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Creative Cut Seminar Review - The first international symposium for creative pattern cutting, University of Huddersfield.

Abstract

A review of the first international symposium for creative pattern cutting, held in February 2013 at the University of Huddersfield, organised and chaired by Dr Kevin Almond.

Key Words

Creative Cut

Fashioned

Digital

Sustainable

Pedagogic

Alternative

February the 6th and 7th, 2013 and the University of Huddersfield played host to the ‘First International Symposium for Creative Pattern Cutting,’ in the textile heartland of West Yorkshire. The two day symposium was organised and chaired by Dr. Kevin Almond, who had previously co-curated with Kathryn Brennan; ‘Insufficient Allure: The Art of Creative Pattern Cutting,’ an exhibition showcasing students skills in creative pattern cutting at the Huddersfield Art Gallery. The symposium gave researchers and practitioners in the area of creative pattern cutting a platform to share new techniques, ideas and direction with their peers in education and industry.

The symposium attracted 160 delegates from around the globe, as far reaching as the USA and New Zealand and included academics, students and industry professionals. Key note speakers included Sylvia Ayton MBE, Chairman of The Costume Society discuss her career with emphasis on the manipulation of the bust dart. It provided an exciting look into her exploration of design and creativity whilst working with Zandra Rhodes and as head of outerwear design for the Wallis Fashion Group. The history of the bust dart was discussed in terms of its positioning on fashion garments throughout different decades and provided a valuable historical insight into how garments can be adapted so dramatically with such a small adjustment.

Throughout the first day the symposium followed two streams: Pedagogical approaches and Fashioned approaches, in which the papers presented covered a variety of creative pattern cutting approaches. Speakers included Professor, Greg Climer from Parsons New School in New York. His innovative presentation: ‘The Cranial Cut: Creating a pattern for the human head’, gave an exciting insight into how using plaster and gauze bandages to map the face in 3D can then be divided and cut to produce a flat pattern. This in turn led to conversation in regards to the teaching of dart manipulation within academia and the differing techniques used. From the University of Lisbon, Portugal, Ines Simoes presented her paper entitled ‘Viewing the mobile body as the source of the design process’. She discussed her process of using body suits to represent the bodies movements performed in everyday life and from this generating a set of blocks for the mobile body, culminating in prototypes being tried and tested. The paper sparked an interesting debate amongst the delegates who found the research thought provoking.

To end the first day, key note speaker, Anne Tyrrell MBE from Anne Tyrrell Design Consultancy gave a valuable insight into her dual career in the fashion industry firstly as a practicing designer, pattern cutter and grader and secondly sharing her skills within an academic role. As chair of the British Fashion Council Colleges Council Anne's passion for students learning the art of creative pattern cutting was clearly and enthusiastically conveyed even whilst she suffered with a wintery cold! The conference dinner allowed academics and industry professionals to come together to discuss the days papers and network. All the delegates had the opportunity to develop contacts and discuss ideas for new projects and initiatives.

The second day followed three streams: Digital approaches, Sustainable approaches and the extremely popular: Fashioned approaches. To begin the day the symposiums sponsor 'Lectra: The Fashion Technology Experts' presented their ever advancing digital ideas for fashion design in the industry. Jenni Murphy and Mark Powell discussed Lectra's newest developments describing how creative pattern cutting can be utilised within the digital package. Subsequently, the Digital approaches stream divided the presentations between old and new methods of creative cut. The use of 'Reusable Learning Objects' and the teaching of pattern cutting on iPods was addressed by Sheila Griffiths from Birmingham City University's Institute of Art and Design. Having created a series of over 100 video clips to inform students on different pattern cutting techniques the study was piloted with two groups of undergraduates, half using the digital and half being taught traditional 'face to face' methods. An interesting idea that will no doubt be further researched as digital technology continues to advance. The use of the 3D technology described by Lectra was realised at the end of the day by a University of Huddersfield collective of lecturers from a digital design background. Using digital sculpture and modelling software allowed the collective to create 3D garments that were exported to flat patterns and reproduced in fabric. Their paper led to a lively debate amongst traditional pattern cutters and fashion lecturers about whether digital technologies allowed the practitioner to be a creative cutter. Masters graduate from London College of Fashion: Arena Page demonstrated how 3D technology had allowed her to generate complex mathematical surfaces, which could then be flattened and the flat patterns extracted. She discussed how the technology was an 'aid' in her design process to spark ideas for design and creative pattern development.

The Fashioned approaches stream included distinguished delegates: Betty Jackson CBE, Prof Wendy Dagworthy OBE and Anne Tyrrell MBE. Speakers included: Gemma Moran from Leeds College of Art and Design, who discussed the place for creative pattern cutting within the high street. Her research included interviews from leading high street stores and their design teams. Cardiff School of Art and Design, Sally Grant's 'Analysis of the pattern cutting and manufacturing techniques used by the designer Ossie Clark, in his collaboration with the clothing manufacturers, Radleys. 1968-1977' provided a romantic yet analytical view of Clark's design and construction, using archived pieces to observe and dissect his pattern cutting technique.

The symposium came to a close with a positive plenary session chaired by Dr. Kevin Almond and Dr. Julie King, Head of Department Fashion and Textiles DeMontfort University. Dr. Almond discussed the importance of such a conference which emphasised the importance of tacit knowledge in the research process. He said: "The different methodological approaches from the papers presented had added credibility with fashion educators and the wider fashion industry because the research results have been arrived at from practical experience" (Almond, 2013). Delegates voiced their appreciation of the need for such a conference. All delegates supported the need for it to be held as a bi-annual event in the future and expressed

their delight for the opportunity to meet, network and exchange ideas like minded individuals in the field of creative pattern cutting.

A selection of the conference papers have been published in the Guest Editorial Special Edition 'Creative Cut' The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education, edited by Dr Kevin Almond. This was published by Taylor and Francis in July 2013.

References

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