

**Resplendent: An investigation into the Synthesis
of Body and Clothing as Sculptural Form.**

by

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Abstract

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The project explored the synthesis of the human body and its dress within the practice of sculpture. It is based on the premise that a dressed person is visualised and comprehended as one coherent image, rather than as two separate components of body and clothing. The creative interplay between these elements accounts for the vitality and ongoing sensual and intellectual stimulation inherent in the body/dress partnership. The project was inspired by the conviction that forms and structural processes of clothing can be paralleled in sculpture.

The conceptual background to the project has been expanded through investigations into several related areas. The idea that dress significantly extends the body image was explored through the concept of metonymical association. A person's self image is conditioned by conventions of pictorial representation of the clothed body. These depictions, traditionally found in painting and more recently in film and advertising, emphasise the frontal aspects of dress. Consideration of the phenomena of mirror reflections and shadows reinforce this two-dimensional pictorial concept. A further field of enquiry focused on the extent to which materials and forms of clothing engender feelings of sensuality and eroticism.

The part of the project concerned with investigations into sculptural construction, focused primarily on shifts between dimensions. The contrasting of two and three-dimensional elements within the one work, or the gradual transformation of one dimension into another, were developmental strategies which resulted in a diverse range of forms. These included fully three-dimensional, free-standing structures and works suspended from the ceiling or attached to the wall. Throughout the project, experimentation with materials and simple processes were essential for the development and consolidation of ideas. Of major importance was the use of rich, tactile fabrics as a potent means of evoking a sense of both body and clothing.

The project has drawn inspiration from artists noted for their original configurations of two and three-dimensional forms and for their innovative use of materials and techniques. These include Eva Hesse, Robert Rauschenberg and Caroline Broadhead. Japanese dress designer, Issey Miyake, through his inventive approach to clothing construction, was a driving force throughout the project. The sculptural work of Judith Shea, clearly evoking both body and clothing, provided a context for comparison and assessment.

The outcomes of the project are demonstrated through the sculpture selected for the thesis exhibition. All images focus on the combination of perceptions of the visual impact of the clothed body with juxtapositions between two and three-dimensional forms.

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