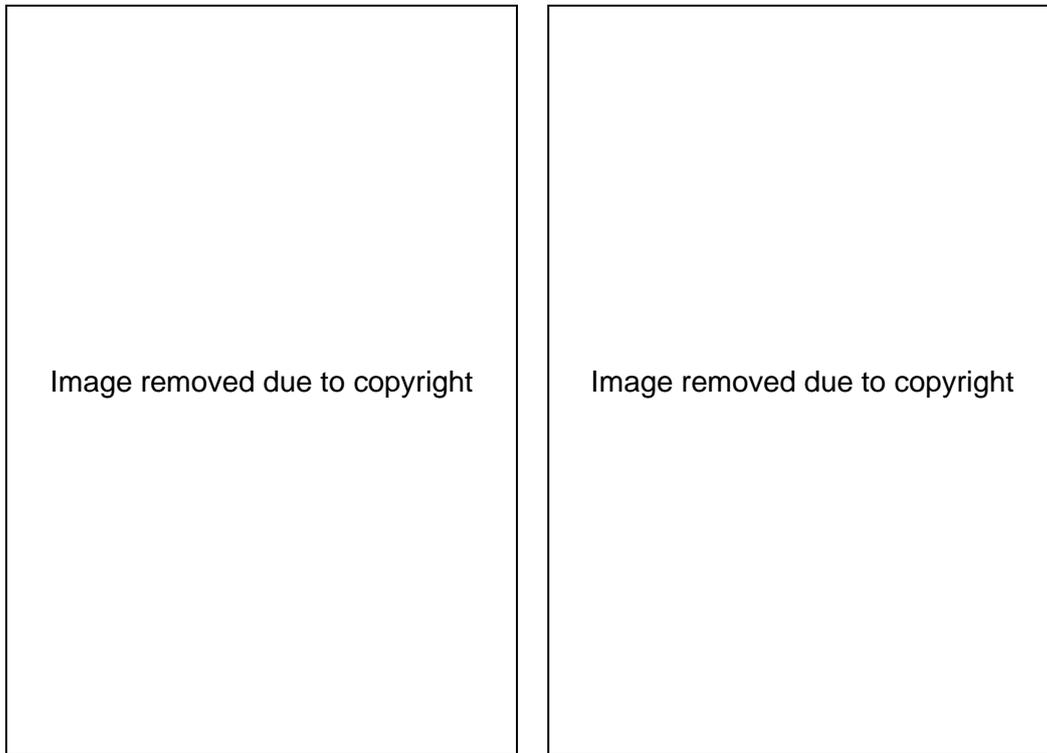
Figure 42 Walter Van Beirendonck Men 'Zwart' Collection Winter 2017/ 2018 (source: Van Beirendonck)

Figure 43 Vivienne Westwood S/S 2016 (source: firstview.com/)

Since Vivienne Westwood's collaboration with Malcolm McClaren in the 1970s, her statement clothing has combined frivolity and parody with rebellion and social activism (fig. 43), although, as Luke Leitch writes in Vogue:

> Can you reasonably rage against the machine when you are a highly profitable
> cog in it? This is an obvious paradox inherent in Dame Vivienne Westwood's policy
> of using her shows as a podium from which to preach about the iniquities of mass
> consumerism and fossil fuel dependence (Leitch 2015).

This paradox could be said to be always present whenever social activism meets couture fashion and the association is perhaps never completely limpid however well-intentioned. The importance of prominent individuals and companies in the move towards change should not be undermined, as

their involvement often brings greater public awareness of an issue, but fashion is big business and, cynically, may be seen as using many different devices to garner publicity, sell clothes and increase profits, including capitalising on certain high-profile issues.

One of the main social and political topics currently under discussion is sustainability as environmental concerns increase. In a letter to their stakeholders, Moncler wrote:

> our growth needs to be first and foremost sustainable…we have a responsibility towards people, the environment, the communities in which we operate…to take responsibility also on issues of global relevance…making our contribution to achieving the goals published in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Moncler 2017).

Like many contemporary fashion designers and brands, Moncler use scenographic costume to increase its visibility in the public eye, as the unusual is more likely to be photographed and reproduced worldwide in newspapers, magazines and across the internet. Moncler is unusual, however, as, in 2018, the company asked eight different designers to redesign their classic (ethically sourced) down jacket as part of the Moncler Genius project. 'Each Moncler Genius project is identified with a number. Numbers do not create a hierarchy, but facets to the whole' (Moncler 2018).

Image removed due to copyright	Image removed due to copyright

Figure 44 Moncler Genius Collection A/W 2018, 5 Moncler Craig Green (source: Vogue)

The designers' names are not hidden, but by giving numbers to each project, Moncler's aim was to remove aspects of hierarchy and egocentricity. It has also proven to be a highly successful publicity stunt. The bulbous, padded designs for '5 Moncler Craig Green', seen in figure 44, are reminiscent of arctic survival suits. Moncler describes Green's work as rewriting 'the dialogue between clothing and body, dress and habitat [following] functional considerations, which he subsequently blew into abstraction' (Moncler 2018).

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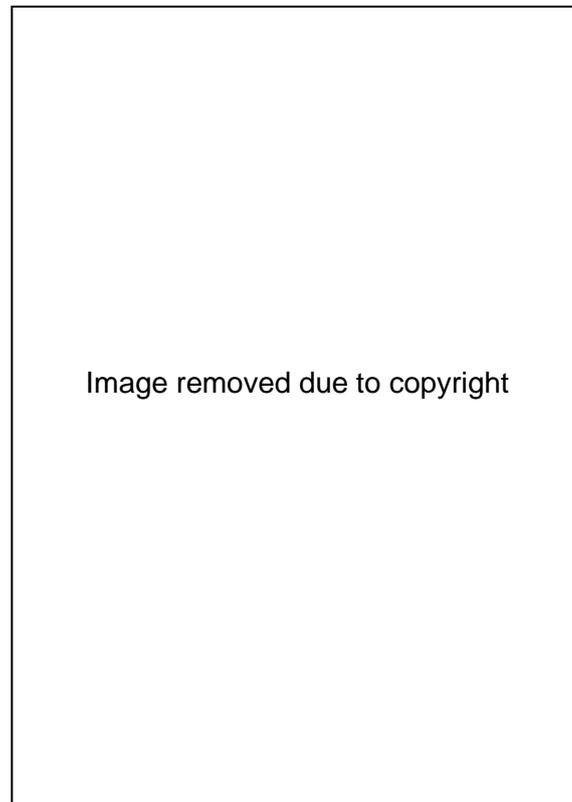
Figure 45 Actor Ezra Miller wearing 1 Moncler Pierpaolo Piccioli at the premiere of Fantastic Beasts in Paris, 2018 (source: GQ)

Green's designs received much press coverage but, when actor Ezra Miller wore '1 Moncler Pierpaolo Piccioli' to the premiere of 'Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald' in Paris in November 2018 (fig.45), it caused a sensation and several articles on gender fluidity (GQ, Vogue, The Independent) as he broke with traditional red-carpet attire in a gigantic puffer gown, hood and gloves originally conceived as women's wear.

2.6. **Serious play**

Play can be frivolous but, as Hockney wrote in his book 'That's the way I see it', 'People tend to forget that play is serious' (Hockney, 1993, 133). In *How to Think*, 1910, pragmatist philosopher and educational reformer, John Dewey, expressed the opinion that a combination of the two is optimal: 'To be playful and serious at the same time is possible, and it defines the ideal mental condition' (Dewey 1910, 218). As mentioned previously, *scenographic costume* has been used and played with

seriously as a method of research in order to explore fundamental questions of emotion, constriction, gender and bodily norms. Martha Graham's choreography and use of costume can be considered an example of this.

> Unlike classical ballet and many modern dance companies who prefer no imposed restrictions, sets and costumes designed for Martha Graham often provided obstacles for her and her dancers to overcome. Graham said: 'I refuse to admit that dance has limitations [   ] Dance décor can, I believe, serve as a means of enhancing movement and gesture to the point of revelation of content' (Brown and Woodford 1998, 52).

Although she used artists and designers such as Alexander Calder and Rouben Tev-Arutunian, after 1935 Martha Graham worked mainly with Isamu Noquchi, a Japanese-trained American, and the pioneer lighting designer, Jean Rosenthal. Noguichi's abstract sculptures of wood, bone, stone and twisted metal were works of art in their own right. Graham allowed him creative freedom and rarely suggested changes, preferring instead to change her own ideas. The designs inspired Graham's choreography as did the costumes she designed herself. The simpler dresses moulded the body and revealed and emphasised the beauty of its contours, the free-flowing silk jersey dresses accentuated the energetic movements of the dancers. But, in the words of Leatherman,

> the more complex, and dramatically more meaningful costumes are designed against the movement. She has put herself and her dancers into tubes of cloth like cocoons; in voluminous robes, weighty and unyielding; in cloaks and capes made of yards of material (Leatherman 1967, 140).

Figure 46 Martha Graham 'Lamentation', photos by Barbara Morgan 1935 (source: https://www.loc.gov/photos/?q=Martha+Graham+lamentation)

'Lamentation', 1930, a four-minute solo performance by Graham (fig. 46), was the

> iconic embodiment of grief distilled to its essence, all the more powerful because it abstracts an emotion rather than depicts a character experiencing grief [ ] Graham's program note called the solo a dance of sorrows, ''not the sorrow of specific person, time or place but the personification of grief itself''' (Kisselgoff 2001).

Graham wore a shroud of stretch jersey which she stretched and twisted into different shapes; her body emblematic of sorrow. She wrote in her autobiography:

> I wear a long tube of material to indicate the tragedy that obsesses the body, the ability to stretch inside your own skin, to witness and test the perimeters and boundaries of grief (Graham 1992, 117).

Graham's choreography for 'Lamentation' and her use of the costume as an expressive tool were inextricably entwined. Body and costume:

> To watch Lamentation is to watch an ongoing negotiation…Interestingly, Graham's body and the material qualities of the costume – although collapsed in terms of the conception of movement – remain distinct entities… costume as an active and reactive performance agent. Beyond a descriptive practice, costume shapes movement through an affective reciprocal exchange between body and costume: where the immediacy of the costumed act affects both the worn and the wearer (Hann 2017, 15).

Richard Buckle wrote of Martha Graham:

> 'She is one of the great creators of our time…she has enlarged the language of the soul' (Buckle 1954, 11).

The rise of second-wave feminism and the appropriation by women artists of the themes of identity, sexuality and the body led to a new era of experimentation. Louise Bourgeois was a prolific artist who worked in all artistic medium from textiles to sculptures in marble or iron, to drawing and print.

> Bourgeois almost always focused on the human form, whether supine, oversized, realistic or abstract. Sometimes it was the whole figure; sometimes just a foot. But all of her work was deeply personal (Ferrier 2016).

Her multi-breasted 'Avenza' costume (fig. 47) was made from a latex mould that Bourgeois took from a sculpture in plaster she had made in Avenza, Italy in 1968. Reminiscent of an ancient Cycladic sculpture 'Avenza', like much of her work, has distinctly sexual/maternal overtones. Bourgeois's friend and assistant, Jerry Gorovoy maintains, however, that:

> To call her a 'female artist' or a 'feminist artist' is reductive. It was simply autobiographical – she was dealing with universal emotions: jealousy, rejection, and so on. These are pre-gender (Ferrier 2016).

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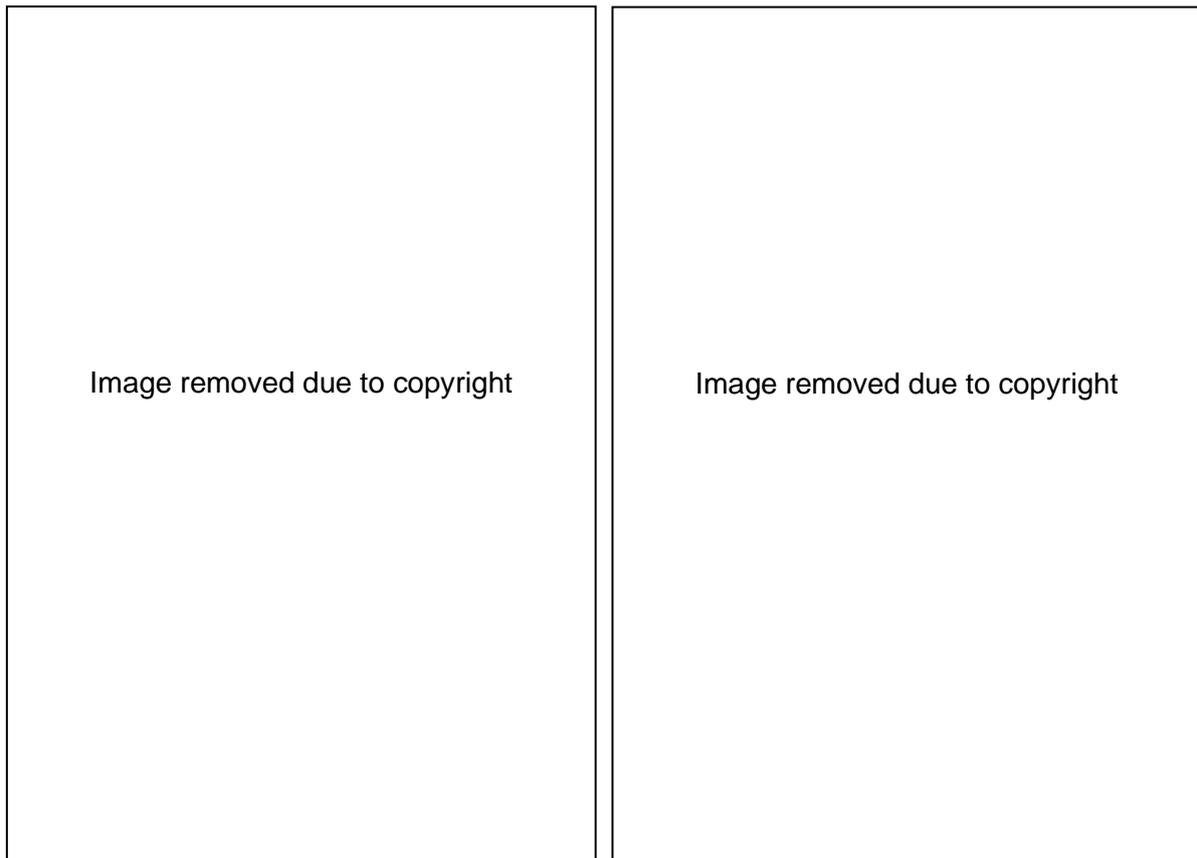
Figure 47 Louise Bourgeois 'Avenza', 1975 (source: artsy.net)

Figure 48 Rebecca Horn 'Arm Extensions', 1968 (source: www.tate.org.uk/)

Recovering from lung poisoning in a sanitorium in the 1960s, Rebecca Horn started to create prosthetic body-extensions from her hospital bed in order to combat her sense of isolation and to reach out, both metaphorically and literally. These body-sculptures, made in fabric and wood, extended and constricted various parts of the body and explored the concept of loneliness and 'the equilibrium between body and space' (Tate 2016; Horn 2017). The prosthesis 'seem to offer an 'improvement' of human capability, the results are often debilitating or grotesque, serving only to highlight the fragility and helplessness of the human body' (Watling 2012).

Talking about 'Arm Extensions', 1968 (fig. 48), Horn said:

Her body is bandaged crosswise from the chest down to the feet, like a mummy. Movement becomes impossible. Both her arms are stuck in thickly padded red stumps that serve as supports for her body. In the course of the action, the performer feels that arms, despite her upright posture, begin to touch the ground, fuse with it, become 'insulating pillars' of her own body (Horn 1997).

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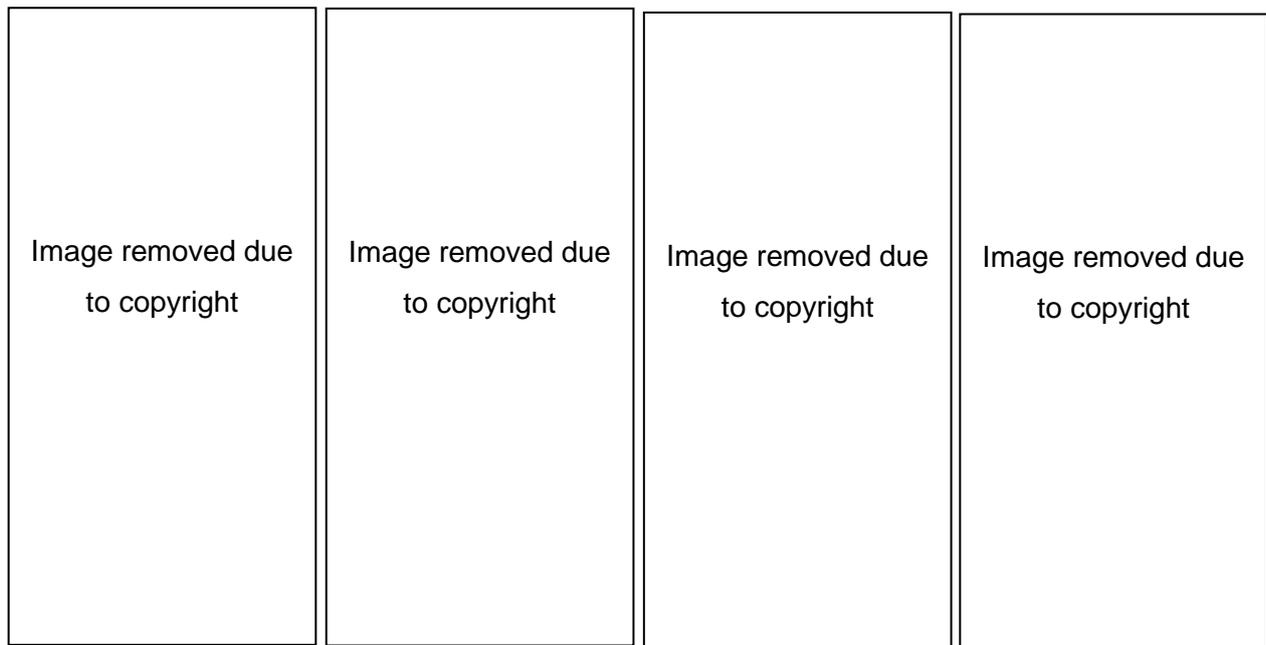
Figure 49 Left: Comme des Garçons 'Body Meets Dress, Dress meets Body Collection 1997 (source: firstview.com), centre & right: Comme Des Garçons A/W Ready-To-Wear Collection 2017 (source: firstview.com)

Rei Kawakuba's designs for the Merce Cunningham dance 'Scenario' in 1997 and her Comme des Garçons 'Body Meets Dress, Dress meets Body' (fig. 49) the year later are the first examples of her playing with padding and body modulation in order to question and subvert ideals of beauty.

> The Spring/summer collection of Comme des Garçons set out to explore and question assumptions about female beauty and notions of what is sexually alluring and what is grotesque within the Western vocabulary (Granata 2017, 40).

As the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute 'Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons: Art of the In-Between retrospective' of 2017 showed, it is a theme which has continued to intrigue her as her work continues to move away from wearability towards the surreal. With her sculptural fashion Kawakubo blurs the boundaries between art and fashion 'challenges our ideas about fashion's role in contemporary culture' (The Met 2016). Speaking about her work, Rei Kawakubo said:

> I have always pursued a new way of thinking about design...by denying established values, conventions, and what is generally accepted as the norm. And the modes of expression that have always been most important to me are fusion...imbalance... unfinished... elimination...and absence of intent (The Met 2016).

2.7. Play, art, form and materiality

Scenographic costume has an aesthetic quality closely related to art, sculptural form and materiality and is infused with an underlying playfulness.

The cubist painter Picasso and the most daring of today's choreographers I think you can't have art without play; Picasso always understood that. I think you can't have much human activity of any kind without a sense of playfulness (Hockney 1993, 133).

Picasso was eager to promote Cubism and to relate its artform to everyday life. 'Parade' (figs. 50 & 51), which he designed for Diaghilev's Ballet Russes, gave him this opportunity. Guillaume Apollinaire wrote in the programme notes:

The cubist painter Picasso and the most daring of today's choreographers, Léonide Massine have here consummately achieved, for the first time, that alliance between painting and dance, between the plastic and mimetic arts, that is a herald of the more comprehensive art to come…This new alliance-I say new, because until now scenery and costumes were linked only by factitious bonds-has given rise, in Parade, to a kind of surrealism…The costumes and scenery in Parade show clearly that its chief aim has been to draw the greatest possible amount of aesthetic emotion from objects…Here the aim is, above all, to express reality. Howeve, the motif is not reproduced but represented-more precisely, it is not represented but rather suggested by means of an analytic synthesis that embraces all the visible elements of an object and, if possible, something else as well: an integral schematization that aims to reconcile contradictions by deliberately renouncing any attempt to render the immediate appearance of an object. Massine has adapted himself astonishingly well to the discipline of Picasso's art. He has identified himself with it, and his art has become enriched with delightful inventions …The fantastic constructions representing the gigantic and surprising features of The Managers, far from presenting an obstacle to Massine's imagination, have, one might say, served to give it a liberating impetus (Doyle 2005, 66-67).
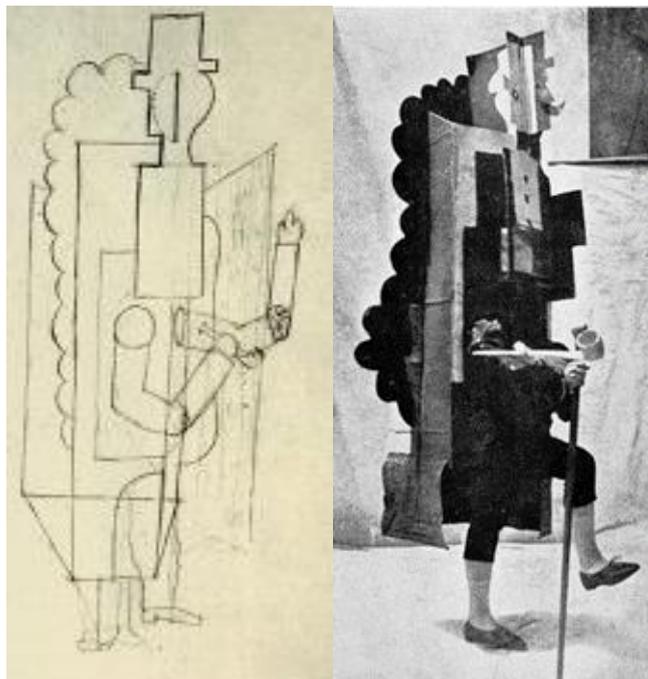
Figure 50 Costume sketch (source: Ledor) and costume for the French Manager in 'Parade', Picasso 1917 photo Lachman (source: Public Domain)

Figure 51 Reproduction of the French and American Manager costumes for 'Parade' performed by the Joffrey Ballet in 1973 (source: source: CC BY 2.0 Jean-Pierre Dalbéra)

Picasso's design for 'Parade' was an early example of design dictating the choreography, most noticeable in his costume designs for the two rival managers who announced the acts. The managers wore three-dimensional sculptures personifying America and France. The American manager was a robot with a hat shaped like a ship's funnel, flags, cowboy chaps and Manhattan skyscrapers on his shoulders; the Frenchman had a starched shirtfront, pipe, stick and a background of Parisian chestnut trees. Naturally, these costumes restricted the movement of the two dancers who wore the structure and thus, as Peter Williams acknowledged in *Masterpieces of Ballet Design*, 'Picasso's towering Cubist structure for the two rival managers became virtually the first instance of choreographed sculpture' (Williams 1981, 17). Picasso's costumes were preceded by Malevich's 'Victory over the Sun' in 1913 and experiments for Schlemmer's 'Triadic ballet' which, although first performed in 1922, had begun in 1916.

In the chapter 'Agency and Empathy: artists touch the body', from the book *Costume in Performance Materiality, Culture and the Body*, Melissa Trimingham discusses the agency of sculpted costume in arousing visceral empathy in the audience. She gives examples of several case studies to illustrate her understanding of the impact of the costume on the body of the performer, but suggests that some *scenographic costumes*, such as Picasso's costumes for Parade, 'remained a purely visual spectacle, however startling, that nevertheless failed…to touch a visceral nerve within us' (Trimingham 2017, 165). It is hard to ascertain the visceral empathy of an audience, however, when documentation is scarce. It is important to place the costumes into a historical and cultural context in order to understand their real impact, but, as Williams notes in *Masterpieces of Ballet Design*:

There are probably no persons – choreographers and dancers in any field, composers, painters, designers – working in dance today who do not owe what they are doing, and the way they are doing it, to the achievements of Diaghilev (Williams 1981, 21).

The materials used to create Picasso, Schlemmer and Malevich's costumes which concealed or deformed the actor's body were rigid - wood, metal and papier-mâché - not the traditional soft fabrics normally associated with clothing, and it is therefore inevitable that choreography and movement were affected by the deliberately cumbersome costumes designed and made during this period.

Contemporary *scenographic costume*, situated somewhere between fashion and performance, continues to experiment with materiality and form. Nick Cave's work bridges art, fashion and dance. His 'Soundsuits', which recall Leigh Bowery's 'Looks' (see fig. 52), are *scenographic costumes*, sewn, knitted, crocheted and adorned with recycled materials, sequins, children's toys and human hair. 'Some are durable; others more fragile. But all, based on the human body, look as if they could easily spring into motion. The potential for dance is implicit in all of them' (Finkel 2009).

In an interview in the New York Times, Cave described how he plays with ideas of identity, masquerade and anonymity in his costumes:

'When I was inside a suit, you couldn't tell if I was a woman or man; if I was black, red, green or orange; from Haiti or South Africa,' he said. 'I was no longer Nick. I was a shaman of sorts' (Finkel 2009).

Figure 52 Nick Cave 'Soundsuits' (source: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 Alba)
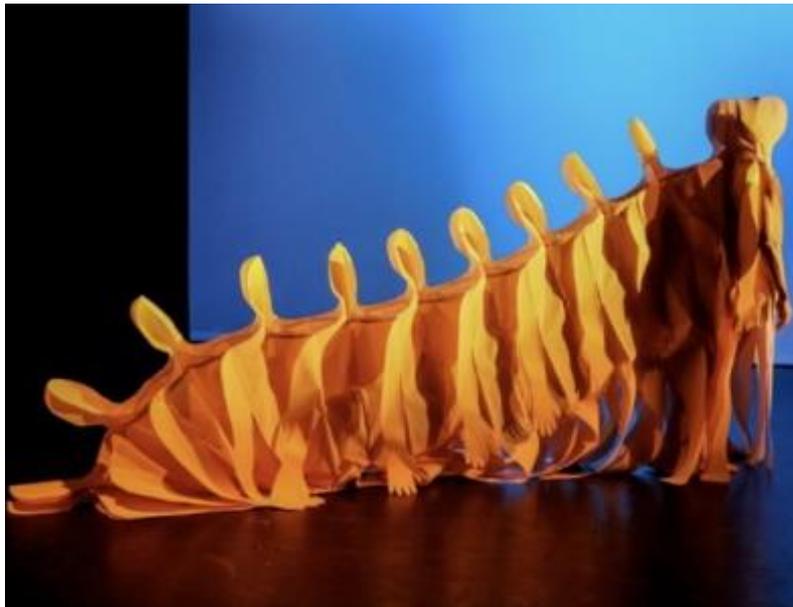
Figure 53 Sandra Becker 'Peeled Shadows' 2013 (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Sandra Becker)

Visual artists, such as Sandra Becker (fig.53), Maria Blaisse (fig. 54) and Lucy and Bart (fig. 55) play with form, movement and materiality to create unique pieces that 'can be understood as sculptures or costumes' (Blaisse 2018). Witty and conceptual the work frequently relies heavily on the aesthetic qualities of the materials and the whole visual impact.

Figure 54 Maria Blaisse 'Rolling Stripes - Kuma Guna' 1996, photo Anna Beeke (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Maria Blaisse and Anna Beeke)

Figure 55 Lucy and Bart 'Spring', 2008 (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Bart Hess and Lucy McRae)

Self-taught costume designer and choreographer, Sonia Biacchi, founded the Centro Teatrale di

Ricerca[29] in Venice in 1982. After reproducing the costumes from Schlemmer's Triadic Ballet for a performance on a barge in Venice, Biacchi developed an interest in materiality and movement[30]. Her costumes are, as her book suggests, 'architecture for bodies' (Biacchi 2015), sculptural 'insubordinate' forms which simultaneously work with and against the body.

Her early costumes were heavily influenced by Schlemmer's work and were 'geometrically minimalist forms of essential lines and volumes [whereas her later work is defined by] 'spontaneous shapes: fluid and indefinite architecture in constant development' (D'Agostino 2015, 84). In my conversation with the octogenarian, Biacchi explained how, for her latest costumes (fig. 56), she now works directly on a mannequin with nylon sailcloth and lightweight boning to create the effect she wants. When worn, these costumes exude kinetic energy in a 'union of body, costume and space' (D'Agostino 2015, 85).
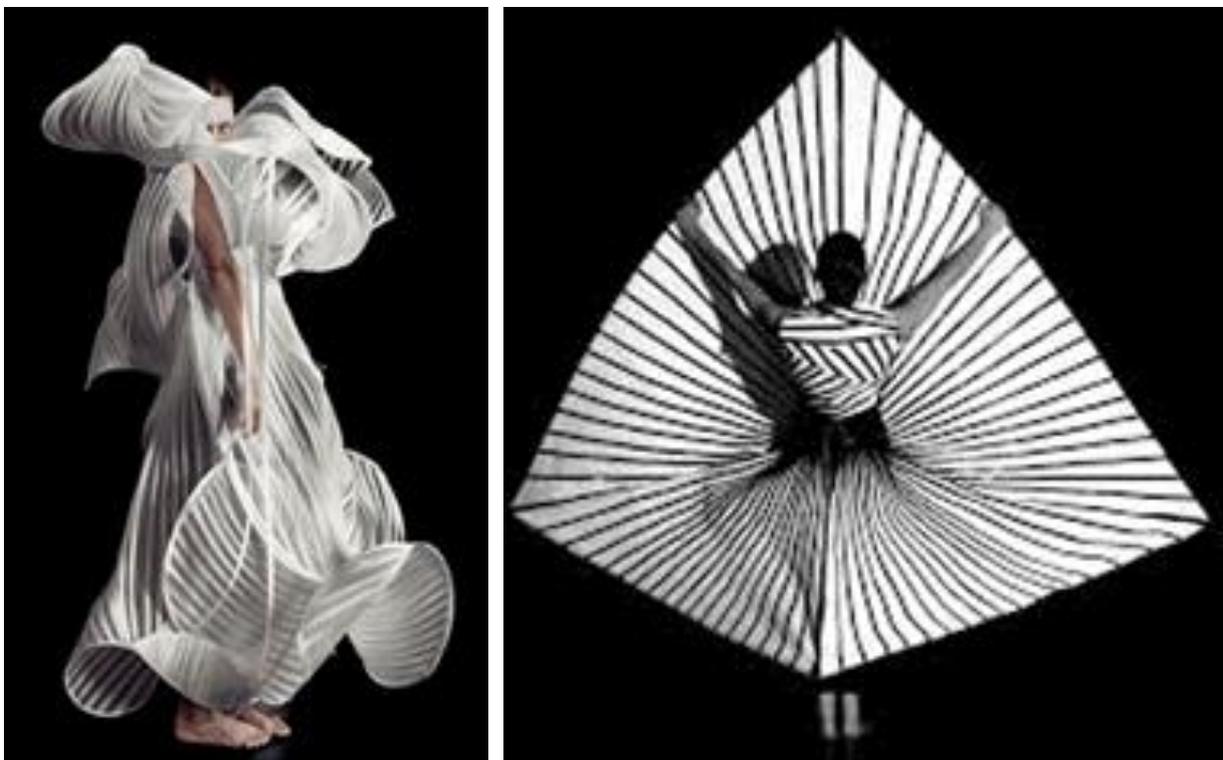
Figure 56 Costumes Sonia Biacchi, photos by Kristine Theimann (Permission to reproduce these images granted by Kristine Theimann)

As I wrote in chapter 1 (page 31), the distinction between fashion, dance, performance and theatre in the 21st century, is less defined than previously. Examples of designers experimenting with play,

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[29] Centre of Theatre Research (www.ctrteatro.it)

[30] From a private conversation with Sonia Biacchi at the exhibition 'Architetture per i corpi. I costumi-sculture di Sonia Biacchi' (Architecture for bodies. The costume-sculptures of Sonia Biacchi) at the Centro culturale Candiani in Mestre.

art, form and materiality can be observed in all four disciplines. Fashion designers are creating *scenographic costumes* in exaggerated forms and from materials not usually associated with wearable clothing. Emulating and inflating the Elizabethan accessory, Junya Watanabe's giant ruff (figure 57) was the element in his Autumn/Winter 2000 collection that was most photographed, published and republished, becoming the cover illustration for Harold Koda's book *Extreme beauty*. The giant hips and shoulders of Alexander McQueen's black swan dress (fig. 58), like many of his conceptual designs, play with traditional forms and unusual materials to question ideals of beauty.
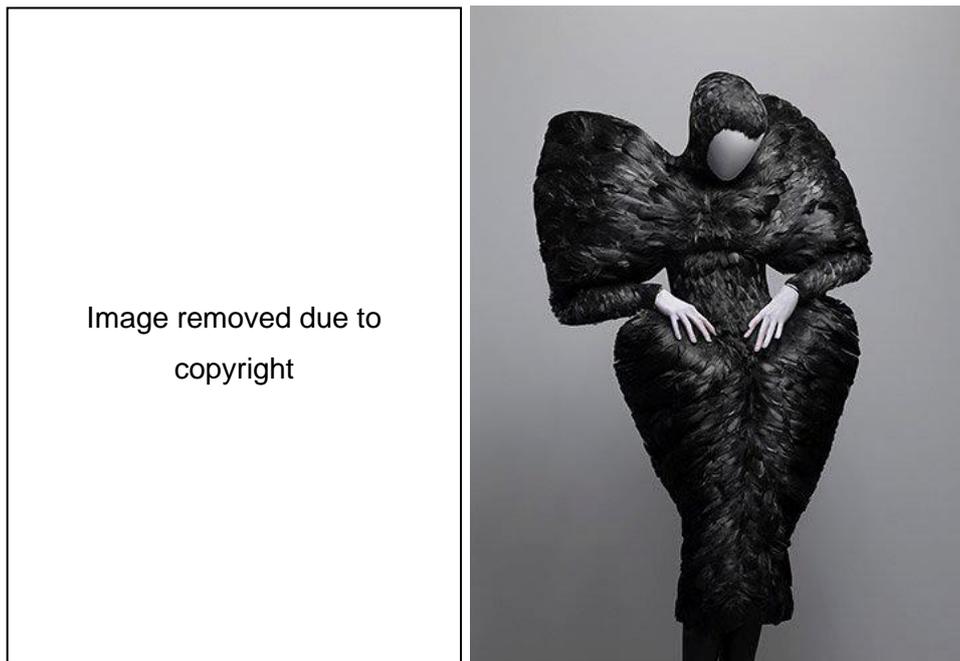
Figure 57 Junya Watanabe oversized ruff, A/W 2000 (source: firstview.com)
Figure 58 Alexander McQueen A/W 2009 (source: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 ER's Eyes)

Yamamoto, Viktor and Rolf and Hussein Chalayan's haute couture pieces, that use wood as a structural element (figure 59), recall the technical construction of some of the avant-garde theatre costumes by Picasso, Schlemmer and Malevich in the early part of the 20th century. Chalayan's Autumn/Winter 2000 'After Words' collection was conceptual and played with the idea of transformation as pieces of furniture morphed into clothing:

This show bordered on a 1970s 'happening': four models wearing grey shift-dresses approached these chairs, removed the covers and then put them onto their bodies. The last model wearing a similar dress delicately stepped into the middle of the table, lifted it up and transformed it into a skirt. [ ] This wasn't, however, an exercise in theatricality for the sake of theatricality [ ] The show was inspired by refugees of war, people forced to flee their homes, carrying their worldly possessions on their backs (Stansfield 2016).
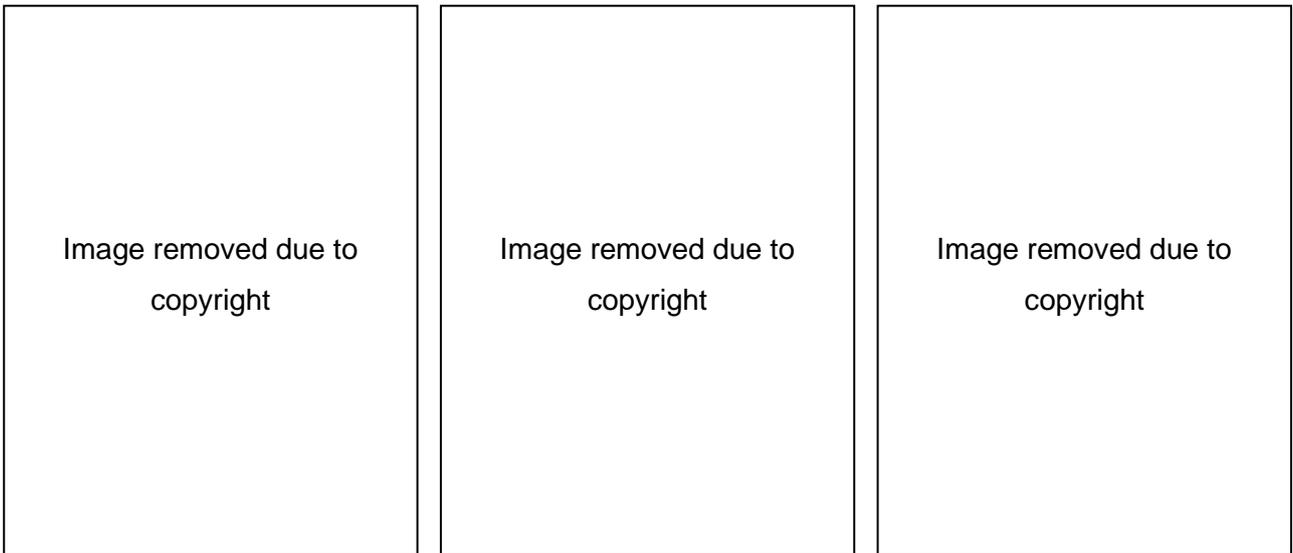
Figure 59 From left to right: Yohji Yamamoto A/W 2015, Viktor & Rolf A/W 2015, Hussein Chalayan 'Table Dress, 'After Words collection' A/W 2000 (source: First View)
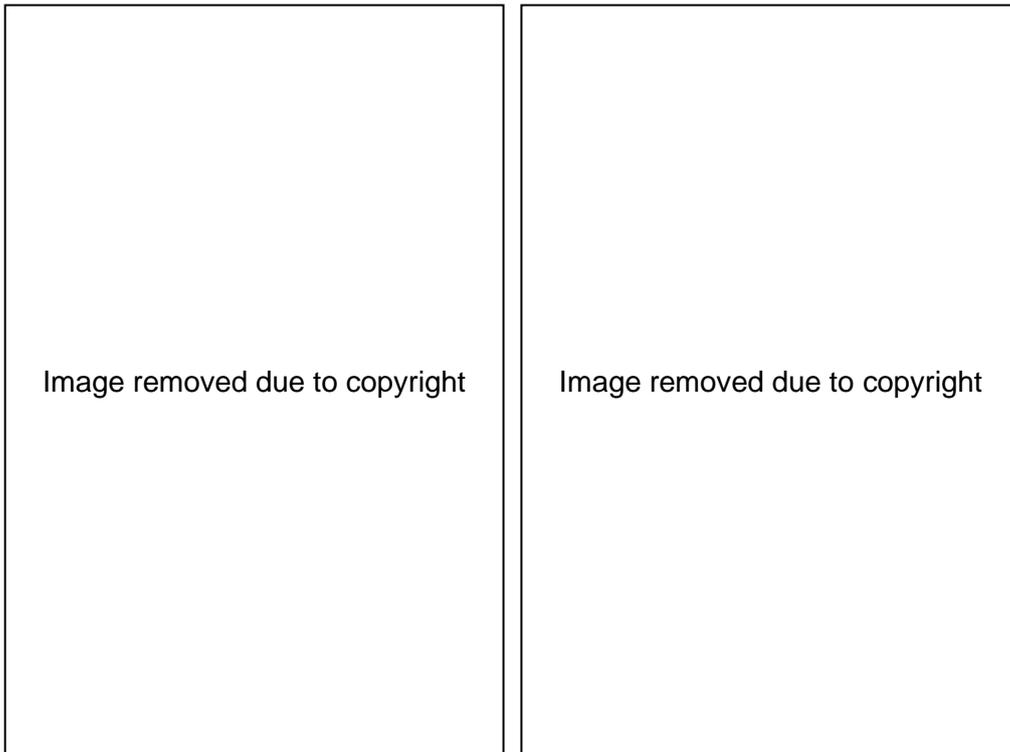
Figure 60 Iris van Herpen 'Capriole' A/W 2011 (source: First View), Iris Van Herpen A/W 2016 (source: Iris Van Herpen)

Dutch experimental fashion designer, Iris van Herpen works with technology, avant-garde textiles, 3D printing and innovative engineering techniques to create unique, scenographic fashion pieces, whose sculptural forms are often inspired by the natural world (fig. 60). Van Herpen's work bridges, not only the boundaries between fashion, theatre and performance, but also those of science, architecture and engineering. She describes her working methods in an interview with Vogue:

When I translate my inspirations into materials and fabrics, I mix traditional craftsmanship and new technologies to go beyond the possibilities of using just one medium. [ ] My process has become much more collaborative, interacting with architects, scientists, and engineers to create garments that combine experimental technology with traditional craftsmanship. This interdisciplinary research creates a constant dialogue and new knowledge and challenge for the atelier (Borrelli-Persson 2017).

Within this chapter, looking at the history of *scenographic costume* from Loïe Fuller in the early 1890s to the present day, many crossovers can be observed between the different examples that have been artificially divided into the various aspects of play. Naturally the work of artists like Louise Bourgeois (figure 46) transcend boundaries and could be positioned in several different sections. Furthermore, there is much individuality and original experimentation in this very specific area of costume design, but visual similarities arise that may have derived from conscious, subconscious or random decisions. It is not always easy to ascertain the influence that designers have had on each other's work, especially in the days before easy-access to images on the internet. There is a fine line between research and plagiarism, particularly in the fashion world hungry for new ideas. John Galliano's Spring Summer Collection 1998 for Christian Dior saw him take his inspiration directly from the Marchesa Luisa Casati, fashion designer Paul Poiret who dressed her and, indirectly, from Leon Bakst who's designs for Diaghilev's Ballet Russes inspired Poiret (figure 2). In his own way, Leigh Bowery has been as influential on costume and fashion as were the Ballet Russes in Paris before the First World War having influenced, directly or indirectly, fashion designers such as Gareth Pugh, Walter Van Beirendonck and Jean Paul Gaultier and performers such as Pyuupiru, Nick Cave and Lady Gaga, to name but a few.

Although they only amount to a small proportion of costume design in general, the periodic instances of *scenographic costume* design, which I have described in this chapter, prove that costume has agency. The artistic practice of *scenographic costume* creation and its playful nature has inspired and influenced me in my practice research, if not directly in any recognizable style or modus operandi. The examples of *scenographic costume* that I have given appear to be preconstructed and defined by a designer not constructed by a performer, although there are many cases where designer and performer are one as this type of costume is a potent form of artistic expression. My own practice differs in that I have made costume modules that can be connected and used in a myriad of different ways offering flexibility and dynamic dramatic potential to the performer.

The flexible nature of *my Insubordinate Costumes* and the diverse creative results of the practice workshops and performances, which I describe in Chapter 3, demonstrate that my *Insubordinate Costumes* could, hypothetically, be placed within any of the categories of play I have defined in this chapter: 'Play as research, play as discovery', 'Play in a social, cultural and political context', 'Playworlds', 'Play and apparent frivolity', 'Serious play', 'Play, art, form and materiality'.

In the next chapter I will illustrate the development of the unique flat-pack modular costumes which form the basis of my practice research and describe the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops held with the different case-study groups, detailing my findings and the process of generating a performance inspired by the costumes.

Chapter 3: Playing with Insubordinate Costume

Case studies Index:

Video library:

Table 1 Insubordinate Costume workshops with video links

Video	Title	Date	Duration	Link
1	Workshop with Giulia Moroni -Paderno Dugnano, Italy	07/2017	3:09	https://youtu.be/pr-qc4Kdijw
2	Workshop with Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2019 Group 1 Play & Development	01/2019	2:48	https://youtu.be/u2pmg1FLbnM
3	Workshop with Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2019 Group 1 Short performances	01/2019	6:08	https://youtu.be/fg6aEUOpAak
4	Workshop with Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2019 Group 2 Short performances	01/2019	7:11	https://youtu.be/2EB1LG1PKDY

5	Workshop with Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2019 Group 2 Short performances spoken word	01/2019	2:21	https://youtu.be/jhdobrgleBc
6	Performance with Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento - Robbiate, Italy	05/2019	0:28	https://youtu.be/tRqGTXR0V58
7	Workshop with Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2020 Play	01/2020	0:47	https://youtu.be/t251knibG8g
8	Workshop with Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2020 Development	01/2020	1:51	https://youtu.be/iFUMElC9rrg
9	Workshop with Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2020 Group 1 Short performances	01/2020	2:42	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WtJukt9qg0oKNDr76RnkMSDBfov2fW2i/view?usp=sharing
10	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Asterions Hus, Copenhagen - Playing with Crinolines 1	11/2019	3:22	https://youtu.be/oSoax3Mltaw
11	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Playing with Crinolines 2	11/2019	3:22	https://youtu.be/XZufagIKnfk
12	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Playing with Circles	11/2019	1:49	https://youtu.be/NpL1ajzn90Q
13	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Playing with Crosses	11/2019	1:23	https://youtu.be/sDAeUQT5V9c
14	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Playing with Cocoons	11/2019	1:58	https://youtu.be/Vbjj0LQmpv0

15	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Asterions Hus, Copenhagen, Denmark - Playing with Flexible tubes	11/2019	2:37	https://youtu.be/Wq8tRJXCnQo
16	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Playing with Squares	11/2019	3:15	https://youtu.be/GoC1WQ3z9NE
17	Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Playing with Fortune Tellers	11/2019	2:12	https://youtu.be/0qOyo3scx1w
18	Video 1 Interview with Tilde Knudsen during the first workshop	11/2019	16.48	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chOM9g9KbgY
19	Interview with Tilde Knudsen during the first workshop	11/2019	16.48	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chOM9g9KbgY
20	Four-day development workshop with Tilde Knudsen Campsirago, Italy – Crinolines	01/2020	6:45	https://youtu.be/-UzJvATCr-Y
21	Four-day development workshop with Tilde Knudsen Campsirago, Italy – Triangles	01/2020	1:26	https://youtu.be/GZSVb1YVVLU
22	Four-day development workshop with Tilde Knudsen Campsirago, Italy - Mixed Modules: triangles, circles, squares	01/2020	1:48	https://youtu.be/BovV9fmkeYY
23	Four-day development workshop with Tilde Knudsen Campsirago, Italy - Flexible Tubes	01/2020	0:54	https://youtu.be/m2p2K213CPg
24	Trailer for Alice in Wonderland - Campsirago, Italy	01/2020	1:00	https://youtu.be/I-NaPMmyXyU

25	Character development for Alice in Wonderland, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Caterpillar	02/2020	3:16	https://youtu.be/wjPLC5MPmkA
26	Character development for Alice in Wonderland, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen – Alice	02/2020	1:08	https://youtu.be/aVvjiL78k8Y
27	Character development for Alice in Wonderland, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Cheshire Cat	02/2020	0:52	https://youtu.be/b_gJ_yKyu5Y
28	Character development for Alice in Wonderland, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Judge	02/2020	0:49	https://youtu.be/p8XzLdShbjU
29	Character development for Alice in Wonderland, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen - Mock Turtle	02/2020	0:44	https://youtu.be/TftrQCwrIrM
30	Rehearsing the character of Alice, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen	03/2020	3:26	https://youtu.be/SJQ855kjOp4
31	Rehearsing the character of The Mad Hatter, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen	03/2020	3:13	https://youtu.be/dZ99AzQS59k
32	Rehearsing the character of the Caterpillar and metamorphosis, Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen	03/2020	5:34	https://youtu.be/TEujT9dsUpY
33	Crinoline Characters, Tilde Knudsen Asterions Hus Møn, Denmark	04/2020	3:24	https://youtu.be/zc9iyEsxoq4
34	Crinoline metamorphosis, Tilde Knudsem Asterions Hus Møn, Denmark	04/2020	2:44	https://youtu.be/qKdUd3X4j3Y
35	White Rabbit, Bird, Alice, Tilde Knudsem Asterions Hus Møn, Denmark	04/2020	5:17	https://youtu.be/bZO5IHOX3tM

36	Growing, Tilde Knudsem Asterions Hus Møn, Denmark	04/2020	2:16	https://youtu.be/zoJFncjuwb0
37	Live stream rehearsal on Facebook during lockdown, Tilde Knudsem Asterions Hus Møn, Denmark	04/2020	46:23	https://www.facebook.com/144774992216347/videos/181468769509697/
38	Alice in Wonderland Trailer filmed by Emile Carlsen of Møn Sessions, Møn, Denmark	05/2020	1:00	https://youtu.be/HEoRoxpudRA
39	Live stream performance of Alice in Wonderland filmed by Møn Sessions.	05/2020	51:10	https://youtu.be/JgNWqDlM4kw
40	Critical Costume 2020: The Agency of Costume – video presentation online conference	08/2020	8:26	https://youtu.be/7amw0g4RXCs
41	Critical Costume 2020: The Agency of Costume – exhibition link	08/2020	-	https://exhibition.costumeagency.com/project/susan-marshall/
42	Critical Costume 2020: The Agency of Costume – video link	08/2020	4:32	https://youtu.be/4rN-wu1_7oM

3.1. Introduction to the Insubordinate Costume practice research

In this chapter I will discuss my costumes and my research methodology, the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops and the role of play in developing a performance inspired by costume. I will illustrate the potential of the approach I have taken and the changes and developments my costumes have undergone as theory was transformed into practice with interesting results.

In the 1998 *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis,* theatre researcher and theorist, Patrice Pavis, wrote:

> 'The last word on costume has yet to be said: fascinating research is being done which could renew stage work. Research into a minimal costume with multiple meanings of "variable geometry" that redivides and represents the human body in a different way, a "phoenix" costume that would be a true intermediary between body and the object, is, in fact, the focus of current experiments in staging. Like a mobile mini-staging, costume restores scenery to its lost glory by emphasizing it and integrating it with the actor's body' (P Pavis 1998, 82).

Pavis does not specify which research into a 'minimal costume with multiple meanings' (Pavis 1998, 82) he is referring to in particular but, as noted in Russell Jackson's book *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Trevor Nunn*, the phrase 'variable geometry' was the title of an article about Nunn's staging of Shakespeare's Roman plays at Stratford in 1972.[33] 'Variable geometry' described the staging for all four plays which used the same basic scenography, designed by Christopher Morley, with numerous possible permutations that rapidly transformed the stage (Jackson 2018). The results of my *Insubordinate Costume* practice research indicate that my flatpack modular 'phoenix' costumes offer multiple possibilities to the performers.

Although the focal point of my research has always been the agency of costume and its ability to generate performance, my practice research question changed after the first experimental workshop. The emphasis of my original aims and objectives shifted as my focus moved away from the idea of constriction forcing a performer to behave in a certain way towards the development of modular costumes and theories of play and creativity in connection with the costume. The case studies in this chapter are divided into three sections to represent the three different stages of my research: the first section (3.2. page 102) will discuss the first practice workshop with Giulia Moroni which resulted in a new emphasis, a new title and a new set of modular costumes for the later workshops; the second section (3.4. page 114) illustrates the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops, undertaken with various groups of performers; and the third section (3.5. page 144) concentrates on the development of a performance of 'Alice in Wonderland' with the Danish actress and dancer Tilde Knudsen.

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[33] Nunn, Bill, 'Variable Geometry at Stratford', *Tabs*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (June 1972), 72-6.

At the beginning of each case study a table is provided which shows the date, the duration, the location, the number of performers, the number of different costume modules used and gives direct links to the videos. Photos illustrate the different workshops and performances within the chapter and the video links demonstrate the *Insubordinate Costume*s in movement and the many different ways the performers have played with and utilised the modules.

3.2. 'Constriction the Costume as Muse' and the exploration workshop with Giulia Moroni

Table 2 Exploration workshop - costume module and video

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video link
07/2017	3 hours	Paderno Dugnano, Italy	1	Giant cocoon	Video 01

Initially, the working title for my PhD was *Constriction: the Costume as Muse* and my research enquiry was primarily into how a performer could overcome the constrictions that my costumes imposed on their natural movements and their consequent phenomenological experience.

As this was the first workshop it was an experiment in methodology for me as well as an investigation into how the costume can be used and manipulated. The role of costume and costume designer in the hierarchy of a production is usually subservient to that of a director or choreographer, so this workshop placed me in the unusual position of directing proceedings. I chose Giulia Moroni as the first person to explore one of my *scenographic costumes* as she is a young, experimental dancer, choreographer and actress who I have worked with before and find to be both imaginative and inquisitive.

The aim of the workshop was to investigate the interaction of the performer with the *scenographic costume*, both when given freedom to choose how to explore the costume and when given specific tasks to perform. Methodological research tools included an open-ended questionnaire and interview to explore the embodied experience of the performer using the costume, video and audio recordings, photographic material and personal observation, with the aim to analysis findings and reflect on the design, research development and how to proceed with further work.

I deliberately withheld any information about the costume from Giulia before the workshop so she would not be influenced or be tempted to prepare anything beforehand. For the purpose of my research, I decided that the costume should lead the workshop as an autonomous object with a minimum amount of guiding instructions from me.

3.2.1. The costume

Figure 61 Scale model of costume (source: Author)

The scale model of the costume (h.27cm x w.18cm) was made from washable paper that has a heavy consistency and is sometimes called eco-leather as it looks like leather when it has been wet and scrunched up. Seven shapes (fig.61) were attached to each other along the straight side and half-way down the curved side to create a three-dimensional structure similar to a sea urchin when folded inwards.

The full-sized prototype (h.150cm x w.100cm, weight 3.5kg) was made from cotton fabric covered with handmade paper and acrylic glue and backed with newspaper (fig.62). Five large metal eyelets were attached down both sides of each segment so they can easily be tied together or untied to allow freedom of movement. As the structure behaved very differently on a large scale and became unwieldy, two of the segments were removed to leave 5 pieces. A 'backbone' seam was then stitched down the middle of each remaining segment to add the necessary rigidity. This structure could be manipulated and used in different ways to create a variety of three-dimensional shapes but was too cumbersome to allow the modules to be experimented with.
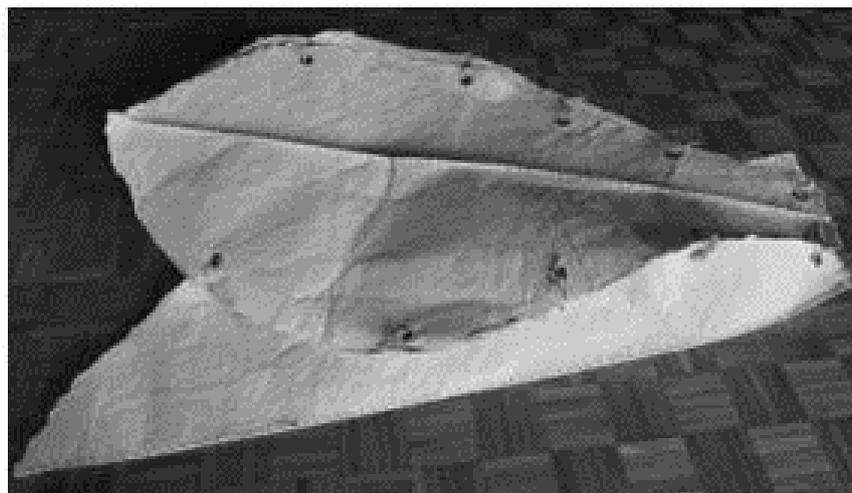
Figure 62 First costume prototype (source: Author)

3.2.2. The Workshop

The workshop was divided into two parts: during the first part Giulia was free to explore the costumes' potentiality whereas in the second part I gave her tasks to complete in order to investigate the possibilities offered by the costume.

Figure 63 Taking over an empty shell (source: Author)

In experimenting with the costume, however, Giulia undertook many of the tasks I was going to propose before being asked. As she crawled into the costume, it immediately changed and began to take on a life of its own: Giulia was like a hermit crab taking over an empty shell (fig. 63). She found many different ways to use and manipulate the costume. Firstly, approaching the costume from the outside with her toes, legs, hands and body and then, upending my own preconceptions as costume designer, she entered the costume from what I had automatically presumed to be the top. Giulia's exploration of shape and movement led to various images being produced, such as a cape, a shell, a nest, a boat (fig. 64). She moved freely within the outer shell which she could sit, lie and roll around in. Putting her head through the smaller hole, the costume automatically became an oversized dress or skirt, immediately taking on a more recognizable and 'acceptable' form in the same way our brains try to make sense of abstract art by thinking 'it looks like…'. At this point the costume became gender-orientated due to innate preconceptions. The costume at this point could be compared to the cumbersome skirts, crinolines and petticoats that women have worn throughout history. Giulia patted it down over her stomach as though she was smoothing down a fabric skirt (video 01).

Figure 64 Costume experiments – cape, boat, nest, skirt (source: Author)

When Giulia first saw the costume, it made her think of an insect or folded angel wings. She also thought it looked very fragile as, superficially, it looked as though it was made of paper. After her initial idea of an insect, she allowed other ideas and images to inspire her during the workshop, at different times it became a lair, a cave, an animal that was eating her, a flower, an onion, a skirt. Play was important to Giulia's exploration of the costume as she tried to understand what it could become. She found that she could create a versatile space for movement inside the costume and that the only constraints that she felt affected her movement were that she found it heavy to lift up. She overcame the difficulties imposed by the costumes by exploring movement that could work while wearing it and by adapting the costume in different ways: by adding string braces or by undoing the sides. She described her relationship with the costume as physical rather than cerebral, and narrative rather than non-narrative, as she imagined fighting against a new and unknown situation.

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She found that working with the costume evoked childhood memories of hide and seek and noted that it seemed like a maternal womb which could sometimes seem reassuring but sometimes also seem constrictive if you are trying to get out of it (out of the womb or from the maternity).   She also noted that:

> The costume was powerful in its own right at a certain point. The fact that you can exit the costume and leave it to live by itself is interesting I think, because it is not anonymous, it is also significant by itself. Even the way you place it within the space, how you arrange it, can make it seem like something: a rock, an animal, a dead body, wings. The performer can enter, like a soul entering inside, and make it live.[34]

Giulia's experience in dance and choreography meant that, aside from her skill set, she was not frightened to confront the new experience head on and experiment and explore the different possibilities the costume offered. Much of her exploration seemed instinctive, again probably due to her cultural background in dance and movement improvisation, and we both noted that the idea of play aided her creativity. The costume offered a surprising amount of freedom within its structure as numerous different ways could be found to overcome any constrictions the costume imposed.

3.2.3. Findings

The workshop demonstrated the interrelationship between the body and the costume as object, but, although successful *per se,* helping to focus my interests and plans for further research, it also highlighted certain limitations which needed to be addressed and which changed my rationale. This resulted in a new emphasis, a new title and a new set of modular costumes for the later workshops. Before the workshop with Giulia, I was primarily interested in the link between constriction and creativity, how performers use creative means to overcome the constrictions of the costume. Two things emerged during the workshop: firstly, it was apparent that, surprisingly, Giulia did not find the costume particularly constrictive, and secondly, that play was fundamental to her creative process as she experimented and uncovered the hidden possibilities of the costume. These discoveries shifted the emphasis of my research away from constriction towards the vital role of play in creativity. The initial title 'Constriction: The Costume as Muse' was, as such, no longer applicable. It would have been possible just to drop constriction from the title but, during my preliminary research, I realised that the passive connotations of the word muse did not describe the insubordinate nature of either the costumes I was researching, or the costumes I intended to make. Taking into account the generative role I was giving my costumes in the creative research process, and that this reversed

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[34] Comment by Giulia Moroni after Workshop 1, 2017

the normal creative scenographic hierarchies of production, the title *Insubordinate Costume* was born as a natural progression.

Perhaps the greatest limitation that the workshop revealed was the costume itself. Although the costume was made from modular pieces, it was immediately obvious that both the size and weight of this first costume would be impractical and cumbersome to transport and, given that I had the opportunity to work with performers in different countries, this was an important element to be considered. In the following section I will describe the design and development of the *Insubordinate Costume* flat-pack modular costumes.

3.3. The development of the Insubordinate Costume modules

Figure 65 Recycled materials for the production of Le Tempeste by the women's prison theatre company San Vittore Globe Theatre (source: Author)

The first workshop precipitated a change in my research focus and necessitated finding a way to resolve the specific practical prerequisites that the costumes needed to be light-weight and easily transportable while still retaining their three-dimensional nature. In response, I looked to origami techniques and modular structures more typical in architecture, industrial design or children's toys such as building bricks, Lego, Meccano, Stickle Bricks and GeoMag as possible solutions to the problem. From playing with small repetitive shapes in paper and fabric, the idea of flat-pack modular scenographic costumes evolved, that were then refined and simplified as my research progressed.

Working as costume designer on a tight budget for a women's prison theatre company, the San Vittore Globe Theatre, recycling and upcycling are fundamental aspects of my design ethos as well as, wherever possible, ecological and sustainable choices regarding the materials I use – biodegradable materials, unbleached cotton, offcuts of fabric, natural dyes (fig. 65). String frequently features on my costumes as it is strong, cheap and visually effective. The modular costumes for my practice research were predominantly white and made from recycled paper, unbleached cotton calico and washable stone paper which is made from calcium carbonate powder blended with a small amount of recyclable high-density polyethylene resin that renders it waterproof and tear resistant. I chose white for simplicity and effect. All the modular pieces of the *Insubordinate Costumes* fit into one suitcase. Performers are given string, elastic and split pins to link the modules together in any way they chose. The designs for my costumes have roots in the artistic patrimony of historical and contemporary examples of scenographic costume, but the sculptural forms that I have constructed and developed in the studio have their own unique characteristics.

3.3.1. The Modular Pieces

The modular designs of the *Insubordinate Costumes* can be divided into two groups: those made with paper and those in fabric. After the first workshop and the evident impracticality of the first costume, I decided to recycle the sandwiched handmade paper-cloth-newspaper material and to cut it into smaller pieces, keeping the flat-topped leaf-shape of the first design. I punched holes down the long sides and stitched 5 modules together with string to form each shape, leaving the top open and the ends of the string long so they could be knotted underneath to close the bottom of the cocoon. More string was passed through the large metal eyelets that remained interspersed randomly as the pieces were cut from the original costume. Ten cocoons of different sizes (fig. 66) were made by recycling the material from the first costume: six were made from five modular pieces 38cm x 20cm, two from five modular pieces 45cm x 25cm and two from five modular pieces 60cm x 35cm. A further four smaller cocoons (26cm x 14cm) were made using remnants of washable paper. The three-dimensional cocoons fold down completely flat for ease of transport. The string stitching is easily unthreaded from the punched holes to create a passage for an arm, leg or head to pass through, allowing for greater variety in their use. Using the offcuts of the sandwiched paper-cloth-newspaper material, I made sixty-five simple 13cm x 13cm cross shaped modules, each with four punched holes (fig.67).

Four module shapes were made from plain white washable paper which does not tear and can be used multiple times. The Fortune Teller (Fig. 68) is a simple origami shape which is immediately recognizable as a childhood toy, usually labelled with colours and numbers and hiding a secret message under each inside flap. Thirty modular pieces were made for subsequent *Insubordinate Costume* workshops in three different finished sizes – 35cm, 28cm, 7cm – with punched holes on the four outer points so they could be joined together using split pins, string or elastic.
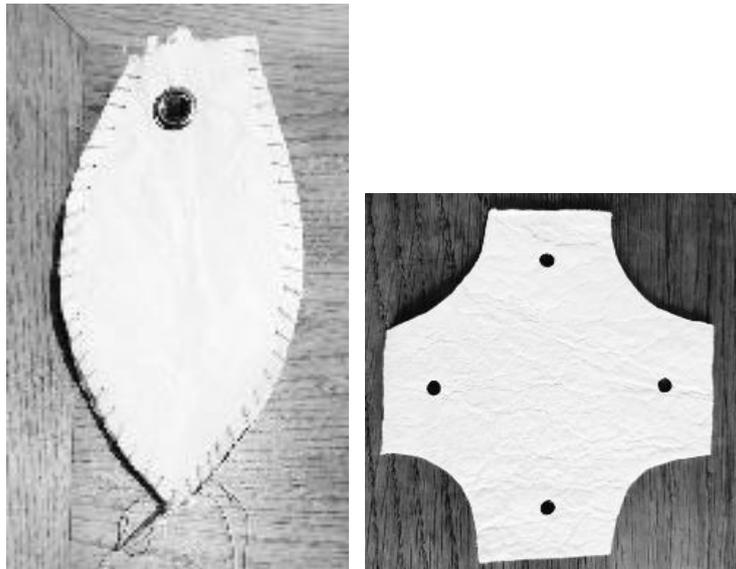
Figure 66 Cocoon module recycled from the first workshop costume (source: Author)

Figure 67 Cross module recycled from the first workshop costume (source: Author)
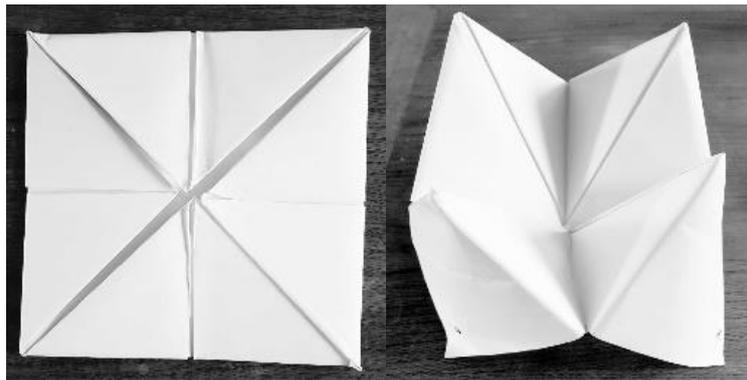
Figure 68 Fortune Teller module (source: Author)
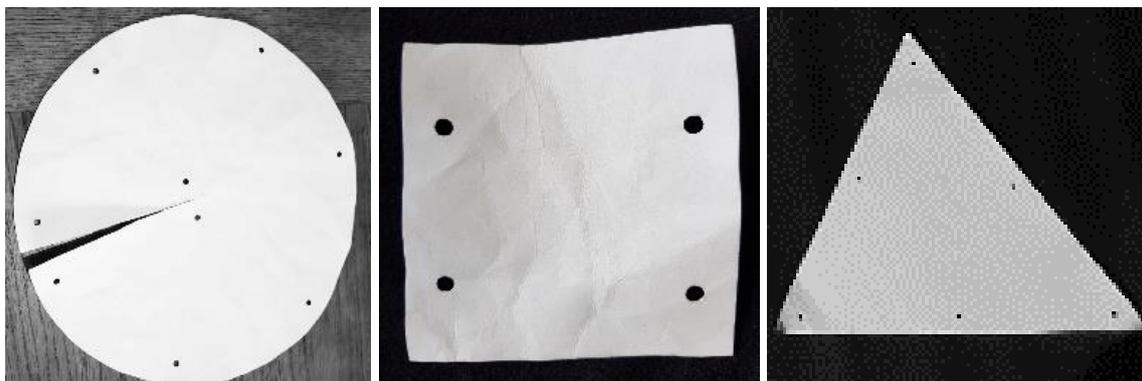
Figure 69 Circle, square and triangle modules (source: Author)

The three other modular shapes in washable paper were the three most basic geometric shapes of circle, square and triangle (fig. 69). In total there were 26 circles, 30 squares and 10 triangles. These

too were punched with holes to allow the pieces to be joined in a myriad of different ways though twisting, folding and connecting.

Table 3 Crinoline module sizes

No. of crinolines	Diameter top	Diameter hem	Height
1	50cm	50cm	400cm
1	24cm	105cm	103cm
1	24cm	60cm	95cm
1	24cm	50cm	65cm
3	20cm	50cm	65cm
2	14cm	65cm	103cm
3	7cm	41cm	28cm
22	7cm	25cm	75cm
1	7cm	25cm	22cm
2	7cm	22cm	15cm
1	3cm	12cm	12cm

Figure 70 Crinoline modules (source: Author).

Continuing with the flatpack modular theme, I developed a series of modules based on the idea of the Victorian crinoline which uses boning to form a three-dimensional shape when held up, but which collapses upon itself to lie flat. By using this module, I have been uncovering the diverse possibilities and hidden potential of the crinoline when it is removed from its traditional role as a fashion garment. The thirty-eight 'crinolines' in calico cotton are different sizes and shapes, ranging from a giant 4m tubular structure to a tiny version that fits on two fingers. Most have open-ended 25cm zips so they can be zipped together or to each other (fig. 70).

In the first group workshops I experimented with a large 4m x 2.5m piece of grey-striped stretch fabric to which I sewed sixteen red and grey sleeves large enough to put an arm, leg or head through (fig 71). Although the experiment worked well as an impetus to performance, and even spawned a professional production with La Dual Band theatre company (page 137), I decided that the design was an anomaly in relation to the other modules. Aside from the colour which could easily be changed, the costume was already fixed and did not offer the same flexibility as the other modular pieces. This was therefore substituted in the following workshops by six 200cm x 10cm and nine 100cm x 10cm flexible air-conditioning tubes to which I added string at both ends so they could be tied together (fig. 72).

Figure 71 Arms and legs module (source: Author)
Figure 72 Flexible tube modules (source: Author)

3.3.2. Research methods Insubordinate costume workshops

The artistic and academic purpose of my research is to establish that the modular costumes enable a different creative strategy that offer diverse dramaturgical possibilities. The *Insubordinate Costume* workshops were devised in order to demonstrate the generative power of costume in performance. They were organised with professional performers, MA Performance Making students at Goldsmiths College, and one amateur theatre company, in order to analyse a range of different approaches comparatively. The workshops include play and improvisation as the structural premise within a brief

time frame that allows time for play, time for creativity and time for performing. The onus is on play as, through play, the performers reach an understanding of the modules, the materials and movement, which may or may not be constricted by the costumes they created, in order to formulise a performance. My aim in the workshops was to emphasise all aspects of play and, aside from the modular pieces reminiscent of children's building blocks, this included hiding the costumes from view during the presentation of the workshop and the set of board game rules given to the performers. Although the workshops are playful and the modular pieces recall children's games, these costumes are not toys, nor are they used in this research as a form of therapeutic drama. The costumes constructed from the modular pieces possess an innate professional value, leading the production of a performance throughout the creative process as performers discover movement, character and physical expression through the wearing of - and playing with - the costume. This is not purely an aesthetic exercise as the costumes have the potential to determine narratives and be the basis for an entire performance.

My practice-based research was then organised into the following cyclical structure where the qualitative research methods using questionnaires and interviews after the workshops fed back into my practice research both in the creation of new modular pieces and in the formulisation and revision of theoretical notions:
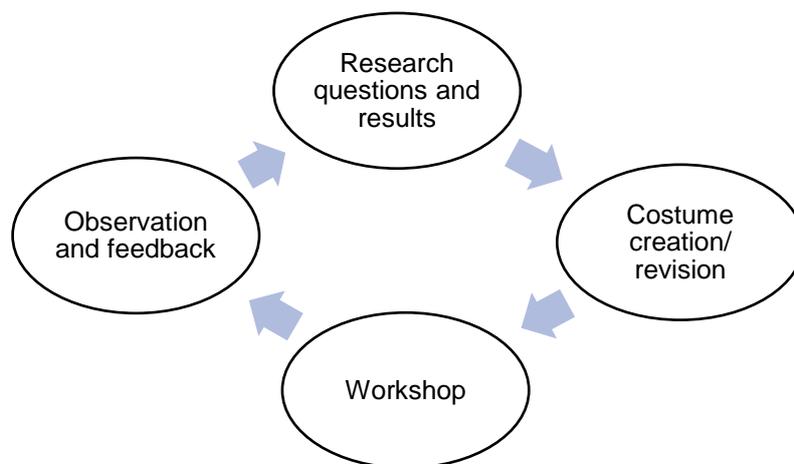
Figure 73 The cyclical structure of my practice research

The original hypothesis and idea development led to the creation of the first modular costume and workshop, whereby the observations and feedback from the workshop led to further ideas and design developments which were implemented in the next workshop (fig.73).

The workshops were mainly organised in two-hour or three-hour sessions with an individual performer or group of performers. The limited time span was deliberately short in order to study the agency of the costumes and creative mechanisms of the performers who needed to react, interact

and make decisions quickly. My research methodology focused on play and although seemingly free, there was a clarified structure to the workshop activities.

The workshops were formed of the following four phases:

- o Phase 1: Playing

Insubordinate Costume

Rules for the Performer

Number of players:
From 1 to 4

Object of the game:
Create a performance inspired by a scenographic costume.

Contents:
Flat-pack modular scenographic costume that can be assembled in various ways to create different shapes and forms.

How to play:
1. Assemble the costumes in any way you choose.
2. The costume can be worn by one person or more.
3. Play and experiment with the costume to find different ways of using it.
4. Create a performance (dance, text-based or performance art) inspired by the costume.
5. You can add text, music, sound, video to the performance.

Notes:
1. Videos and photos will document the creative process.
2. After the workshop you will be asked to describe your experience of using the costumes.

Figure 74 Set of rules for the performer using the Insubordinate Costumes.

I invite the participants to play with the elements and start to build costumes while thinking how the costume interacts with the body and how it affects movement. In order to add to the playful nature of the workshops and to ensure that the performers could not make a visual judgement of which elements they would prefer to play with, the modular pieces were hidden in hessian sacks together with a set of rules (fig. 74) which mimic the rules of a board game. Some are set in stone, others unwritten but, as Huizinga states: 'All play has its rules. They determine what 'holds' in the temporary world circumscribed by play.' (Huizinga 2016, 11). *Scenographic costume* subverts and destabilises

rules and norms which Riezler associates with play: 'We never enjoy a playful attitude more than when making or changing the rules or conventions to which we submit.' (Riezler 1941, 507). In his article *The Elements of Play, toward a philosophy and definition of play* in the American Journal of Play, Scott G. Eberle writes: 'Rulemaking also includes rule breaking…[t]hus subversion and mischief often become part of the experience and parcel of the fun. In fact, play will lurch between regulation and abandon, order and disorder, or contain both forces at once' (Henricks 2009; Eberle 2014, 216).

- o Phase 2 Development

The performers are invited to elaborate and consolidate their creative ideas and start to work towards creating a mini performance inspired by the costume. They are given the opportunity to add speech or music if so desired.

- o Phase 3 Dramaturgy

The performers demonstrate the short performance they have prepared during the previous two phases.

- o Phase 4 Feedback

Qualitative research methods using questionnaires and interviews were implemented to gain feedback from the performers in order to understand their physical, emotional and cognitive reactions to the costumes.

Although I observed from the side-line and intervened on occasion as what Viola Spolin defined as a *sidecoach*, I deliberately decided not to assume the role of director or choreographer as, by taking on an autocratic role, I would be consolidating, rather than subverting, the hierarchies of traditional theatre practice. My intention rather, was an inclusive, collaborative production with a more equal partnership between human and non-human elements which avoided pushing the performers in a preconceived direction of my own.

3.4. Insubordinate Costume Workshops

The case-study workshops involved performers from heterogeneous backgrounds and were organised with both single performers and small groups, professional, semi-professional/trainee and amateur. From a starting point of personal creativity as a costume designer/maker, my research grew to become an example of collaborative creativity between the designer, the modular costumes and the performers. My creative practice is a collaboration of interdependent equals - costume/body performer/costume designer – which subverts traditional hierarchies, merging and questioning the roles of the costume designer, the author, the director/choreographer, the spectator to create horizontal creative process.

3.4.1. Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students Group 1 2019

Table 4 Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students Group 1 2019 – workshop modules and videos

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
01/19	2 hours	George Wood Theatre, Goldsmiths University London	Large group split into 7 smaller groups	Cocoons Circles Squares Crosses Fortune tellers Crinolines Arms and legs	Video 02 Video 03

As part of my practice research, I ran three *Insubordinate Costume* workshops with students on the MA Goldsmiths Performance Making programme (see 3.4.1., 3.4.2 and 3.4.5). Goldsmiths Performance Making students are an international mixed group of dancers, architects, film makers and artists who are open to creating and performing and to gaining inspiration from alternative sources.

At the beginning of the two-hour workshop the modules were hidden inside hessian sacks, divided by type. After a brief introduction, I invited the participants to form seven groups of two or three, to choose a sack to open and to read the rules of play (see above). The performers immediately started to play with the modules, finding ways to quickly link the pieces using the string, elastic or split pins provided (figs. 75 - 78) and experimenting with movement and shape (fig. 79, video 02).

I intervened occasionally to make suggestions or offer advice when asked but, as I stated before, I deliberately decided not to assume the role of director or choreographer during the workshop as my research involves the agency of the costumes and not whether or not a costume designer is capable of directing.

Figure 75 Connecting fortune teller with split pins (source: Author)

Figure 76 Connecting circle modules with split pins (source: Author)

Figure 77 Connecting the cross modules with elastic (source: Author)

Figure 78 Connecting the square modules with string (source: Author)

Figure 79 Experimenting with the cocoon modules and movement (source: Author)

Within a two-hour workshop, decisions needed to be made quickly in order to proceed to the performance development stage. The groups working with the circle, square, fortune teller and cross modules (figs. 75-78) immediately found a way forward, whereas the groups working with the cocoons, crinolines and arms and legs modules (figs. 79-81) experimented with different possibilities before deciding which path to follow. All of the groups worked by building the costume directly on the body and many used photos or videos of the costumes to understand the shapes they were creating.

The development stage, where each group devised a short production, progressed naturally from the creation of the modular costumes. The groups discussed and planned their performances while experimenting with movement and decided whether they would include sound, lighting and narration. I joined the groups to listen to their discussions and answer questions, while aiming not to impose my opinion on the proceedings. The brief five-minute performances were then presented to the class at the end of the workshop.

These performances, like the costumes, were varied and, due to the limited time available, offered just a glimpse of what was possible had the performers had more time to develop their ideas. The crinoline, crosses, cocoons, circles and fortune teller groups had only one person performing in the costume, whereas the groups using the squares and arms and legs modules used multiple performers. Three of the groups added music to their performance and one of the groups used narration (video 03).

Figure 80 Experimenting with crinoline modules shape and movement (source: Author)

Figure 81 Experimenting with the arm and leg modules (source: Author)

The group using the crinoline modules decided against the first idea they had experimented with, where two performers were wearing the same costume (fig. 80) and chose a more traditional look

where one performer wore the costume modules as an eccentric wedding dress (fig. 82). Eight long thin crinolines were zipped together to form the skirt and hessian sacks, which had held the modules at the beginning of the workshop, were used to create the bodice, veil and bouquet. To the accompaniment of the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir singing 'Svatba' (Wedding Party), the performer slowly descended the theatre steps, spun round like a Whirling Dervish and threw her bouquet over her shoulder to the audience.

Figure 82 Final performance by the group using the crinoline modules (source: Author)
Figure 83 Final performance by the group using the cross modules (source: Author)

Structures reminiscent of armour were built by the group using the cross modules by threading the crosses onto black elastic both horizontally and vertically (fig. 77). During the performance one performer tied these structures onto the other performer, gradually imprisoning her and taking away her freedom and her identity (fig.83). The ironic choice of music, Aretha Franklin's '(You make me Feel like) a Natural Woman' enforced the idea that this was a political statement about domestic abuse.

The group using the cocoon modules developed the costume by assembling the modular pieces around one performer's body, playing with the restrictions they caused and building their ideas around it. At first, they experimented with two performers, one restricted by the costume while the other 'tried to fit within the gaps created by the modular pieces in order to create a duality of freedom

of movement and restriction'[35] (fig. 79). For the final performance, however, they chose to use just one performer, a dancer, whose minimal movements became progressively more pronounced, opening up from a closed cactus shape to reveal the body (fig.84).

Figure 84 Final performance by the group using the cocoon modules (source: Author)
Figure 85 Final performance by the group using the square modules (source Author)

All three members of the group using the square modules took part in the final performance. The squares were rolled and fixed with split pins to create three different characters: a woman with pointed breasts, a hat and a handbag, an animal with a mask and a bird with a beak and tail (figs. 78 & 85). During the performance the characters walk in a line across the stage. As the woman walks to the rhythm of The Flamingos 'I only have Eyes for You', she repeatedly takes a stone from her handbag and throws it to the animal behind her who then posts it through the mask to be pecked by the bird.

The mollusc costume, constructed with the circle modules, inspired the only narrated performance in this workshop. The circles were wrapped to form three-dimensional cones which were then connected with split pins, encompassing the body of the performer. The costume encased the upper body, arms and head and thus constricted natural movement. As the performer wearing the costume

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[35] Feedback from the cocoon module performer Luigi Ambrosio

(fig. 86) drifted across the stage, another performer described the lifestyle and behaviour of the mollusc in the style of a David Attenborough video. Towards the end of the performance the mollusc began to spin slowly and interact with the performer wearing the costume made from the fortune teller modules.

Figure 86 Final performance by the group using the circle modules (source: Author)
Figure 87 Final performance by the group using the fortune teller modules (source: Author)

The fortune teller costume (fig. 87) was comprised of three parts: a sash around the body, a short string of small modules held in one hand and a long string of large modules held in the other. The long string of modules formed a veil or tail as the performer twisted and turned before laying down, arranging the costume in a cascade of modules.

The group working with the arms and legs module was unusual in two aspects: firstly, because the modules were already fixed in place and secondly because, although the original group was made up of only two performers, other people joined in spontaneously during their performance. The original experiments at the beginning of the workshop were very interesting and often amusing as they played with ideas of conjunction and constriction (fig. 81). They discarded these ideas however and, for their presentation, wore the costume on their heads, each wearing a red leg module as a hat pulled down over their eyes so they moved unseeing around the stage (fig. 88). One by one several performers from the other groups ran onto the stage and pulled a red leg module onto their head, making a group of six or seven pulling the costume in different directions and moving as one.

The costume became a playful game where the players understood the unspoken but aesthetic rule that they should use the red module as a hat rather than the grey module.

Figure 88 Final performance by the group using the arms and legs modules (source: Author)

Findings

This was the first of two workshops in January 2019 with two different groups of Performance Making MA students at Goldsmiths, using the new *Insubordinate Costumes* and therefore an experiment in functionality. The workshop proved my hypothesis that, by playing with my modules, performers can create costumes which in turn have the ability to generate a performance. The Goldsmiths Performance Making students responded enthusiastically to this method of working towards a performance. The modules in se are completely neutral and can be used in innumerable ways to create representational or abstract forms. In this workshop three groups created anthropomorphic costumes, two groups created zoomorphic costumes, two groups created abstract costumes and one group created a phytomorphic costume.

Table 5   Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students Group 1 2019 - findings

Module	Cocoon	Circle	Square	Crosse	Fortune teller	Crinoline	Arms & leg
No. performers	1	2	3	2	1	1	2-7

			X	X		X	
Anthropomorphic			X	X		X	
Zoomorphic		X	X				
Phytomorphic	X						
Abstract					X		X
Voice		X					
Music/sound			X	X		X	

3.4.2. Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students Group 2

Table 6 Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students Group 2 2019 – workshop modules and videos

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
01/19	2 hours	George Wood Theatre, Goldsmiths University London	Large group split into 7 smaller groups	Cocoons Circles Squares Crosses Fortune tellers Crinolines Arms and legs	video 04 video 05

Just as for the previous workshop, the workshop for the second group of Goldsmiths MA performance making students was organised into three sections – play, development performance. This simple but functional format was hereafter used for all subsequent *Insubordinate Costume* workshops. It is likely that students participating in the second workshop had gleaned some information from those in the first group as they approached the set task with confidence and ease. It was immediately obvious that none of the playful experiments were the same as those of the group workshop of the previous day.

The groups working with the circle, square, fortune teller and cross modules (figs. 89-95) immediately found a way forward, whereas the groups working with the cocoons, arms and legs modules and

crinolines (figs. 96 - 100) who experimented with different possibilities before deciding which path to follow. Surprisingly, this was the same division as the previous workshop.

Again, all the groups worked by building the costumes directly on the body, or bodies in the case of the groups working with the fortune teller modules (fig. 93 & 94) the group playing with the arms and legs module (figs. 98 - 99) and the group using the circle modules (fig. 89).

Figure 89 movement experiments with the circle module (source:Author)

The two performers using the circle modules worked completely autonomously on two distinct costumes before joining together for the short performance. Both these performers are performance artists whose work primarily concerns the body, which was evident in their costume development and movement experimentation. For their final performance (fig.90 video_04 3:27- 4:29) one performer moved slowly backwards before shedding the costume like a skin, while the other performer stood with her arms raised, manipulating the shapes of the costume which hid her head and shoulders.

One of the performers, wrote of her experience in using the modular pieces to create a costume:

> In making I found myself absorbed by the language of the materials introduced. Somehow, through the making the costumes became the things that directed how my body is to move, where on the body it might sit and the type of movement language I should use…There was a sense of excitement; this idea that you have

freedom to create without knowing what will be and at the same time understanding the complex qualities of a material.[36]

Figure 90 Final performance circle module (source: Author)

My friend and colleague, Swedish performer, choreographer, filmmaker and writer Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, joined the group working with the square modules for this workshop. Ami frequently incorporates traditional Japanese dance, theatre techniques and the slow walk called *suriashi* into her work and the influence of Noh theatre was apparent in the measured, deliberate movements of this group. The squares were used as decoration or armour, attached to the body to form a hat, mask, shoulder, elbow and shin protection (figs. 91 & 92).

The performance began with one performer hypnotically swinging two balls of string in front of an unidentified sitting creature whose head followed the movement. Slowly the two performers moved forward, one walking, one crawling. A third performer, sitting in the audience with his face covered, recited a text written specifically for the performance:

> There was nothing for miles. Forever actually in every direction, bar a solo scavenger who, dragging his feet, overturned the occasional piece of rubble with a curious combination of desperation and utter unenthusiasm. He didn't seem to know what he was looking for and, more than that, I suppose he looked as though he wished he was anywhere else but here, wherever here might be. He also had no face, no notable characteristics either. He barely had form. Perhaps that was what he was looking for or why he appeared desperate. It would after all be wholly

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[36] Feedback from Chinasa Vivian Ezugha

confusing to have no discernible features. I suppose it might feel like floating or falling slowly if there's a difference. Perhaps disappear is the wrong word. Both in terms of the place and its melancholy occupant there seemed little if any difference between existence and non-existence.

The spoken word in this performance complimented, rather than narrated, the action of the two performers whose movements recalled those of an eccentric character walking a dog (video 05).

Figure 91 Playing with the square module (source: Author)
Figure 92 Short performance square module (source: Author)

The performers using the fortune-teller modules started experimenting, almost immediately, with the idea of two separate but interlocking costumes (fig. 93). As they oscillated towards and away from each other, roaring and hissing like two ferocious beasts or dinosaurs, the pointed modules clicked and drew apart, creating a soundscape of rustling and banging (fig. 94 video 04 2:17-3:25).

 Performer, Rebecca Carter wrote about her experience:

When I first saw the modular pieces of my chosen bag I felt the excited feeling that you get as a child when you have so many possibilities of creation - which I think you get less and less as an adult…I really enjoyed the concept of the costume being the starting point of a performance development - I am personally very interested in how costumes change how we physically feel, hold ourselves and act.

Figure 93 Building costumes with the fortune teller modules (source: Author)

Figure 94 Short performance fortune teller modules (source: Author)

The group working with the cross modules also experimented with conjoined bodies and developed a performance based on mirror images and shadows. The cross modules, which were threaded

together with black elastic, were used to cover part of the body of the supine performer and link her to the ankle of the second standing performer (fig.95, video 04 5:50-7:06).

Figure 95 Short performance cross module (source: Author)

Figure 96 Playing with the cocoon modules (source:Author)
Figure 97 Short performance cocoon modules (source: Author)

Figure 98 Playing with the arms and legs module (source: Author)

Figure 99 Short performance arms and legs module (source: Author)

The group with the arms and legs module (fig. 98) played and experimented with various ideas before deciding a completely different approach for the costume in performance. At first the two performers both participated in the action, using the arms and legs as sleeves and trousers that linked their bodies in movement, but the final performance saw one performer knotted into a larvae-like costume, twisting, and writhing and interacting with the second uncostumed performer (fig. 99, video 04 0:06-1:10).

Figure 100 Short performance crinoline module (source: Author)

Although they started with the more traditional idea of using the crinolines as a skirt, the final performance by the group using the crinoline modules was much more original. In a narrative reminiscent of ancient mythology, a seated performer 'gave birth' to another performer from the tubular crinolines wrapped around his legs just above the knee, accompanied by the heavy breathing and pushing noises of childbirth. (figs. 100, video 04 4:31-5:48).

Findings

The second of the two workshops at Goldsmiths in January 2019 confirmed that my *Insubordinate Costume*s are able to generate a performance and, again, the Goldsmiths Performance Making students responded enthusiastically to this method of working. In this workshop four groups created anthropomorphic costume and four groups created zoomorphic costumes. One group added spoken word, two groups verbal noise and three groups music whereas one group used no sound effects.

Table 7 Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students Group 2 2019 - findings

Module	Cocoon	Circle	Square	Cross	Fortune teller	Crinoline	Arms & leg
No. performers	1	2	3	2	2	2	2
Anthropomorphic			X	X		X	
Zoomorphic	X	X	X		X		X
Phytomorphic							
Abstract		X					
Voice			X				
Music/sound	X			X	X	X	X

3.4.3. Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento, Italy

Table 8 Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento, Italy – workshop modules and video

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
02/19-05/19	3 months	Osnago & Robbiate, Italy	Large group	Cocoons Circles	Video 06

				Squares	
				Crosses	
				Fortune tellers	
				Crinolines	
				Arms & legs	

The Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento is my local amateur dramatics theatre company run by director, counsellor and drama therapist Silvia Melis in Osnago, Italy as an ongoing course in theatre techniques. The company consists of a heterogeneous group of people of different ages and different walks of life, including students, teachers and an astrophysicist, some of whom had theatrical experience before joining the group and some who had never acted before. It is a predominantly female group. They usually meet once a week for two hours in the local primary school and they perform several times a year in local venues.

Figure 101 Playing with the arms and legs module (source: Author)

I have worked with the director, Silvia Melis on costumes for several years with this group and another theatre company she runs with young disabled actors. She was very interested in the idea of having costume as a starting point for performance and invited me to organise a workshop with

the Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento in January 2019. This was a completely different approach to the group's usual method as they are accustomed to starting from a text with a predilection for absurdist theatre such as Eugène Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano.*

The workshop with this group was organised in the same three sections as the workshops with the Goldsmiths students: play, development and performance and, again, the modules were hidden from the participants inside separate hessian sacks. The group began by playing together with the arms and legs module (fig. 101) before dividing into groups to work with the remaining modules. I noted that, although some people started playing with the modules straight away, several were uncomfortable working like this. Discussing this with the director afterwards she suggested that this could be due to the fact that it was an unfamiliar situation that they did not feel in control of, adding that, as it is a theatre course, they are used to working within tighter parameters and more concrete instructions. As the workshop progressed, however, the group relaxed and appeared to be enjoying the experience more, particularly those with dance or movement training (figs. 102 - 106).

Figure 102 Playing with the fortune teller modules (source: Author)

Figure 103 Playing with the square modules (source: Author)

Figure 104 Developing the performance using the cocoon modules (source: Author)

Figure 105 Developing the performance using the crinoline modules (source: Author)

Figure 106 Developing the performance using the circle modules (source:Author)

One participant later told me that the modules had a mysterious life of their own, almost behaving as though they were alive. She said this was sometimes frustrating as they would not comply to her manipulations, but she found that the solution was to let herself be guided by the modules.

At the end of the workshop the groups presented five short experimental performances. The three performances using the square, circle and crinoline modules were abstract whereas the performances by the groups using the cocoon and fortune teller modules were narrative, the first depicting a butterfly and a flower, the second a bishop fighting for power with a king.

It was decided that the costumes would be the starting point and stimulus for the company's main end-of-course production in May 2019, and that they would devise a text inspired by the initial workshop. Over the next few weeks, I did not participate in the rehearsals and the group worked without the costumes. Each group was asked by the director to find a key word or phrase to describe their short performances - *limite* (limit), *abbondanza* (abundance), *fluire* (flow), *scambiare* (exchange), *potere spirituale, potere temporale* (spiritual power, temporal power) - which she then used as themes to create a series of word and movement games. The following is an example of the method Silvia Melis used with the group to develop the script and choreography of the final production:

> **Limit**
>
> Physical work:
>
> Move from one side to the other with another person holding you.
>
> Move from one side to the other with another person trying to block you.
>
> Try to go from one side to the other in pairs, looking for common strategies - one of the two must keep their hands on the ground, one of the two must be lying down. Find synchrony.
>
> Creative writing:
>
> Write a serious monologue about limit
>
> Write a comic dialogue about limit. Title "There is a limit to everything"[37]

The final production, entitled *Musical Theatre,* which was performed onstage in a local theatre in front of a large audience of family and friends (fig. 108, video 06) was an interesting combination of music, text and movement. Despite my initial concerns that the *Insubordinate Costumes* had perhaps taken on a less insubordinate and more aesthetic role, the costumes remained fundamental to the production.

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[37] Silvia Melis's private notes

Figure 107 Second workshop costume development (source: Author)

Figure 108 The final production entitled Musical Theatre (source: Author)

One of the performers described the effect of the costumes in their performance:

> In our production, the harmonious relationship between movement and music converged with the harmony of the costume shapes. It was the costumes themselves that induced a certain rhythm, a certain movement, almost independently... Their forms reproduce indefinitely on different scales, they combine and unforeseeably disrupt each other, giving an aesthetic pleasure similar to that of fractals.[38]

Silvia Melis, the director, was also enthusiastic about the creative process of taking costume as the initial stimulus to inspire a whole performance 'in a playful, unusual, non-schematic and unpredictable way'. She described the materiality of the paper as 'visually stunning - a warm material that is at the same time so white that it creates a surreal, refined and poetic aura.'[39]

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[38] Private note in Italian from Tullia Ascoli

[39] Private note in Italian from Silvia Melis

Findings

The workshops with the Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento were different to the previous *Insubordinate Costume* workshops both because it is an amateur rather than a professional or semi-professional theatre company and because it was the first time that a workshop led to a full-length production with text, choreography and music. Although the costumes were eventually adapted to the exigencies of the performers, they generated a performance and were the inspiration for both text and movement. The aesthetic nature of the final costumes recalled the forms of Schlemmer's costumes for the Triadic Ballet.

Table 9 Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento, Italy - findings

Module	Cocoon	Circles	Square	Crosses	Fortune tellers	Crinoline	Arms & legs
No. performers	2	3	2	1	2		
Anthropomorphic	X		X	X	X		
Zoomorphic							
Phytomorphic			X				
Abstract		X		X			
Voice	X	X	X	X	X		
Music/sound	X	X	X	X	X		

3.4.4. Workshop and performance with a professional theatre company - La Dual Band

Table 10 La Dual Band – workshop module

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
2019	3 months	Il Cielo sotto Milano	2	Arms & legs	-

Figure 109 Workshop with La Dual Band (source: Author)

Figure 110 The Dual Band 'Deus Ex Musical' (source: Author)

Over the last few years, I have designed several productions for La Dual Band, a professional bilingual theatre company in Milan. The *Insubordinate Costume* workshop with the company arose

from initial discussions about a forthcoming production entitled Deus Ex Musical, a musical based on the story in Greek mythology of Gaia, Mother Earth. It was not organised in the same way as the previous workshops as it only involved the arms and legs module (fig. 109) which was later discarded as an element in the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops in favour of flexible tube modules. The arms and legs module was used as a starting point to explore possible ways of portraying Gaia giving birth and, although transformed completely, it was the inspiration behind the costume as scenography for the final production where a giant patchwork skirt made of squares of hessian covered the whole stage. This was attached to a step ladder increasing the height of the actor playing Gaia and had openings in several strategic points from which she gave birth to Uranus, the Titans and the Cyclopes (fig.110).

3.4.5. Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2020

Table 11 Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2020 – workshop modules and videos

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
01/2020	3 hours	George Wood Theatre, Goldsmiths University London	Large group split into 5 smaller groups	Cocoons Circles Squares Triangles Crosses Fortune tellers Crinolines Flexible tubes	video 07 video 08 video 09

Just as for the previous workshops, the workshop for the group of Goldsmiths MA performance making students in January 2020 was organised into three sections – play, development performance. Unlike the previous *Insubordinate Costume* workshops, several performers asked if they could mix the modular pieces to create their costumes. As I felt that the earlier workshops had already demonstrated that my costume modules have the ability to generate a performance, I thought that it would be an interesting experiment and agreed. Four groups decided to use mixed modules while one group created a performance with their assigned fortune teller modules (fig. 111). The arms and legs module was replaced by the flexible tube modules in this workshop and more crinoline modules of different sizes and shapes were added.

Figure 111 Playing with the Insubordinate Costumes (source: Author)

The workshop proceeded in a different way for the groups experimenting with mixed modules as the choice was broader and involved negotiation between groups to obtain the desired pieces. This did not appear to impact the decision-making process and playing with the modules (video 07) quickly led to the developing a performance for all the groups (video 08).

The group using the fortune teller was the only group to use a single module type. After creating some three-dimensional structures from the modular pieces, the group discovered that, by attaching the forms to black elastic, the costume bounced and moved by itself. This discovery led to the

development of their final production which played with the element of chance offered by the original function of the paper fortune teller. The performer wearing the costume held a tiny fortune teller module and asked a member of the audience to call out a number from one to ten. The chosen number defined the amount of times the performer spun around sending the attached modules splaying out around them. After asking the audience to then choose a colour, the performer opened the selected flap of the fortune teller, turned three times as the colour was red, then, as the song '99 Red Balloons' by Nena began, jumped up and down in time to the music with the elasticated modules moving to their own rhythm (fig. 112, video 09 1:47-2:42).

Figure 112 Group 1: Final performance using fortune teller modules (source: Author)

Figure 113 Group 2: Final performance using circle, square, flexible tube and fortune teller modules (source: Author)

The second group utilised the circle, square and flexible tube modules as well as a lot of string to create the body armour and headgear of 'two aliens dropped to earth'[40]. The two performers, both holding tiny fortune teller modules and one with a dog puppet on a leash, shuffled slowly around each other, muttering and exlaiming. (fig. 113, video 09 1:23-1:46).

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[40] Noted on the workshop questionnaire

Figure 114 Group 3: Final performance using the crinoline, cross, fortune teller and cocoon modules (source: Author)

The third group was comprised of three conjoined performers exploring the crinoline costumes and a fourth performer using the cocoon, cross and fortune teller modules. The crinoline modules were zipped together to form a multi-segmented creature which necessitated a coordination of movement between the performers who were linked together. During the final performance the oscillating creature was attacked by a predator (fig. 114, video 09 0:26-0:54).

The two performers of the fourth group began by working separately on their own costumes, one creating a tubular 'Michman', inspired by the Michelin Man, and the other a Techno Bishop with a cocoon-module mitre and flexible tube dreadlocks. On discovering that they were both wearing breasts made from the circle modules they decided to use this as the starting point of their performance which began with a delicate touch and ended in a frenetic embrace. (fig. 115, video 09 0:45-1:21)

Figure 115 Group 4: Final performance using circle, square, cocoon and flexible tube modules (source: Author)

Figure 116 Group 5 Final performance using circle, cocoon and cross modules (source:Author)

The fifth group experimented with different modules before decided to use the cocoon and circle modules for one costume and the cross and circle modules for the other costume. The cross modules were held together with split pins which created a flexible armature. During the final performance, entitled 'Spirit Animals', the performers enacted a ritualistic dance of approach and defence (fig.116, video 09 0:05-0:20). In reply to the question 'did you make aesthetic or conceptual choices?' one of the performers commented: 'It was aesthetic, but I was curious about my decision to make something that someone might imagine as being linked to my lineage'.[41]

Findings

At the end of this workshop, I asked the groups to complete a detailed questionnaire to uncover their reactions to working with modular costume as the starting point of a production (see appendix 2, page 180). Two of the five groups already used play as an important part of their work method and all thought constraints could be positive. All the groups stated that they were excited to see the modular pieces and wanted to start playing with them to discover the multiple possibilities and identities. They all started by experimenting with the materials and most experimented with movement while they were building the costumes. All the groups stated that they made aesthetic choices rather than conceptual choices and that they developed their performances after experimenting with the modules which, interacting with their bodies, constricted and informed the way they moved and created a sense of character. When asked what part play had in exploring how to use the costumes some of the groups said that playing was a very important part off the process whereas one group said it improvised and another that it was more about imagination than play. I would argue that improvisation and imagination are both important facets of play. All but one of the groups could imagine a narrative emerging from the costume given more time to explore movement and characterisation. Nearly all of the groups felt that the costume had taken on the role of director or choreographer and that they themselves had taken on the role of costume designer to some extent. All of the groups thought that costume should be recognised as a powerful tool in the theatre, dance, performance art and fashion and all of the groups would like to work like this again.

Table 12 Goldsmiths MA Performance Making students 2020 - findings

Module	Cocoon	Circles	Square	Crosses	Fortune teller	Crinoline	Flexible tubes
No. performers	3	5	2	1	1	3	2
Anthropomorphic	X	X	X		X		X

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[41] Comment on the post-workshop questionnaire

Zoomorphic	X	X		X		X	
Phytomorphic							
Abstract							
Voice	X	X	X	X	X		X
Music/sound			X	X	X		

3.5. Developing a professional performance with Tilde Knudsen of Asterions Hus, Copenhagen.

All the workshops have informed my research and generated ideas for further exploration but my collaboration with Tilde Knudsen of Teater Asterions Hus developed into a long-term collaboration and proved, without doubt, the versatility of the simplest modular pieces. Asterions Hus is a Danish physical and experimental theatre company based in Copenhagen on Teaterøen (theatre Island) and at Teater Møn. The company has created an international network and tours regularly with performances in Danish, English, Italian, German and Portuguese. Tilde Knudesn is a dancer, actress and physical theatre performer and one of the founding members of Asterions Hus. After seeing the company perform several times in Italy and the playful nature of their performances, I contacted Tilde to see if she would be interested in taking part in one of the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops. After the three day workshop in Copenhagen experimenting with all the modular pieces and she was so enthusiastic about the project that we have continued to work together between Italy and Copenhagen to produce a production of *Alice in Wonderland* which was going to be performed at several theatre festivals in 2020 but actually premiered online during the Covid 19 lockdown.

3.5.1. Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen, Copenhagen, November 2019

The three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen in the Asterions Hus theatre space was organised in a slightly different way to the previous workshops as, rather than a group, there was a single performer. Tilde experimented with all the modules one shape at a time, playing with the pieces and developing ideas. As can be noted in the following photos and videos, she automatically introduced movement from the moment she picked up a module, indubitably due to her training as a dancer and her innate playfulness.

Table 13 Three-day workshop with Tilde Knudsen 2019 – workshop modules and videos

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links

November 2019	3 days	Copenhagen, Denmark	1	Cocoons	video10
				Circles	video 11
				Squares	video 12
				Triangles	video 13
				Crosses	video 14
				Fortune tellers	video 15
				Crinolines	video_16
				Flexible tubes	video_17

Crinolines (See figs. 117 and video10)

Figure 117 Playing with the crinoline modules (source: Author)

Tilde's experiments with the crinoline modules at first recalled the skirt fashioned by one of the groups in the first Goldsmiths MA Performance Making student workshop in 2019 but she then positioned different sized crinolines under the skirt to create odd sized legs, a cape and tried a variety of headdresses. She played in and with the costume, hiding and appearing and using other modules

as props in her explorations adding a circle module as a mask or a breast, a fortune teller module as a mouth or a flexible tube module as a slippery baby or a breathing lung. Lastly, she removed part of the costume and experimented with a piece of choreography she was familiar with in order to understand how the costume might impede or emphasise her movement.

Circles (See fig. 118 and video 12)
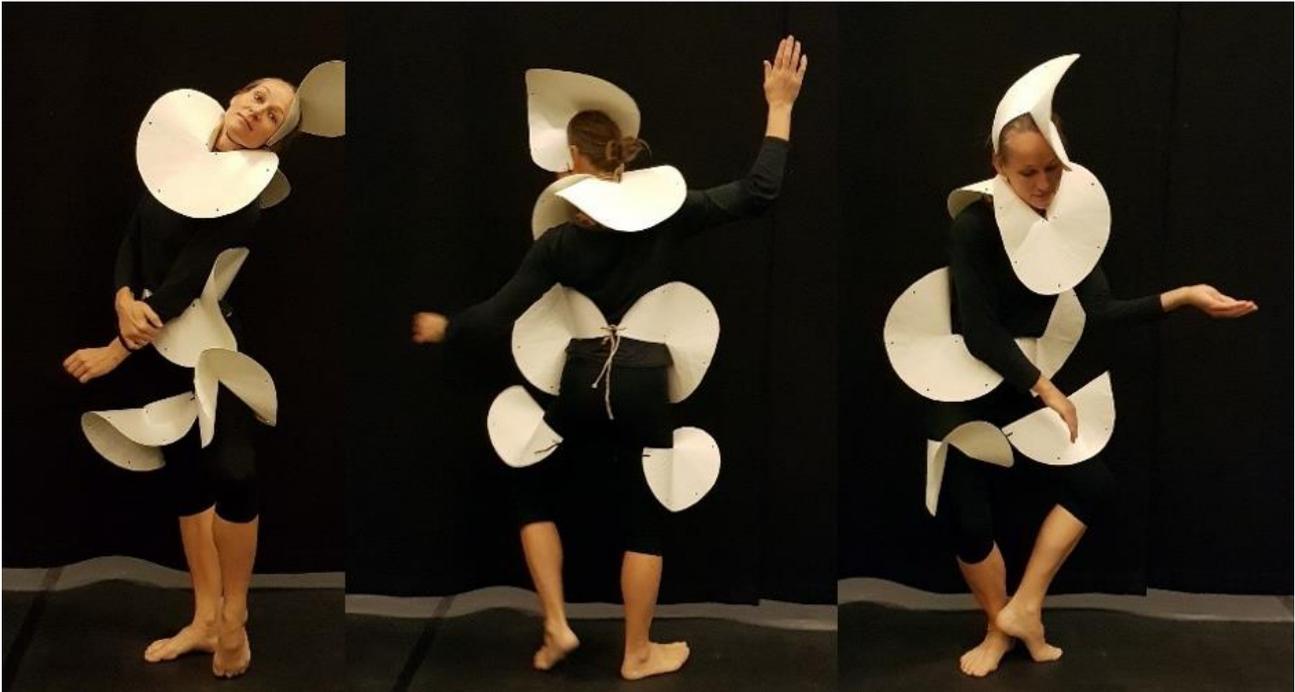
Figure 118 Playing with the circle modules (source: Author)

The simple circle modules with one radius cut to the centre, can be folded and fixed to form cones or twisted and turned in a variety of ways. Depending on where they were positioned on her body, Tilde emphasised different movements inspired by the modules, fluctuating from sinuosity to ungainliness and back again. While experimenting, she noted that she needed to get used to combining her movements and the modular costume. The costume in figure 118 later developed into the Queen of Hearts' costume in the production of 'Alice in Wonderland'.

Crosses (See fig. 119 and video 13)

The cross modules were threaded onto black elastic and wound and draped around Tilde's body and arms, allowing her complete freedom of movement. She kicked, pulled, flapped and stretched the modules noisily in an energetic, improvised choreography.

Figure 119 Playing with the cross modules (source: Author)

Cocoons (See fig. 120 and video 14)

Tilde experimented with different combinations of the cocoon modules and, with each variant, exhibited a different personality and different movements. In one manifestation, reminiscent of a costume from Schlemmer's Triadic Ballet, she became a soldier with stilted robotic gestures, in another she appeared to be a princess plucking strange bulbous flowers from the ground, and in a third manifestation, she added improvised dialogue about the moon.


Figure 120 Different manifestations of the cocoon modules: princess, soldier and the moon
(source: Author)

Flexible tubes (See fig. 121 and <u>video 15</u>)

The flexible tube modules offered great flexibility as they concertinaed from 20cm in length to 150cm, becoming multiple extra limbs and appendages, stretchy legs and lengthy arms whirling and creating a soundscape that clacked, rustled and whistled as the air caught in the hose. Again, Tilde experimented with different possibilities, fixing the tubes to her body with string. In figure 121 the tubes take on the form of a Renaissance gown with heavy skirts and a ruff.

Figure 121 Playing with the flexible tube modules (source: Author)
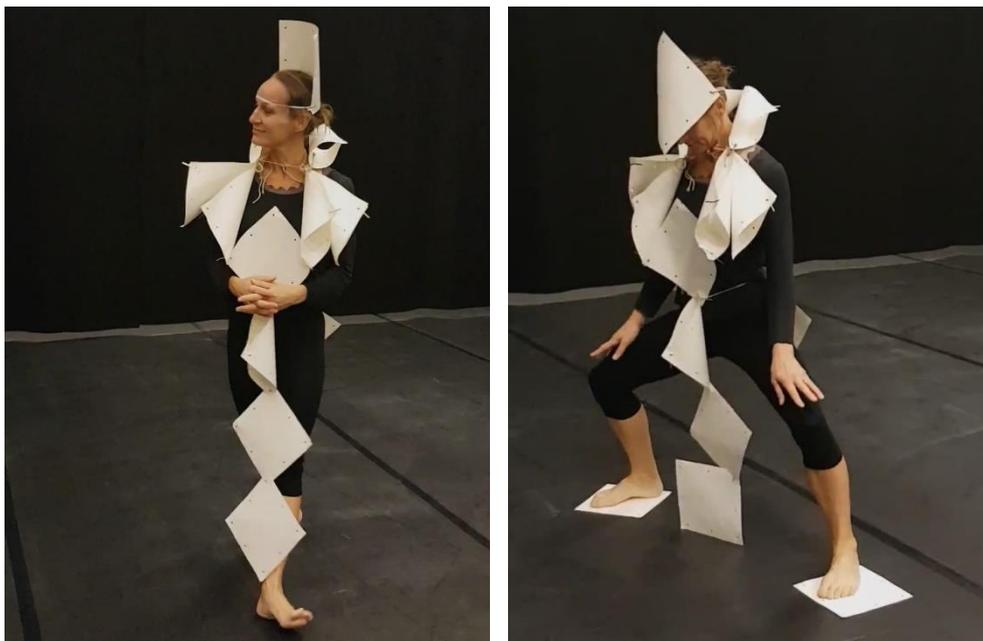
Figure 122 Playing with the square modules (source: Author)

Squares (See fig. 122 and video_16)

The square modules were used to create a partial costume with a string of diamond shapes in front and folded squares around the shoulders. It was extraordinary how she was able to create innumerable different characters just by wearing one square in diverse ways on the head or in front of the face. These experimentations later took form in the production of Alice in Wonderland.

Fortune Tellers (see figs. 123 video_17)

After playing with the fortune teller modules and playing with different movements for a while, Tilde noted that she was not sure how to proceed: 'in the beginning I just I was almost giving up because I thought they were a bit difficult to place, they were like getting out of shape when I tried to do something, so it took a while before I got into that the secret was when I had it on that I start to open these and then they developed from the body…it was a bit stressful that it didn't come to me immediately because all the others it went very quickly so this was like yeah why because I could imagine it being really nice, maybe I had some expectations higher than I could fulfil'[42]. Like the flexible tube modules, the fortune teller modules created a soundscape which formed part of the improvised choreography.

Figure 123 Playing with the fortune teller modules (source: Author)

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[42] Interview with Tilde Knudsen during the workshop November 2020

3.5.1.1. Interview with Tilde Knudsen during the first workshop (See video 18 and appendix 3, page 181):

After the first two days of the workshop, and again after the third day, I interviewed Tilde about her experience of playing with the *Insubordinate Costume*. The following is a synopsis of the conversation:

Tilde could immediately understand how costume can be the starting point behind a performance but noted that she would like longer to be able to find the secret possibilities of each of the *Insubordinate Costumes.* Before the workshop, she had seen some photos of other performers in the *Insubordinate Costumes* and thought that I had constructed them. She knew that she was free and could do what she wanted but felt that some of the modules directed the design more than others, finding the really simple shapes like the circle and the square allowed great flexibility where a huge image could be made from very little 'because maybe there was kind of a restriction already that something was made but when it was not so made it was easier'. After the first two days, she noted that the crinolines were nice but 'felt like it was more difficult to make a complete other construction [as they] already have a shape that you know and therefore it was maybe harder to break' but added that maybe she should try out other possibilities. Ironically, on the third day, it was the crinoline modules that Tilde chose from a hidden selection to experiment with further and, on discovering their hidden possibilities, it was the crinoline modules which became the basis of the production of Alice in Wonderland.

Tilde stated that she was not consciously thinking of aesthetics while experimenting with the costume modules but that there may have been a subconscious element as she acknowledged that she found herself sometimes trying to construct a symmetrical image. She particularly liked the way different characters could develop 'so all of a sudden it was beautiful, all of a sudden it was weird. Sometimes I didn't feel human sometimes I felt very elegant and so I was searching in different directions and I was not like trying to be the most beautiful or the most ugly, it was the transformation that was really interesting when you saw that small changes can make a whole new world …differences are endless. There are no limits.'

When asked how the constraints of the costume affected her movement, Tilde acknowledged that sometimes they limited her movements but that it was fun 'to see what kind of movements comes directly out of the question and then try to make a choreography [experimenting] from the inside and from the outside'. As Tilde thought the idea of building the costume on the body in front of the audience would be interesting, we discussed possible ways to join the modules together quickly on stage without using string or split pins. We later tried using magnets but the experiments were unsatisfactory so we returned to using split pins for the production of Alice. We talked about experimenting with using music, lighting and projection as well as trying to introduce text and a narrative. Tilde found that movement was closely linked to the shapes formed by the modular

costumes but thought it would be interesting to 'look for the words', the 'voice' of the costume and perhaps try to explore using more naturalistic movements while wearing a 'crazy costume'. In playing with the modular costumes, Tilde did not feel as though she had taken on the role of costume designer but did think that the modular costumes acted as a 'a good choreographer', proposing an initial concept and allowing the performer to elaborate on the idea.

3.5.1.2. Performance development with the crinoline modules (see fig.124 and video 11)

Figure 124 Performance development with the crinoline modules (source: Author)

Rather than develop short performances from all the modules, one module was chosen to develop into a performance. The choice was made by hiding the different modules behind the stage curtain and asking Tilde to point to a section of the curtain. The chosen module was the crinoline module which would not have been Tilde's first choice as she had not discovered the infinite variety of ways the crinolines could be used the first time she had played with them, believing them to be already constructed. She noted that the costume modules offered 'a quick frame that shows itself

[immediately] but then…, it needed more research to find where the secret was'[43]. Tilde's second approach to the crinoline modules yielded a vast number of shapes and ideas which later inspired the basis of the production of Alice in Wonderland.

Findings:

In her previous work Tilde has frequently been inspired by 'a colour or shape or an image or a word. … very often the playfulness of anything'. Her inventive, playful and versatile approach to performance formed a perfect synergy with my experimental modular costumes which were enhanced by her training as a dancer astutely aware of movement and spatial relations, Tilde was surprised that she had never seen anything like the simple modular costumes, which offer such a great variety of possible combinations, before as the idea felt so natural.

3.5.2. Four-day development workshop with Tilde Knudsen Campsirago, Italy January 2020

Table 14 Four-day development workshop with Tilde Knudsen 2020

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
January 2020	4 days	Campsirago, Italy	1	Circles Squares Triangles Fortune tellers Crinolines Flexible tubes	Video [video 19](#) [video 20](#) [video 21](#) [video 22](#)

A few days after the first workshop Tilde contacted me to say she would like to continue working with the modular costumes in order to create a complete production. She suggested that the modular costumes could be used to recount the surreal tale of *Alice in Wonderland* and the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic characters that inhabit that strange world. In January 2020 Tilde and I continued our research with the modular costumes in a four-day development workshop held in the rehearsal space of the Campsirago Residenza centre for theatre study in the Italian Prealps. The atmospheric fifteenth-century Palazzo Gambassi in Campsirago is home to the Scarlattine Teatro, Pleiadi,

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[43] Interview with Tilde Knudsen during the workshop November 2020

Riserva Canini and Stradevarie theatre companies as well as the Giardino delle Esperidi international theatre festival where I first saw Tilda perform.

Figure 125 The White Knight, Alice through the Looking Glass (source: Author)

Figure 126 A Talking Flower, Alice through the Looking Glass (source:Author)

Tilde had already played with the modules and developed ideas in the first workshop so her approach to the costumes was naturally different. We decided before the development workshop that the crinoline module would be the basis for Alice and many of the other characters in *Alice in Wonderland* as Tilde had unlocked the secret possibilities of the costume module in the first workshop.

Figure 127 The Dormouse, circle modules (source: Author)

I prepared triangle modules before this workshop to add to the geometric theme of the circle and square modules and these were used together with the crinoline, flexible tube and fortune teller modules. With *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice through the Looking Glass* in mind we played with each costume module, sometimes combining them with other modules, to create different characters from the book. The flexibility of the circle, square and triangle modules was demonstrated in the numerous characters created (see figs. 125-128 video 20 video 21). As Lewis Carroll was a mathematician, the use of the simple geometric shapes was particularly relevant to the production of *Alice in Wonderland.*

I took numerous photos and videos so we could look at the effect and together we created a chart and a library of images from which to build the choreography. The characters began to evolve as Tilde experimented with movements that could be associated to each personality: the rigid movements of one of the Queen of Heart's soldiers, the sinuosity of Alice as she grows, a dormouse with huge eyes (fig. 127) or a crouching frog (fig. 128).

Figure 128 The Frog Footman using two circle modules and one square (source: Author)

Tilde played with the flexible tube modules (fig. 129 & video 22) which were aesthetically and sonorously interesting and it was decided that these modules were particularly effective when combined with the crinoline modules to create an elephant trunk, the pig baby and Alice's elongating neck or arms.

Figure 129 Flexible tube module (source: Author)

Figure 130 Using the crinoline module to fall down the rabbit hole (source: Author)
Figure 131 Marching with the crinoline module (source: Author)

As the crinolines were to form the basis for much of *Alice in Wonderland*, this was the module that Tilde played and experimented with the most, finding all the different permutations possible (see figs. 130 - 133 video 19).

Figure 132 Experimenting with characterisation using the crinoline module (source: Author)

Figure 133 The different permutations of the crinoline module (source: Author)

Interview with Tilde Knudsen after the second workshop (see appendix 4, page 185 for the complete transcript):

When asked why she had decided to develop a performance using my modular costumes, Tilde replied that it was because 'they inspired instantly and made it easy to start creating'. She had the idea to create a production of *Alice in Wonderland* as she 'felt there was an opportunity to work freely in that universe, because it is building a dream, pretending things are what they are not. Transformations from one thing to the other, fits the costumes well. And after starting the rehearsals, it makes even more sense'. She confirmed that the costumes remain the fulcrum of the performance as 'the visual and storytelling part of the story'. In describing how she will use the costumes, Tilde said 'I start from putting them on, and see what they give, adding, transforming, small changes, can change a lot. As a beginning Alice is the crinolines, and what she meets is made from paper, but she is also transforming herself, and since it is all in her imagination, it also makes sense, that she becomes different kind of creatures. I feel, I won't use a lot of text, first of all the costume parts should "speak"'. Although many of the story's characters developed from the costume shapes, others were formed by 'bending the parts into something we recognize'.

3.5.3. Tilde Knudsen Asterions Hus Copenhagen February 2020 – character development for Alice in Wonderland

Table 15 Tilde Knudsen character development for Alice in Wonderland 2020 – costume modules and videos

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
February 2020	5 days	Copenhagen	1	Circles	video 24
				Squares	video_25
				Triangles	video_26
				Fortune tellers	video_27
				Crinolines	video_28
				Flexible tubes	

At the end of the development workshop in Italy in January 2020, it was agreed that Tilde would continue to develop the performance in Copenhagen and that I would join her in February. Although the modules remained with me in Italy, Tilde continued developing the choreography with theatre director Peter Kirk and dancer/choreographer Liv Mikaela Sanz while we were apart. Composer Klaus Risager, who has worked with the Asterions Hus theatre company several times, participated

in rehearsals so that he could create a soundscape by watching the choreography. *Alice in Wonderland* was to premier the production at the popular Danish children's theatre festival *April Festival* where more than 100 professional theatre groups from around the world perform around 250 different performances to children and buyers. Using the videos I had taken during the development workshop, Asterions Hus created a promotional trailer for the production (see video 23).

Figure 134 Giant caterpillar module (source: Author)

Figure 135 Small Alice module (source: Author)

I travelled to Copenhagen in February to work together with Tilde on finalising the costumes. As I still needed the modular pieces for other workshops, I had decided to make a second set which Tilde could keep in Copenhagen, a fortuitous decision as it happens because, the day after I flew home, Italy went into a general lockdown due to Covid 19. After seeing rehearsals and discussing progress with Tilde, I added some new modules to the original pieces including a giant 4m long crinoline for the caterpillar (see fig. 134 & video 24), and tiny crinolines which could been worn on the wrist or fingers. (see fig. 135 & video 25). Other Characters that appeared during the February rehearsals were the Cheshire Cat with a smiling fortune teller module mouth and a flexible tube tail (see video 26). the Judge with a flexible tube wig (see video 27) and the Mock Turtle under a crinoline shell (see video 28).

Tilde had inherited a large number of giant chicken feed containers in 2019 when Asterions Hus bought an old school and chicken farm on the Island of Møn to turn into a theatre space so we decided to use these onstage to keep the modules hidden as they continued the modular theme.

3.5.4. Long-distance collaboration during the Covid 19 lockdown Asterions Hus Copenhagen March 2020, Møn, Denmark April 2020

Table 16 Long-distance collaboration during the Covid 19 – costume modules and videos

Date	Duration	Location	Performers	Costume modules	Video links
March/ April 2020		Copenhagen & Møn	1	Circles Squares Triangles Fortune tellers Crinolines Flexible tubes	video 29 video 30 video 31 video 32 video 33 video 34 video 35

I am based in Lombardia, Italy which was heavily affected by Covid 19. I returned from working with Tilde in Copenhagen just before lockdown began but, as I had left the modular costumes with her, she was able to continue rehearsing *Alice in wonderland*, filming her rehearsals so we could discuss progress, in much the same way as French choreographer Jérôme Bel. Although he frequently works internationally, in February 2019 Bel made the decision not to fly anymore due to ecological concerns, preferring instead to rehearse with dancers around the globe via Skype or Zoom. Before the global pandemic this was a highly unusual method but, over the past year this has become common practice in education, business and the creative industries.

The production gradually took form under the guidance of director Peter Kirk, lighting was experimented with and Klaus Richter composed a soundscape that reflected the odd discordant adventures of *Alice in Wonderland*. Although it was frustrating not to be able to work together in the same place, it was lucky that Tilde had the costumes and theatre spaces where she could work, both in Copenhagen and on the island of Møn (see Tilde rehearsing the character of Alice video 29, rehearsing the character of The Mad Hatter video 30, rehearsing the Caterpillar video 31, rehearsing the crinoline characters video 32, rehearsing the crinoline metamorphosis video 33, rehearsing the White Rabbit, the Bird and Alice video 34 rehearsing Alice growing video 35). During this period Emile Carlsen of Møn Sessions took photographs of Tilde in various *Insubordinate costumes* (see figs. 136-137).

The text of the final performance consisted of only two phrases: 'Eat me!' and 'Drink me!' which meant it could easily be performed to audiences in different countries by changing the language.

Asterions Hus had bookings for *Alice in Wonderland* at a children's theatre festival in Denmark and a theatre festival in Italy as well as performances at the theatre in Copenhagen and several schools but everything was cancelled due to Covid. It was decided to show a live stream rehearsal on Facebook on April 14th (filmed on a static iPhone, see video 36), followed by the premiere of *Alice in Wonderland* online on May 2nd with Emile Carlsen filming Tilde live on Facebook. A second publicity trailer was created from the film (see video 37).

Theatres in Denmark reopened in July 2020 and Tilde was able to perform to a live audience before they were shut again with the second Covid wave in the autumn. Unfortunately, I could not be there as Denmark was not allowing flights from Italy to enter the country but feedback was very positive from both the audience and the press for the online and live performances. The production was invited to the Voila! European Theatre Festival in London in November 2020 but this was moved online with an artists' Q&A after the performance. Waiting for theatres to reopen across Europe, it was decided to film a production of *Alice in Wonderland* as the previous version had been a live stream video (see video 38). I finally saw the a live performance in August 2021.

Figure 136 White Rabbit & Caterpillar, photo Emile Carlsen (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Emile Carlsen)

Figure 137 Walrus & The Queen of Hearts, photo Emile Carlsen (Permission to reproduce this image granted by Emile Carlsen)

The various *Insubordinate Costume* workshops have proven the versatility of the modules and an almost infinite variety of possible combinations. Tilde Knudsen noted in one of our discussions that 'the costume modules have secrets, that there is a quick framework that shows itself immediately but then needs more research to discover where the secret is'. In August 2020 I presented my research online at the Critical Costume Conference where the pertinent theme was 'The Agency of Costume. (see video 39 & video 40, exhibition link).

In the concluding chapter I will analysis the findings of the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops and reflect on what I have learnt from my research.

Chapter 4 Analysis and Conclusions

4.1. Artistic and academic purpose

The artistic and academic purpose of my research has been to establish that playing with my modular *Insubordinate Costumes* enables a different creative strategy and offers diverse dramaturgical possibilities.

In order to contextualise this research, I have examined historical and contemporary examples of performance-defining costume and academic studies of the agency of costume in performance with particular reference to the writings of Donatella Barbieri and Sofia Pantouvaki. I am also indebted to Rachel Hann and the Critical Costume community which I discovered while undertaking my research and which has been invaluable to both my academic and personal growth. As the rule of play is essential to the approach to my costumes, both in the playful essence of the costume and in the way the body interacts and plays with it, I have looked at theories of play and creativity. Not wanting to underpin my research with phenomenological theories, as the onus would have been on the performer rather than the costume, I became interested in theories of New Materialism and, in particular, in 'thing power' and 'intra-action'(Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; McKinney 2015) which I will reflect further on here.

Costume was used as a research tool in my practice research. The first exploratory workshop with dancer Giullia Moroni led to the development of the *Insubordinate Costume* modules: flat-pack modular costumes which can be constructed in different ways allowing for diverse creative interpretations. Six *Insubordinate Costume* workshops followed: two with professional performers, three with Goldsmith's MA in Performance Making students and one with an amateur theatre company. The groups I chose for my case studies were heterogeneous, differing both in size and in type, but in all cases the modular *Insubordinate Costumes* provoked a positive reaction and led to a seemingly endless amount of creative and unique solutions which can be observed in the photos and videos taken in the different workshops.

4.2. Findings

The *Insubordinate Costume* workshops have fully demonstrated the agency of my modular costumes which can be seen to offer dynamic possibilities and have the ability to inspire theatre making and dramaturgy through play. *Insubordinate Costume* activates, and like a character it can be played in different ways. The photos and videos illustrate the flexibility of the modular pieces and the playfulness and creativity they inspire in the performers both in the costumes and performances they produced. The three workshops with the Dual Band, the Gruppo Teatrale Riscaldamento a Stento and Tilde Knudsen have proved that the *Insubordinate Costumes* have the ability to extend the experimental workshops and inspire full productions. Looking at the diverse creative results of the

workshops, the overriding impression is of the originality of each performance. Very few patterns arise and, although similarities can sometimes be observed in the use of the crinoline module, when worn in a more traditional way as a skirt, (figs. 82 & 117) and of the less flexible cocoon model (figs. 104 & 120), the final performances were markedly different.

There is a symbiotic relationship between costume, performer and performance in my practice as the modular pieces initiate a kinetic chain reaction. The modules change form and significance by interacting with the performer's body and can be worn and played with as abstract shapes or transformed into anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or phytomorphic forms, demonstrating their extreme flexibility.

The *Insubordinate Costumes* inhabit the stage space dynamically and activate the senses of the performers and the audience in the same way as Bonnie Marranca's *Theatre of Images*:

> In the Theatre of the Images the painterly and sculptural qualities of performance are stressed, transforming this theatre into a spatially-dominated one activated by sense impressions, as opposed to a time-dominated one ruled by linear narrative (Bonnie Marranca et al. 1996, xii).

As with the historical examples of *Insubordinate Costume* my costumes can be seen to have been used as a narrative tool in a predominantly conceptual or movement-based manner. Only four of the workshop participants, or groups of participants, added spoken word to the costume experiments (figs. 86, 92, 108 & 120), although this may have changed had workshops been longer as all three fully developed performances added speech. Two of these groups were playing with the circle module, one with the square module and one with the cocoon module indicating no particular correlation between module and predisposition to the spoken word. The white modules of the *Insubordinate Costumes* offer poetic images. They have a strong aesthetic quality, but they are not to be considered purely sculptural as they interact with the performer's body, do not remain a static entity and have the potential to determine narratives, albeit non-traditional, and be the basis for an entire performance.

4.3. Analysis in the context of play and creativity

My research has consolidated the theories of Fröbel, Dewey, Maslow and Piaget, among others, who considered the concept play as fundamental to creativity. Returning to the threefold definition of creativity proposed by Monica M Smith in her article 'Playful invention, inventive play' (mentioned on page 47), I believe that the playful nature of the *Insubordinate Costume* workshops encouraged all three dimensions she indicates and fulfilled her premise that '[a]ctivities that allow a range of options encourage flexibility originality and other forms of divergent thinking to generate multiple solutions for a problem' (Smith 2016, 46-7). My modular costumes required the participants to be mentally flexible, spontaneous, curious and persistent and to approach the costumes with intuition and imagination in order to generate rich visual images and an original performance.

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The capacity to play and to wonder are two characteristics frequently associated with being child-like but the importance of wonder and the intrinsic link between play and creativity, discussed in chapter 2, are two characteristics I consider fundamental in the performers' approach to my modular costumes. Sara Ahmed clarifies the importance of wonder in her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* noting that Descartes regarded 'wonder as the first of all the passions' (Ahmed, 2014, 179) and stating that 'wonder is a passion that motivates the desire to keep looking; it keeps alive the possibility of freshness, and vitality of a living that can live as if for the first time' (Ahmed, 2014, 180). Writing on 'wonder as a corporeal experience' Ahmed describes how, through wonder, 'the body opens as the world opens up before it; the body unfolds into the unfolding of a world that becomes approached as another body' (Ahmed, 2014, 180). The *Insubordinate Costumes* unfold new worlds both literally and metaphorically. The costumes open up, become three dimensional, join together, bend, move, metamorphose and unfold new possibilities.

The performative competence and capabilities of the *Insubordinate Costume* workshop participants, together with their willingness to play, are reflected in the creative way they interacted with my modular costumes. The professional performers and drama students who participated in the workshops approached the costumes in a different way to most of the amateur theatre company members. The chosen professional performers and MA Performance Making students already had experience in creating through play and improvisation and were programmed to work in this way whereas the amateurs were more traditional and found the task more difficulty at first. Tilde Knudsen's highly developed willingness to play resulted in an especially fruitful collaboration as we had the opportunity to work together over a longer period and to develop a production from the initial workshops. The ability or desire to play is often lost with adulthood but is an important attribute that is frequently associated with creativity and a pronounced aptitude for play certainly facilitated the approach to the modules. In all cases the costume modules control the design process but they are interdependent on the creativity of the individual performer or performers and consequentially follow different pathways. The results of the workshops indubitably demonstrate the power and agency of the modular costumes, but occasionally, when used in a familiar way or incorporated into a pre-structured performance, the *Insubordinate Costumes* are tamed and told to behave. The amateur performers, who were less used to play as a methodology, were, in most cases, noticeably more comfortable with the situation when they had tamed the costumes into something fixed and aesthetically pleasing.

4.4. Thing power

In further analysing the generative power of the costumes, I looked at New Materialism theories which consider the agency and discursive possibilities of materials (Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; McKinney 2015). Previous materialism theories, both the ancient materialism theories of Atomism and modern theories of the presence of an external force, share 'a conception of matter as essentially

passive, non-performatively constituted, and discretely self-contained' (Gamble, Hanan, and Nail 2019, 113) and, as such, do not allow for 'creative agency' (idem). Bennett's aims to 'theorize a materiality that is as much force as entity, as much energy as matter, as much intensity as extension' (Bennett, 2010, 20). While she highlights the agency of things, she acknowledges the interdependency of human and nonhuman elements and quotes Spinoza: 'as the body is more capable of being affected in many ways, and of affecting external bodies …so the mind is more capable of thinking'[44] (Spinoza and Shirley, 1992, 1999) to put forward the idea that the mind has a greater capacity for thought and 'bodies enhance their power in or as a heterogeneous assemblage' (Bennett, 2010, 23). She continues by defining the word assemblage used by Deleuze and Guattari:

> Assemblages are not governed by any central head: no one materiality or type of material has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group. The effects generated by an assemblage are, rather, emergent properties, *emergent in their ability to make something happen*[45] (Bennett, 2010, 24).

My practice research can be considered as an assemblage of human and non-human elements with the 'ability to make something happen' (idem). 'Thing-power', in this case costume-power, affects and is affected by the body, together they have greater power, together they increase the mind's capacity for thought, together they generate a performance 'in a reciprocal exchange between bodies and materials' (McKinney 2015, 127). As Sofia Pantouvaki stated in her inaugural lecture at Aalto University: 'The performer's body is transformed by the process of costuming into a scenographic body' (Pantouvaki 2013, 12).

In 'Vibrant materials: the agency of things in the context of scenography' Joslin McKinney discusses Tim Ingold's theory of animate life where materials have the 'capacity to become active participants, incomplete potentialities' (McKinney 2015, 126) that fulfil their potential through human interaction. The *Insubordinate Costumes* are active participants in the dramaturgical process as performers interact with them to bring forth, as Ingold suggests, the 'potentials immanent in a world of becoming' (Ingold 2013, 31).

Carl Lavery and Clare Finburgh Delijani discuss Guattari's "ecosophical" thinking 'that seeks to explain how human and "more than human" worlds intersect and interpenetrate in a dynamic nexus' and link Marranca's ideas put forward in her book *Ecologies of Theatre* to those of Martin Esslin in his groundbreaking *The Theatre of the Absurd,* originally published in 1961, to describe

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[44] Spinoza Ethics part. 4 appendix 27

[45] The idea that an assemblage of human and non-human elements has the ability to make something happen is crucial to my research as the costume and performer collaborate in symbiosis to generate a performance.

collectives of interrelating, interacting and interdependent scenic elements on stage [that] can forge an ethics of interconnectedness, exchange, dialogue, reciprocity and democracy – an ecology – where established order between living and non-living, animate and inanimate forms, is levelled (Lavery and Finburgh 2015, 15-16).

This levelling of animate and inanimate forms proposes a move away from anthropocentric theatre to a theatre of animate/inanimate equals. In my research the inanimate costume and the animate body are entangled elements which interact to generate performance. The modular costumes are activated by the performers but, simultaneously, the performers are activated by the costumes which act like prosthetics, changing the body through extension and altering their physical perception.

The interaction between the modular costumes and the performer recalls Tadeusz Kantor's 'object-actor' (known as 'bio-object' after 1980) where

[the object] WAS […] on an equal footing with the actor/ the OBJECT-ACTOR! [This] signified a new relationship between the object and the actor, both of whom were engaged in a space that created and shaped them both (Kantor and Kobialka 1993, 275).

As such Kantor upends the traditionally hierarchical relationship between actor and object just as historical and contemporary examples of *scenographic costume* and my own *Insubordinate Costumes* have done. In Kantor's *A Journey Through Other Spaces: Essays and Manifestos, 1944-1990* translator Kobialka notes that 'Undoubtedly, Kantor perceived himself as an inheritor and a chronicler of the constructivists, surrealists, and dadaists as well as of their strategies of protest and mutiny against commodification' (Kantor and Kobialka 1993, 309). As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, all three of these avant-garde artistic movements experimented with the notion of *scenographic costume* in order to reframe the relationship between body and costume. The artists I cite have either directed their own presences as wearers of *scenographic costume* or directed others to do so.

I deliberately decided not to assume the role of director or choreographer during the workshops as, by taking on an autocratic role, I would be consolidating, rather than subverting, the hierarchies of traditional theatre practice. My intention rather, was an inclusive, collaborative production with a more equal partnership between human and non-human elements which avoided pushing the performers in a preconceived direction of my own. As I noted in Chapter 3 my research has grown and expanded from a starting point of personal creativity as a costume designer/maker, to become an example of collaborative creativity between the designer, the modular costumes and the performers. The collaboration of interdependent equals merges and questions the roles of the costume designer, the author, the director or choreographer and the spectator and generates horizontal creative process which is non-hieraarchical.

4.5. New knowledge

Costume is a relatively new field of academic enquiry although, as noted in Chapter 1 (page 19), there has been a noticeable increase in the areas of both practical and theoretical costume research since 2010 as the agency of costume has become increasingly recognized as a fundamental aspect of performance. Through my research into *scenographic costume* and *Insubordinate Costume,* I have joined an active community of costume designers and theorists exploring the potential of costume in performance, each with their own area of interest and expertise. My work is placed firmly in the context of research into the agency and potential of costume, and I have made a positive contribution to this field of costume research by presenting my theoretical and practical research at two Critical Costume conferences as well as writing articles for both the Theatre and Performance Design journal[46] and the Studies in Costume & Performance journal[47]. The *Insubordinate Costume* modules and their modus operandi are original and present new knowledge in the fields of costume and performance.

4.6. Future Research

Although my doctoral research concludes with the production of *Alice in Wonderland*, my collaboration with Tilde Knudsen continued in August 2021 in the gardens of Liseland Castle on the island of Møn in Denmark with 'The White Lady'. New modular pieces, made of strong waterproof blind fabric and corset boning, were used to recount the eccentric life of Lady Martha of Liseland, who collected a menagerie of white animals.

When the world opens up after Covid, it would be interesting to continue to experiment further with the original costume modules working with performers in different contexts and situations. With funding, future research could include sending boxes of flat-pack modules and a set of rules to experimental theatre and dance companies worldwide in order to continue collating visual and experiential data from other groups and to ascertain the potential impact of the I*nsubordinate Costume* model and the numerous possibilities it offers.

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[46] Susan Marshall 'Following the threads of scenographic costume at PQ19'
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mWIGkfxbQIFSX7ihmWIBMNlqddlQnTx2/view?usp=sharing

[47] Susan Marshall 'Insubordinate Costume' (to be published December 2021)

Figure 138 A new Insubordinate Costume for the production of 'Martha of Liselund' (source: Author)

Appendix 1: Scenographic costume and fashion:
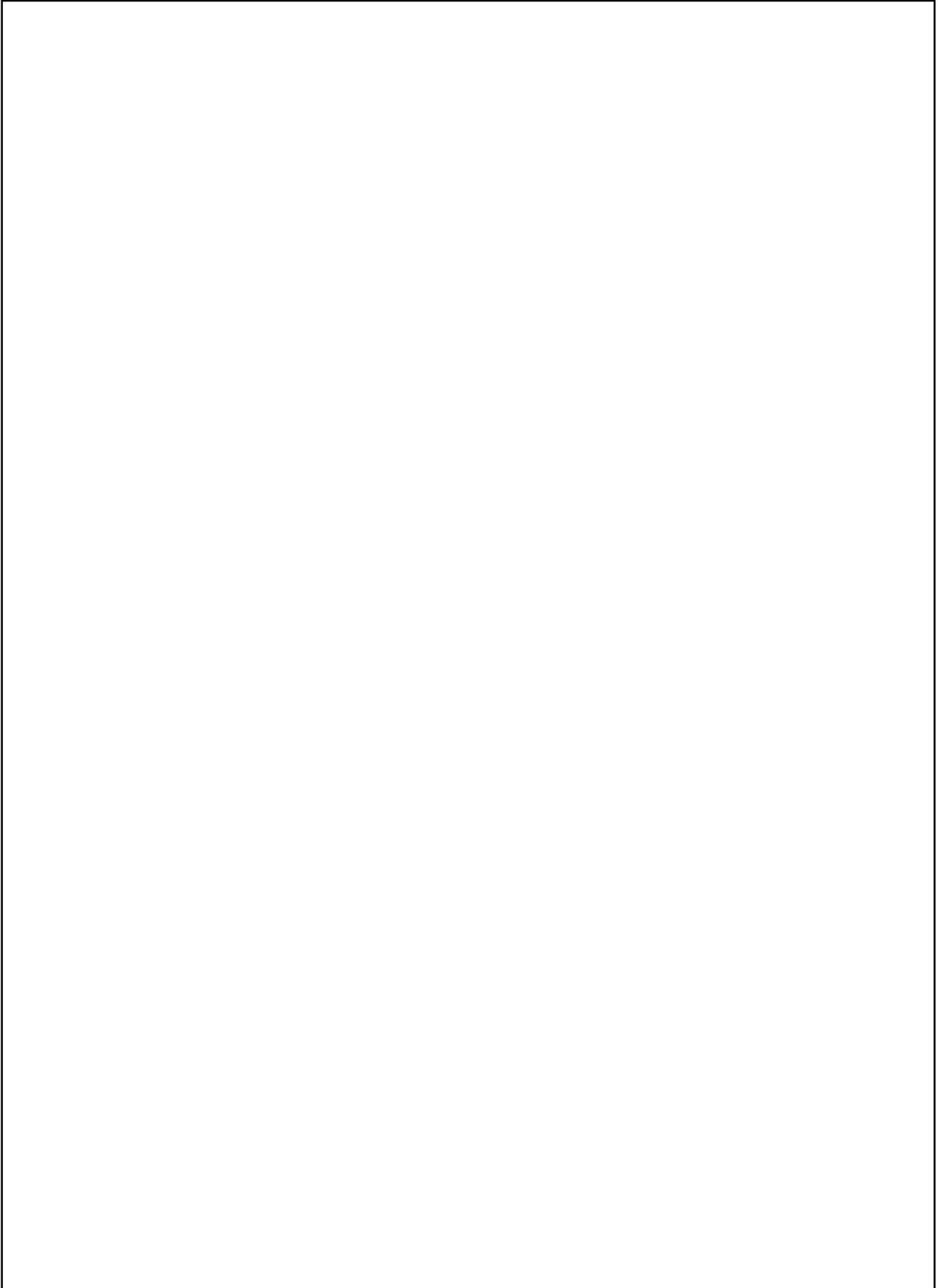
Designer	Page	Costume
Bakst, Leon Costume	Pages 28, 75, 94	 Léon Bakst's costumes for Nijinsky in 'Le Dieu Bleu' 1912 & Marchesa Luisa Casati 2013
Ball, Hugo Performance	Pages 32, 59, 60	 Hugo Ball reciting his Sound Poem 'Karawane' 1916
Becker, Sandra Costume	Page 90	 Interior 2012 'Peeled Shadows'
Biacchi, Sonia Costume	Pages 90, 91	2012
Blaisse, Maria Design	Page 90	 'Kuma Guna' 1996

BodyMap Fashion Stevie Stewart & David Holah	Pages 32, 36	Michael Clark & Ellen van Schuylenburch 1984
Bourgeois, Louise Visual art	Pages 32, 84, 85, 94	'Avenza' 1975
Bowery, Leigh Performance art/design	Pages 17, 32, 35-39, 41, 75, 76, 89, 94	'Looks' 1989-91
Bugg, Jessica Costume research	Pages 42, 53	2011
Casati, Marchesa Luisa "Life as a work of art"	Pages 75, 94	1913-24
Cave, Nick Performance/visual art	Pages 35, 41, 77, 89, 94	'Soundsuits'
Chalayan, Hussein Fashion	Pages 32, 92, 93	Collection 'After Words' A/W 2009
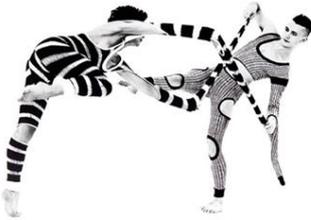
Craig, Edward Gordon Theatre/design	Page 59	 'Hamlet' 1911
Dean, Sally Somatic costumes	Pages 54, 55	 'Something's in the living room' 2014
Depero, Fortunato Futurist art	Pages 30, 31, 35, 58, 59, 75	 'Macchina del 3000' 1924
Exter, Alexandra Russian Constructivism	Pages 40, 60, 61	1924
Fuller, Loïe Dance/lighting	Pages 17, 29, 30, 35, 40, 50, 94	 'Serpentine Dance' 1891
Gaultier, Jean Paul Fashion	Page 94	 'Regine Chopinot' 1985
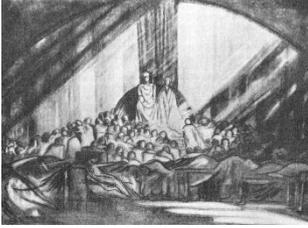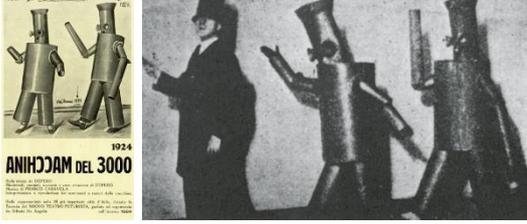
Graham, Martha Dance	Pages 30, 32, 35, 40, 83, 84 83	'Lamentation' 1935
Green, Craig Fashion	Page 35, 77, 81, 82	2015
Horn, Rebecca Visual art	Pages 32, 84, 85	1968
Karstens, Daphne	Pages 45, 69	'Het Grote Kleurenballet' 2020
Kawakubo, Rei Fashion	Pages 32, 33, 35, 41, 86	Comme des Garçons 'Body Meets Dress, Dress meets Body' S/S 1997
Lady Gaga Music	Pages 39, 41, 75, 77, 94	
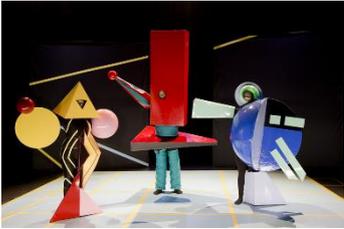
Lasser, Robin & Pao, Adrienne Art/ wearable architecture	Pages 78, 79	 2010
Lucy and Bart Visual art McCrae, Lucy & Hess, Bart	Pages 35, 90	 2008
Malevich, Kazimir Russian Constructivsm	Pages 31, 32, 40, 57, 61, 88, 89, 92	 'Victory over the Sun' 1913
Margiela, Martin Fashion	Pages 33, 41	2008
McQueen, Alexander Fashion	Pages 33-35, 39, 77, 92	 Alexander McQueen 2010
Miyake, Issey Fashion	Page 32	1993
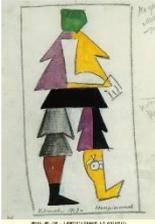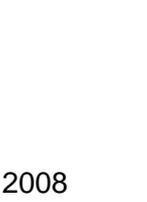
Nagy, Fruzsina	Pages 45, 64, 65	 'Taboo Collection' PQ 2019
Nikolais, Alwin Dance/design	Pages 30, 32, 35, 70-72	 Nikolais 'Allegory' 1959 Pierre Cardin 2008/2012
Orta, Lucy	Pages 78, 79	'Refuge Wear' 1996
Østergaard, Charlotte	Pages 45, 54, 55	'Traces of Tissue' 2019
Oyama, Yuka	Page 45, 73	 'Helpers - Changing Homes, Motorbike' 2018
Pannaggi, Ivo Futurist art	Page 58, 59	 'Ballo meccanico futurista' 1922
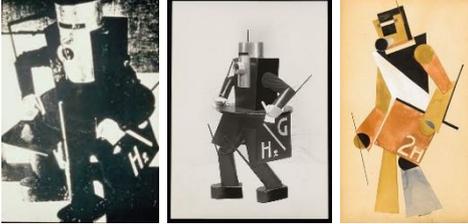
Pecorari, Giulia Costume	Page 53, 54	'The non-existent knight' 2009
Picasso, Pablo Visual art	Pages 32, 35, 38, 40, 87-89, 92	'Parade' – Ballets Russes 1917
Piccioli, Pierpaolo	Page 82	Moncler 2018
Poiret, Paul	Pages 75, 94	Costume for Marchesa Luisa Casati 1924
Pugh, Gareth Fashion	Page 77, 94	AW 2007
Pyuupiru Visual art	Pages 77, 94	'Planetaria' Mercury

Rauschenberg, Robert Visual art	Pages 32, 72, 73	 'Pelican' 1963
Schiaparelli, Elsa Fashion	Pages 32, 63, 64	 The Skeleton Dress (from The Circus collection) 1938 Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí
Schlemmer, Oskar Theatre/design	Pages 17, 32, 35,, 40, 41, 47, 51, 52, 66-70, 88, 89, 91, 92, 137, 148	 'Das Triadisches Ballett' 1922 'Stäbetanz' 1927
Schulz, Lavinia & Holdt, Walter	Pages 38, 40, 50, 51, 52	 'Bibo' 1923/24
Sophie Taeuber-Arp	Pages 59, 60	 Costume 1922

Urban Camouflage Visual art/performance Keric, Sabina & Bayer, Yvonne	Pages 77, 78	2007-2010
Van Beirendonck, Walter Fashion	Pages 32, 79, 94	'Not Strictly Rubens' 2012
Van Herpen, Iris Fashion	Page 93	'Capriole' 2011
Victor and Rolf Fashion	Pages 92, 93	2015 2010
Watanabe, Junya Fashion	Page 92	Ruff 2000
Westwood, Vivienne Fashion	Page 80	2016

Woutera de Jong, Iris	Pages 73, 74	Deform 2019
Yamamoto, Yohji Fashion	Pages 92, 93	Humorous photo Yamamoto 1860 wedding dress 1999

Appendix 2 - Case Study Research Questions:

1.   Is playing usually an important part of your work method when creating a performance?

2.   Do you think constraints can be positive?

3.   What was your first reaction when you saw the modular pieces?

4.   Did you start by experimenting with the materials or by thinking of an idea?

5.   Was it fun or stressful to build your own costumes?

6.   Did you experiment with movement while you were building the costumes?

7.   Did you make aesthetic or conceptual choices? Do you think the costume you have created is purely aesthetic or that it has a deeper meaning? If so, what?

8.   How did you proceed to use the finished modular costume?

9.   How did the costume interact with your body?

10.   How did the constraints of the costume affect your movement?

11.   What part did play have in exploring how to use the costumes?

"play" took away the pressure to a certain degree (KJ)

12.   How do you think you can develop a performance further?

13.   Could you imagine a narrative emerging from this costume?

14.   Did working with the costume evoke any memories? Does it remind you of something? If so, what?

15.   Do you feel that you have taken on the role of costume designer?

16.   Do you think that in a certain way the costume has taken on the role of director/choreographer?

17.   In the past costume has often been treated as an afterthought in a production but recently this has changed and costume is starting to be recognized as a powerful tool in theatre, dance, performance art and fashion. What do you think?

18.   Would you like to work like this again?

Appendix 3: Transcript of the interview with Tilde Knudsen during the first workshop

(See video_18) :

Susan: Do you think that costume can be the starting point behind a performance?

Tilde: Yes, I mean this is a yes and no question and of course it can and now I see that it's really possible but I would like longer time to be able to see what comes out of it because there's like a quick frame that shows itself but then, as we discovered with these, that actually it needed more research to find where the secret was but definitely it's possible.

Susan: I think they all have secrets don't they. Is playing an important part of your work method when creating a performance?

Tilde: Yes, a lot. I love to improvise and just start from a colour or shape or an image or a word. Often when we make a performance we make like piles of ideas and then we can move the piles or smaller, you know this plastic thing that you put things inside, you put inspiring things inside and then you swap them and take out and say let's start here today. Sometimes it's just the text and we also use the text, not as understanding the text but playing with the words, trying to save them in different ways and forget about the meaning and just go into another way and then there's coming a different meaning to the text. So it's very often the playfulness of anything.

Susan: Which is actually why I chose you! So what was your first reaction when you saw the modular pieces and what was your reaction when you realized you had to construct your own costume?

Tilde: Yeah first I thought maybe because I saw some of the pictures on your website I thought maybe there was something you constructed. I knew that it was free from what you said, that I could do what I wanted, but on the other hand I also felt that, like this one for example, it looks like this already some way to put it. Where some of the more really simple like the circle and the square it was more obvious that anything could go and then then it very easily became a huge image from very little. So what I was surprised of was that the most clear images in a way when they're flat, lying here, was more difficult to create from in a way.

Susan: Because you felt that was already a start?

Tilde: Yes because maybe there was kind of a restriction already that something was made but when it was not so made it was easier. The crinolines were also nice but it also felt like it was more difficult to make a complete other construction but maybe I should actually try to see.

Susan: Whether there's something else you can do. So was it fun or stressful to build your own costumes?

Tilde: It was definitely fun but also because I was tired there was some point in this one, yes, in the beginning I just I was almost giving up because I thought they were a bit difficult to place, they were like getting out of shape when I tried to do something, so it took a while before I got into that the secret was when I had it on that I start to open these and then they developed from the body.

Susan: It was also one of the last ones you chose as well wasn't it.

Tilde: Yeah, so it was a bit stressful that it didn't come to me immediately because all the others it went very quickly so this was like yeah why because I could imagine it being really nice, maybe I had some expectations higher than I could fulfil.

Susan: It was interesting in the end because then you opened it up and so it was another shape wasn't it and the nice sound as well wasn't it.

Tilde: I didn't think of aesthetics but then I still do because I was also trying to construct something that was maybe the exactly the same on both sides to make it symmetrical but sometimes it was yeah this that it made me more animal that it was more the characters growing from moving small things So all of a sudden it was beautiful all of a sudden it was weird. Sometimes I didn't feel human sometimes I felt very elegant and so I was searching in different directions and I was not like trying to be the most beautiful or the most ugly, it was the transformation that was really interesting when you saw that small changes can make a whole new world.

Susan: Particularly with the square one - you kept changing one square on your head like a hat and it changed character completely didn't it.

Tilde: And this was fun for me because I like to go into characters.

Susan: Have you created a play world with the modular pieces your own little world, this idea of a play world?

Tilde: I mean I see that they're endless. I see that the two days we have spent now a lot can happen, but I could certainly go on for a long while and even with one shape. For me it was fun to try all the different shapes just to see what inspires immediately but I could easily go much further with only one and it is really endless it's like how you create numbers, differences are endless. There are no limits.

Susan: Of course it would be different if there were more people as well obviously everything would come out in a different way.

Tilde: In a different room, outside, in a different light, with music, I mean you can add so many things. Now we only played from this but if you add something else, we add audience.

Susan: Yes, it's going to be completely different. How did the costumes make you feel? Did they interact with your body? Did the constraints of the costume affect your movement?

Tilde: Yeah, they did sometimes it limited movement like this one, I couldn't bend forward I could only bend backwards, so it immediately created this kind of movement. But it was also fun to try first to see what kind of movements comes directly out of the question and then as I try to make a choreography that was now I take something from outside and put on top of it and see you then what happens. So both going from the inside and from the outside, and both is possible.

Susan: You were trying both I think and this was definitely to do with play wasn't it? The whole thing, you were playing with the costumes.

Tilde: Yeah it was good to not be restricted, like, do what you feel like when this put on, you put it on. It could also be fun like, first It's really nice to build it, but it could also be fun if somebody else built on you. Yes, this could be fun to see you move like this.

Susan: Yes, because then you build in a different way on somebody else.

Tilde: Yeah, yeah so maybe if we were two, we should build for the other one.

Susan: Yeah that's true. What would you change to adapt the costumes to suit you more? Would you change anything or do you think that as a research project this is interesting?

Tilde: I mean if I should use it on stage I would really like that it's easy to click together, that the strings are easy, that when I put it here is this size and it works.

Susan: Yes but I think once we were using the split pins and the string to be quick, to build the costumes.

Tilde: But I really like the idea to build it up on the body not to take one shape on, but I like this that it's possible to do onstage, take another one and another one.

Susan: So maybe I need to find some big magnets or something.

Tilde: Yeah, some power magnets could be useful somewhere. I mean it's also possible to spend a little time if it's only few. So I wouldn't change anything of the shapes only the way to put them together if possible.

Susan: But we did say as well that perhaps it would be fun to have as I have already a circle and a square that we could add a triangle as well, which would be fun because then we have a kind of

geometric theme. Would you describe your relationship with the costume as cerebral or physical? Did you think about what you were doing? It was a complete physical reaction wasn't it?

Tilde: Yes but it made me think that it made me at some point having this why do I go so much into animals for example and how would I add more naturalistic because I like this change of being very much style and also being very natural being able to be completely me on stage talking directly to the audience so I would like to find the combination of how can I, in this very crazy costume, be completely natural. I think I'm going there as well so it doesn't feel like wow crazy shape and I would easily go into crazy movements but it would be very nice to be very natural.

Susan: We said yesterday didn't we that sometimes you felt like you were a model a vogue model and at that point of course it is aesthetic, it's an aesthetic isn't it rather than actually being a narrative.

Tilde: Yes exactly and it could be nice to be able to sit amongst the audience with this and that they almost forget that I'm looking weird. About the changing it was also nice as we talked about, that could be secrets in here that there could be things written.

Susan: Yes yes colours, yes that would make a big change as well wouldn't it. I suppose you can also project onto these after seeing your performance the other day you know I was thinking well even you can even do that especially if they're white objects that you can actually change quite a lot as well can't you. Can you imagine a narrative emerging from the costumes?

Tilde: Yeah, I feel it would take a bit longer. The movement and the shapes go directly. There was one of them starting to have a voice but many of them were silent.

Susan: Yes, because you are a dancer as well as an actress.

Tilde: Yes, but I work with a lot of text.

Susan: I think it would be interesting if you can find a way.

Tilde: You know I'll look for the words and not for the movement.

Susan: That could be something we do yes. Did working with the costumes evoke any memories? Do they remind you of something when you put them on? I mean you've been using them separately you haven't mixed the modules actually have you you've been using each module group separately

Tilde: It reminded me a bit of a performance I made where we had some modular set pieces that we should just improvise with which was like the the square ones, like a half big square like a half moon and moving these just going into all kind of shapes it reminded me a bit but it was from the out you could jump on these and turn them and dance with them. So it was not putting them on, but it was relating to shapes. But then I also like using fabrics and changing them in different ways. But I didn't, I mean I'm surprised I haven't seen a lot like this before because it feels so natural, why not to do this.

Susan: I'm pleased means my research works! Which costume did you choose for your final performance and how did you choose it?

Tilde: I couldn't choose, I wanted everything, so putting behind here everything and then see what happened.

Susan: So even the choice was playful[4]. Did you use words or texts? Well you didn't with the first one right.

Tilde: Yes I tried, only with one I just tried to see if there were words. It's possible but it was a bit like just put on top just go from one word and then see but I have no idea what happened.

Susan: I've got it, now I'm going to bribe you with it! So did you interact with other objects?

Tilde: Only with the other objects from the suitcase?

Susan: Yes, just with the tubes wasn't it yes? And how did you decide what you wanted to do with the final performance because it wasn't that it wasn't necessarily the one that you wanted was it necessarily?

Tilde: No, but then I found out that there's definitely more options in each and I knew that kind of trying to go for the more abstract yeah the ones that already have a shape that you know and therefore it was maybe harder to break it but I thought we broke it and especially the turning front and back, not being sure of what was what was interesting the hiding and the turning was interesting.

Susan: Do you think that you have taken on the role of costume designer in this project?

Tilde: No, I feel I'm the performer. I feel like the costume is some way given as a concept and then I try to fill it as much as possible but I think in our theatre we often, I mean we're not like only the performer and then the technician comes and he puts I mean I'm very often in a lot of the process also on the directors table and stuff like that but I feel that the costume is coming as an inspiration. I don't feel I made it.

Susan: Do you think that in a certain way the costume has taken on the role of director or choreographer because it's telling you, showing you how to work?

Tilde: Yeah, it's a starting point, it's the idea is here. The idea is flat and you try to listen to the idea so it feels like definitely yeah, it's a good choreographer.

Susan: Do you think it's possible to create a non-hierarchical theatre

production like this, where everything is sort of on the same level? I mean you work like that don't you?

Tilde: Yes definitely

Susan: Would you like to work like this again?

Tilde: Yes, I would love too.

Susan: Right answer! Thank you

Appendix 4 Interview with Tilde Knudsen after the second workshop

Susan: What made you decide to develop a performance from the modular costumes?

Tilde: Because they inspired instantly and made it easy to start creating.

Susan: Why did you choose to develop a performance for children?

Tilde: I have done several performances for children., and I enjoy it. And meeting you, was about the same time I decided to cancel my planned performance for adults, and to develop for children instead. Many reasons for the decision…. but I needed to make a performance, that was easier and cheaper to take on the road and selling for kids is in Denmark is easier than for adults.

Susan: Why did you choose Alice in Wonderland?

Tilde: I have been thinking to make an Alice production before, and I felt there was an opportunity to work freely in that universe, because it is building a dream, pretending things are what they are not. Transformations from one thing to the other, fits the costumes well. And after starting the rehearsals, it makes even more sense.

Susan: How will you use the costumes?

Tilde: I start from putting them on, and see what they give, adding, transforming, small changes, can change a lot. As a beginning Alice is the crinolines, and what she meets is made from paper, but she is also transforming herself, and since it is all in her imagination, it also makes sense, that she becomes different kind of creatures. I feel, I won't use a lot of text, first of all the costume parts should "speak".

Susan: Will the costumes remain the fulcrum of the performance?

Tilde: They will be the visual and storytelling part of the story. The set will be very simple.

Susan: Are the characters developing from the costume shapes?

Tilde: Yes, but I will also try to bend the parts into something we recognize

Susan: Several of my modular pieces are simple geometric shapes which you were immediately attracted to in the first workshop. You chose Alice in Wonderland without remembering that Louis Carroll was a mathematician, but this is a brilliant coincidence for our production.

Tilde. It was a coincidence, but often a choice is made because it feels right, and then you realize that it makes so much sense.

Susan: How will you continue to develop the performance in Copenhagen?

Tilde: I will spend time alone, with my camera, but also use Peter in the room, and Liv (the dancer I work with in Copenhagen) to help with choreography. And then also use music from Klaus, and invite him into the room, so that he can compose from what he sees.

Susan: Tell me about the other people involved in the production (the musician, Peter)

Tilde: Peter knows me very well, after we worked and lived together for 15 years. He can see the direction I´m taking, and inspire me to go deeper some places, and look in other directions. We are very much used to grab what happens in the room. Klaus has worked with us several times, and his sense of timing is unique. How he listens and gives is a gift. And I love to work with his soundscapes and music.

Susan: Tell me about Asterions Hus.

Asterions Hus started 15 years ago with a performance about the Minotaur in the labyrinth of Crete, the monster with a bull's head, and a human body. We made a performance together about that myth and took the name as our company. We have made one, sometimes two new performances every year since, and touring in Denmark and abroad in several languages, both for children and adults. Often very physical performances, great myths, classics, but very twisted, and our own. We have developed Teaterøen in Copenhagen, and now Teater Møn. We are always hungry for more and love new challenges.

Susan: Tell me about April Festival, the children's theatre festival in Denmark, where you will be performing Alice this year.[5]

Tilde: The April Festival in Denmark, is the biggest of its kind in the world. More than 100 professional theatre groups perform around 250 different performances around 4 time each in a week. It moves to a different town/area every year, and all kids will see at least one performance each. In the weekend it is a fair for selling shows, so buyers from all over Denmark come to attend the festival. And many theatre people from festivals around the world join as well.

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