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Guest Editorial Second Special Edition 'Creative Cut'

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## **Guest Editorial Second Special Edition 'Creative Cut' The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education**

The call for papers for this second special edition 'Creative Cut' evolved from the success of 'The Second International Conference for Creative Pattern Cutting' held at the University of Huddersfield in the UK on 24<sup>TH</sup> and 25<sup>TH</sup> February 2016. The conference attracted over 130 delegates from around the world and included 36 paper presentations from leading researchers and practitioners on aspects of pattern cutting. The overriding theme of the conference was to provide a platform to develop ideas as well as continue reinforcing notions of what constitutes practice based enquiry and the value of tacit knowledge (in this case creative pattern cutting), within a research context. The cut and construction of clothing, which embellishes the human body was the overarching discourse. The conference was streamed into four definitive themes, which investigated digital technology, eco-sustainable, pedagogical and fashioned approaches to creative pattern cutting and gave researchers and practitioners a platform to share new techniques, ideas and direction with their peers in education and industry. The conference highlighted some re-occurring themes such as the use of unconventional methods to create 3D forms. This was supported from both a pedagogical perspective by Hardingham, **Montgomery**, and Tan et al. and by theorising practice based approaches by Lindqvist, James et al., Dove and McKinney et al..

These papers published in this special edition expand the literature devoted to practice based, scholarly research in pattern cutting and ways in which it can be explored, much further through the intellectual relationship between theory and practice. The papers published here demonstrate some of the ideas discussed in the conference and continue to emphasise how we shouldn't underestimate tacit knowledge and the making process as a form of enquiry. This is important in the drive to heighten awareness of fashion practice as a viable academic research topic. The papers in 'Creative Cut' base their understanding on evidence from observation, participation and investigation of pattern cutting practice, pattern cutters at work and interviews with pattern cutters. The different methodological approaches have added credibility with fashion educators and the wider design industry because the research results have been arrived at from practical experience.

Hardingham's (2016) analysis of how a box can become a garment illustrates the frustration of design students when learning technical patternmaking skills. It calls for the academic community to consider new styles of learning to ensure talented creative students reach their potential using an array of pattern construction techniques including those that are deemed to be non-traditional and unorthodox. **Montgomery re-focused pattern experimentation with a clear move away from technology, to support practical experimentation in the studio.** Authors Tan et al., and Hardingham called for an exposure to a variety of creative pattern techniques as standard in fashion design education; since the learner will find a method, technique that resonates and underpins further theoretical development. Such

approaches in creative pattern cutting are presented by Lindqvist, James et al., Dove and McKinney et al. in this special edition.

The highlights include: Lindqvist paper which presents the “kinetic garment construction theory” which challenged the conventional tailoring mix. This newly developed theory studied the intersection between fabric and the human form, using the grain of the fabric ingeniously to take creative pattern cutting to the next level. The work presented is based on the “Langer Lines” model used in surgery, thus, crossing discipline boundaries and creating a nexus between health, engineering and creative design. The paper presented by Dove supports Lindqvist's work in many ways. It highlights the pressing issue of inconsistencies in the sizing of fashion and apparel and identifies this as one of the most influencing factors in clothing dissatisfaction, often leading to high levels of garment returns. Dove highlights the over-reliance on material properties to solve fit issues. She criticises the over-use of stretch fabrics to disguise fit issues, which could be solved using creative pattern techniques. An approach was presented whereby manipulating the bust dart dimensions, garments can be produced that better conform to specific cup sizes, resulting in better fit and comfort for the wearer. James et al. explores the recent growth in zero-waste construction. Her work presents a practitioner enquiry using a variety of garment forms. A case study methodology is used to ascertain if the zero-waste approach is transferable to commercial production in different sectors. It is of no surprise that this paper discusses the relationship between the designer and pattern cutter in some detail regarding creative ownership and equity. The paper quite rightly recognised the creative contribution of both, and suggests that new methods of creative pattern cutting such as zero-waste require a creative partnership with new epistemologies emerging.

In *Tacit Magic* (McKinney et al.) the authors explore traditional construction techniques used by Japanese designers including, deconstruction, origami and asymmetry (to name a few). These techniques were explored through the concepts made explicit in the book *Pattern Magic* by Nakamichi and then compared to conventional western pattern cutting techniques. This resulted in a new understanding and theoretical perspective in creative design and an appreciation of different cultural approaches. Other authors Tan et al. presented the argument that creative pattern cutting should be a specialism and not part of a broader fashion design curriculum, a view gaining esteem with some universities now offering this as an academic discipline. Tan et al.'s paper presents a case-study which focused on the growth in the Southeast Asia for creative pattern cutters and Lasalle College's (Singapore) philosophy to address this. The arguments support James et al. in that, a seamless integration is required between the designer and pattern cutter to reach new heights in apparel, fashion and clothing construction.

One of the prevailing themes in this special edition is the value of “learning by doing” (active learning) and the art of reflection. This was embedded into all the papers through practice and theory. The work papers presented in this special edition underpin some of the strengths of peer learning and moving forward the

benefits of interdisciplinarity as a means of creative development will be an emerging theme, leading to the introduction of new skills, epistemologies, and creative impact leading to a new era in fashion design.

Testimonials about the conference and this subsequent special edition of 'Creative Cut' from the fashion industry and education include:

"This conference is key to advancing the scholarship of pattern cutting, by providing a venue for a lively exchange between pattern cutters from around the globe." - *Timo Rissanen, Assistant Professor of Fashion Design and Sustainability, Parsons The New School for Design, New York.*

"I am delighted to welcome the second of these most exciting conferences and look forward to it being even more stimulating, creative and thought provoking as the first one." - *Betty Jackson CBE, Fashion Designer.*

"The conference is essential for both pattern cutters and fashion designers to attain a joint awareness of the technicalities of pattern cutting in order to inspire creative and innovative design ideas." - *John West – Senior Development Manager, Creative Skillset*

"This conference provides a valuable space for discussion about the importance of pattern cutting for design. It draws attention to the relevance of concept and collaboration and highlights the necessity of individual experimental methods of shape making to push boundaries and inspire students, designers, education and Industry" - *Juliana Sissons, Designer and Senior lecturer in Fashion Knitwear Design and Pattern Cutting Nottingham Trent University and the University of Brighton.*

We hope you enjoy reading through 'Creative Cut'.

We would like to thank the editorial panel for all their hard work and commitment reviewing the manuscripts and the abstracts;

Dr Kevin Almond and Dr Jess Power, March 2016