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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Barry, B. (2017). Enclothed knowledge: the fashion show as a method of dissemination in arts-informed research. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18(3), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-18.3.2837>

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## Enclothed Knowledge: The Fashion Show as a Method of Dissemination in Arts-Informed Research

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**Key words:** arts-based research; arts-informed research; clothing; embodiment; fashion show; gender; masculinity; participatory; performance

**Abstract:** In this article, I investigate the processes, benefits and dilemmas of producing a fashion show as a method of dissemination in arts-informed qualitative research. I examine a project that used a fashion show to analyze and represent interview findings about men's understandings and performances of masculinities. Fashion shows facilitate the dissemination of new qualitative data—what I coin "enclothed knowledge"—which is embodied and inaccessible through static or verbal descriptions. Fashion shows also enable participants to shape knowledge circulation and allow researchers to engage diverse audiences. Despite these benefits, researchers have to be mindful of ethical dilemmas that occur from the absence of anonymity inherent in public performances and therefore I suggest strategies to mitigate these threats to research ethics. Ultimately, I argue that fashion shows advance social justice because the platform can transform narrow, stereotypical understandings of marginalized identities.

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### 1. Introduction

In this article, I investigate the fashion show as a method of dissemination in arts-informed qualitative research. I explore a research project—[Refashioning Masculinity](#)—that used a fashion show to analyze and represent interview findings about men's understandings and performances of masculinities. Some scholars might be hesitant to use a fashion show in research given that fashion is frequently associated with superficiality (ENTWISTLE, 2000) and commerce (HOFFMANN, 2009). Fashion shows and the clothing featured in them, however, construct, express and embody lived experiences (WOODWARD, 2016a). To explore fashion shows as research dissemination, I first examine arts-informed research methodology and the potential of using fashion shows within its

framework. I then describe the project and analyze the processes, benefits and challenges of producing a fashion show to share research findings. I find that fashion shows allow researchers to share new qualitative data, enable participants to shape knowledge creation and engage diverse audiences. Researchers, however, have to be mindful of ethical dilemmas and I share strategies to safeguard research ethics. This article therefore focuses on the processes, challenges and benefits of producing a fashion show to share qualitative research rather than on its result. Through examining the fashion show as a method to share research, I argue that it can advance social justice. The fashion show is a platform where differences are celebrated and where diverse people engage in the performance of a common pursuit. [1]

My analysis of the fashion show contributes to an emerging paradigm in social research methodology in which scholars incorporate the arts. Scholars across the social and health sciences have recognized that the senses and embodiment are integral to how people understand the world and have begun to organize approaches to capture and communicate these multisensory modalities (PINK, 2015; RICE, CHANDLER, HARRISON, LIDDIARD & FERRARI, 2015). Researchers have drawn upon film, fiction, dance and other artistic mediums as methods to capture human experiences and to communicate their findings about them (LEAVY, 2015; PINK, 2015). Over the past decade, social researchers have written increasingly about the diverse ways in which they have included the arts in their work, but contention remains regarding the specific terminology used to describe a research approach that uses the arts. The lexicology of terms is vast, and there is little agreement about the differences between the definitions and uses (LEAVY, 2015). While I recognize the diversity of concepts and the lack of agreement about them, I nonetheless draw on the framework of arts-informed research to situate the fashion show as method for research dissemination with the qualitative tradition (COLE & KNOWLES, 2008a). The fashion show introduces a new mode to share embodied and multisensory data, which can be used by researchers who study topics related to the body, embodiment and identity, irrespective of how they define their arts-based approach. [2]

## **2. Fashioning Arts-Informed Research**

In the "Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research," COLE and KNOWLES (2008b) organized and synthesized the emergent use of the arts in qualitative research. While these scholars were trained in traditional qualitative methods, they became disillusioned with how knowledge was defined and represented by the academy. They found that traditional qualitative research inquiry failed to capture the complexity of human experiences while the language of research publications made findings inaccessible to the public. Subsequently, COLE and KNOWLES articulated the tenets of a new qualitative methodology: arts-informed research. They define arts-informed research as "a mode and form of qualitative research in the social sciences that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts" (2008a, p.59). In arts-informed research, the arts are combined with traditional qualitative methods during data collection and/or analysis and/or dissemination. Introducing the arts into research enables scholars to understand and share a

more holistic understanding of humanity by respecting "the multiple dimensions that constitute and form the human condition—physical, emotional, spiritual, social, cultural—and the myriad ways of engaging in the world—oral, literal, visual, embodied" (p.60). Arts-informed methodology also aims to influence the lives of people and the thinking of key decision-makers by engaging participants and making research accessible. [3]

Arts-informed researchers use all forms of literary, visual and performing arts including novels, poetry, film, photography, dance, art installation and performances. For example, arts-informed researchers have examined and represented the experiences of refugee youth through drawing (GURUGE et al., 2015); people with disabilities through digital filmmaking (RICE et al., 2015); and open-heart surgery patients through artistic installation (LAPUM, RUTTONSHA, CHURCH, YAU & MATTHEWS DAVID, 2012). As arts-informed research gains in popularity, there is growing discussion among scholars of how to address its unique ethical challenges (e.g., BOYDELL et al., 2012; COX et al., 2014). Although the fashion show has not been used as a method in arts-informed research to date, this artistic medium has been demonstrated to unearth and represent the richness of human experience. BUTTERWICK, CARRILLO and VILLAGANTE (2015) explore a research project that used a series of fashion shows to engage Filipino-Canadian women and share stories about their colonial histories and postcolonial experiences. By enabling participants to create, wear and perform their lived experiences, BUTTERWICK et al. find that "the genre of a fashion show created space for telling complex stories about the colonization of the Philippines and how it is lived in the body" (p.86) The authors also assert that their fashion shows created spaces for public pedagogy because the medium generated and circulated knowledge about women's experiences. [4]

BUTTERWICK et al. describe the impact of fashion shows in research, but they do not analyze the process of creating them. The authors only examine the influence of fashion shows on the participants and audience through a range of qualitative methods implemented years after the fashion shows occurred. Without exploring the production process, the authors are unable to analyze fully the value of incorporating a fashion show into research and to advise scholars about the procedures of creating them to disseminate findings. BUTTERWICK et al. also classify their fashion shows as arts-based research. In the volume edited by COLE and KNOWLES (2008a), arts-informed and arts-based research are classified as different approaches: arts-informed research incorporates the arts alongside traditional qualitative methods whereas arts-based research uses the arts as the primary mode of research inquiry and representation (COLE & KNOWLES 2008a; McNIFF, 2008). While I follow this distinction in terminology, I recognize—as I acknowledged in the introduction—that there is debate about the differences between arts-informed and arts-based research; in fact, arts-based research can be used as the overarching term to describe all research that uses the arts (LEAVY, 2015). In BUTTERWICK et al.'s (2015) study, the authors employed qualitative methods to analyze retroactively the impact of their fashion shows rather than infuse qualitative approaches into its development. According to the distinctions outlined in the "Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research"

(COLE & KNOWLES 2008a; McNIFF, 2008), BUTTERWICK et al. reveal the impact of fashion shows in arts-based research but do not explore its potential to disseminate findings uncovered from a qualitative inquiry. [5]

### 3. Form and Fashion

COLE and KNOWLES (2008a) assert that the selection of an artistic form is a defining element of arts-informed research and they advise researchers to consider what form best expresses the richness of their data and how the form relates to the topic being studied. Given the importance of form in arts-informed research, it is necessary that I explore the fashion show as an art form in order to understand its potential for research dissemination. HOFFMANN (2009) examines whether fashion shows can serve as sites for social commentary by analyzing a fashion show from designer Hussein Chalayan that explored wartime migration. HOFFMANN's analysis provides insight into the fashion show as an art form as she examines how Chalayan used its artistic elements to communicate political messages. She argues that fashion shows present garments by constructing narratives around them: these stories are created by adopting and combining various theatrical and performing art techniques. HOFFMANN also notes that the purpose of fashion shows is to disseminate new information from creators to consumers. Specifically, fashion shows are an entry point for designers to introduce new collections and trends to members of the fashion industry who then circulate them to the public through media and retail channels. [6]

Based on HOFFMANN's analysis, I define the fashion show as an art form that presents clothing through narratives enhanced by the performing arts with the aim of circulating new ideas to the public. While HOFFMANN suggests that the commercial motive of fashion shows weakens their ability to share social commentary, she argues that the use of performing arts can rupture their capitalist foundation and communicate social ideas. Academics, however, are free of the commercial and retail imperatives of the fashion industry, and so can use fashion shows to share narratives about social research. Fashion shows in research would remain grounded in the purpose of this art form; instead of circulating new trends from designers to consumers, these shows would share new knowledge between and across communities. Fashion show narratives further operate through dominant discourses of beauty, glamor and spectacle (EVANS, 2001). Although Chalayan's audience attended his show for commercial reasons, HOFFMANN (2009) argues that he subverted their motivations by engaging them in political commentary. Similarly, researchers can leverage the associations of fashion shows to attract audiences who might otherwise not engage in socio-political issues and can subvert traditional fashion show discourses by performing a critical commentary about them. [7]

The clothes featured in fashion shows provide an additional art form to disseminate the human experience. Commercial fashion shows present clothes from brands but arts-informed fashion shows, with the aim of sharing qualitative research, showcase clothes from participants. WOODWARD (2016b, p.359) contends that everyday clothes "are central to understanding the sensual, tactile,

material and embodied ways in which social lives are lived and experienced." Clothing constitutes a personal experience of the body because it is "worn on our bodies" (WOODWARD, 2016a, p.46), and it is a public marker of identity because it gives bodies meaning in culture (ENTWISTLE, 2000). As a visual signifier, "the dressed body is always situated within a particular context, which often sets constraints as to what is and what is not appropriate to wear" (p.328). People feel included when they wear "appropriate" clothes, whereas they feel excluded and face social sanctions when they do not. While fashion shows function as artistic platforms to tell narratives, the clothes presented in them drive these narratives by sharing people's experiences in, on and through their bodies. [8]

#### **4. The Project**

"Refashioning Masculinity" was a two-year research project that explored how men's engagement with fashion illuminated the ways in which they experienced, navigated and reimagined gender norms. The project was theoretically framed by CONNELL's (1995) concept of hegemonic masculinity: the most culturally exalted forms of masculinity within a system of gender relations. Based on patriarchy and dominance, hegemonic masculinity is hierarchically superior to all other configurations of gender practice—for example, gay masculinities (ibid.). I undertook research on men, masculinity and fashion by following a feminist, arts-informed qualitative methodology. In research with men, feminist methodology seeks to illuminate and transform gender inequality (PEASE, 2013). Refashioning Masculinity subsequently aimed to change how men understand themselves, each other and gender in general by exposing harmful masculine norms and celebrating diverse expressions and embodiments of masculinity. [9]

Because men's various identities inform their masculinities (BEYNON, 2002), I used purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices (PALYS, 2012). Participants were between the ages of 22 and 78 and reflected intersectional ethnicities, body types, sexualities and disabilities. Recruitment requests were sent to social and professional groups as well as to my personal and professional contacts. I invited self-identified men from diverse subject positions to join the study. I encouraged men who wore a range of clothing styles to contact me, and participants did not need to have an interest in fashion. The final sample selection was based on diversity in demographics and sartorial presentations. During the first phase, I conducted wardrobe interviews with 50 men in their homes and used the contents of their wardrobes to prompt discussions (see WOODWARD, 2016a). Wardrobe interviews combine life histories and object interviews to explore how clothing materializes identity. This approach provides unique insights into how people think about identity when they talk about their clothes. Interviews began with a life history and overview of each participant's fashion experiences. I then asked him to provide a tour of his wardrobe, describing the memories and feelings attached to his garments. With the help of research assistants, I audio-recorded interviews, photographed garments and took field notes. [10]

An additional goal of the project was to examine the fashion show's potential to analyze qualitative data and share it with the public. Subsequently, the second phase of the research was a fashion show—the focus of this article—that aimed to analyze and disseminate the interviews. All participants were invited to take part in the fashion show but only half of them agreed to do so. Once all of the interviews were transcribed, I analyzed them by using an approach that RICE (2009) employed in her work on women's experiences of bodily difference: a combination of grounded theory and narrative inquiry. I first analyzed the transcripts through the grounded theory method in which research propositions are not specified a priori and findings are allowed to emerge from the data (CORBIN & STRAUSS, 2008). Interviews were coded to describe phenomena pertaining to the relationship between fashion and men's understandings and performances of masculinities. During this process, I developed open codes by looking within and across the transcripts in an iterative process and using the constant comparison strategy. I then developed axial codes by grouping these initial codes into common categories and developing relationships between them. The result was a research framework that explained how men use fashion to understand and perform masculinities. As seen in Table 1, four main themes comprised the framework and each theme is noted in the column headings: men's *fashion influences*, *fashion motivations*, *fashion experiences* and *fashion disruptions*. I also developed corresponding sub-themes for each main theme. The sub-themes are noted directly under each respective main theme.

<b>Fashion Influences</b>	<b>Fashion Motivations</b>	<b>Fashion Experiences</b>	<b>Fashion Disruptions</b>
Childhood and relationships	Expression of self	Body insecurities	User generated social media
Popular culture	Police & protect self	Body confidence	Wearing women's clothing & accessories
Fashion culture	Maintain & assert power & privilege	Restricted by menswear options	Hacking clothing
Digital fashion culture	Educate, advocate & inspire dialogue	Dress codes & social sanctions	New clothing combinations

Table 1: "Refashioning Masculinity" research framework [11]

RICE (2009) asserts that grounded theory allowed her to discover commonalities across difference but she also explains that this method fragmented individual accounts and did not allow for analysis of complex meaning according to each participant. By using narrative inquiry (CLANDININ & CONNELLY, 2000) as a second analytical lens, RICE (2009) preserved the coherency of individual interviews and privileged each participant's unique ways of interpreting their experiences. Similarly, I used narrative analysis to capture the complexities, intentions and agency embedded in participants' accounts. I engaged in a close

reading of each transcript of those participants who agreed to be in the fashion show and mapped their key stories (and corresponding garment images) onto the research framework developed during grounded theory analysis. This process enabled me to develop an individual research framework for each participant that corresponded to the general research framework. I noted the diverse ways that men's narratives related to each theme and in particular that the experiences of many participants did not map onto all of the themes. By combining an empiricist grounded theory method with a poststructuralist narrative analysis, this analytical approach "shed light on social processes underpinning personal accounts, while illuminating [participants'] abilities to craft and maintain a sense of self" (p.248). [12]

## 5. Fashion Show Production Process

The research team and I met over four months to translate the interview findings into a fashion show narrative. The team included a PhD candidate in communication and culture and three students (one undergraduate and two Master's) with backgrounds in fashion show and theater production. The research team and I first decided that the research framework would be used as the fashion show narrative. The four themes in the research framework told an organized and chronological narrative of the contexts in which fashion influences men's understandings and performances of masculinities. By starting with *fashion influences*, the audience first learned the various ways that men are taught about masculinity through fashion. *Fashion motivations* then explored how these influences affect men's thoughts and feelings when they decide what to wear, while *fashion experiences* detailed how men's chosen outfits influence their daily social encounters. Concluding the show with *fashion disruptions* provided an empowering culmination that illustrated how men use fashion to resist, rupture and reimagine masculine norms. Each of these four research themes became a fashion show scene. To construct each scene, the research team and I drew upon the interview data to integrate participants' voices authentically and to share fully the qualitative research findings in the fashion show. [13]

The students with backgrounds in production suggested that the fashion show should be no longer than 45 minutes to maintain the audience's attention. The research team and I therefore had to reduce the list of quotations developed during the narrative analysis from approximately 40 per participant to two. Using each participant's narrative framework, we selected key quotations and, where relevant, corresponding garment images for each theme. We chose quotations that represented each man's story and highlighted his unique experiences of masculinity based on his intersectional identity. Through an iterative process, we then reduced the number of quotations for each participant to two per theme, eventually removed the framework sub-themes, and finally selected four quotations for each participant. These four quotations were sent to the participant who was asked to indicate whether he was uncomfortable sharing any of them publically. The research team and I incorporated the men's feedback into our final selection of two quotations per participant. We then mapped the final quotations onto the fashion show narrative framework, using the quotations to bookend each scene and frame an overall introduction or conclusion. [14]



The final fashion show narrative consisted of four scenes with an introduction and conclusion. Participant quotations were shared in two ways during the show. Participants had previously audio-recorded some quotations, and these recordings were played over speakers. Other quotations were typed out and live posted on Instagram. We used Instagram because the interviews revealed that social media influences men's engagement with fashion, and our integration of this medium into the show enabled us to share the interview findings further. Instagram also allowed us to share more participant quotations during the show but still keep it within time limits. Quotations were not shared when the speaker was on the runway because we did not want to distract from his aesthetic performance. Instead, quotations were used to create breaks within and transitions between scenes when the runway was empty. Before the show, the audience was asked to download Instagram onto their mobile phones and follow a specific account. During the show, the audience heard a "ding" notification sound over the speakers that alerted them to refresh their feed. An image of the garment referenced in the quotation was included in the Instagram post. Figure 1 provides an example of an Instagram post from the fashion show. Each participant had a quotation in two thematic sections of the show and they took part in the same sections in which their quotations were placed. Throughout the production process, I experienced the strengths and dilemmas of using a fashion show to share qualitative findings. The next sections draw on my journey to analyze the fashion show in arts-informed research.



Figure 1: Sample Instagram post from "Refashioning Masculinity" fashion show [15]

## 6. Translation of Research

My first challenge was to find an ethical means by which to translate interview findings into a fashion show format because public performances lack confidentiality. Qualitative interviews guarantee anonymity to participants through a series of strategies, such as giving them pseudonyms in publications (KVALE & BRINKMANN, 2009). Arts-informed research using photography and performance often creates ethical uncertainty because participants are publicly identified through their likeness in visual outputs (BOYDELL et al., 2012). I provided confidentiality to participants in the written work that resulted from their wardrobe interviews, but the fashion show was a public event. The audience saw participants on the runway, and so their role in the research was disclosed. I also had a photographer and videographer capture the show, and the audience was invited to take pictures on their mobile phones and share them publicly on social media. I did not want to place black bars across the eyes of participants or blur their faces in these images. Because this research aimed to empower diverse bodies and aesthetics, disguising participants would perpetuate their marginalizing and undermine the project's emancipatory goals (ibid.). The use of participant quotations during the fashion show further limited participant confidentiality. The recorded quotations did not identify the speakers and were not played when they were on the runway, and the quotations shared on Instagram only identified participants by their first name. Nevertheless, the audience could have connected participants to quotations because some quotations referenced the outfit that they wore during the fashion show. In other cases, audience members would know participants (they could invite friends and family to attend the show) and would be able to discern their voices in the recordings. The images posted on Instagram also featured aspects of the outfits participants donned in the show and in certain cases showed participants' faces. Although participants consented to the absence of anonymity during the fashion show and in its subsequent images, these public artistic mediums prevented me from sharing certain findings. [16]

Participants were uncomfortable sharing stories in the fashion show that they considered intimate and/or that negatively depicted family members or colleagues. By eliminating these stories, I was unable to disseminate crucial interview findings about fashion and masculinity. For example, one participant, who is transgender, explained the role of underwear in his life:

"Underwear is important, particularly if I'm packing [wearing a phallic object to give the appearance of a penis] which is my normal way to be. I don't want to feel like my dick is going to fall out of my pant leg and that I'm going to have to think about it all day because it isn't in the right place." [17]

This quotation troubles the relationship between sex and gender and suggests an important relationship between wearing men's underwear and creating a male identity. However, the participant deemed "packing" too personal an experience to share in a public setting, especially with his family and coworkers in the audience. Research ethics requires researchers to avoid causing harm to

participants (ORB, EISENHAUER & WYNADEN, 2001). However, arts research often exposes participants to types of harm beyond natures and levels that ethics committees typically consider acceptable because participants are vulnerable when they share their stories through the display of art (COX et al., 2014). Participants were given a list of quotations to approve for use in the fashion show; however, I eliminated quotations that I suspected might cause harm before the list was provided to them. I reasoned that even suggesting the inclusion of intimate stories might cause distress and discomfort, outweighing the benefits of sharing these stories with the participant for consideration let alone publicly. [18]

I also had to eliminate quotations that negatively represented participants, such as those depicting them as sexist or homophobic, from the list shown to them for inclusion in the show. For example, one participant did not like to wear shoes that "clip clop, like high heels" because it made him "feel feminine, and I don't like that." This quotation reveals that the repudiation of femininity structures many men's fashion practices, but showing it to the participant could have made him feel attacked for his position or preference. I therefore faced a dilemma: I had a duty to prevent harm to participants who agreed to be in the fashion show and I also had a commitment to feminist methodology that locates men in the context of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy (PEASE, 2013). As a feminist researching male rugby players, SCHACHT (1997) argued that challenging interviewees' sexist comments would have made them uncomfortable and ended the interviews. He therefore remained silent when participants made sexist statements because doing so elicited these comments and provided knowledge to challenge sexism. While I used SCHACHT's strategy during the interviews, he was nonetheless able to share sexist remarks in print publications because his participants had anonymity whereas mine did not have this same protection in the fashion show. PINI and PEASE (2013), however, suggest that SCHACHT's silence in the interviews provided tacit support for his participants' sexist practices. In my case, I would be doubling my support of sexism: remaining silent during the interviews and the fashion show. [19]

I rationalized that I could protect participants while simultaneously highlighting the power of hegemonic masculinity at work. Although I had to limit which quotations were used in the show, I had many performance and aesthetic tools with which to articulate the interview findings, including the venue, music, staging, lighting, choreography and clothing. For example, I selected the weight room in my university's athletic center as the runway. Rather than hide or move the weights, I highlighted them: I positioned the chairs around them to create a runway path. The concrete hallway leading into the weight room was also used as a runway to accommodate more guests. Figure 2 provides images of the runway configurations in the weight room and hallway. Selecting the weight room allowed me to take an archetypal masculine space where men literally construct strength and power onto their bodies and juxtapose it with the feminized activity of fashion. The concrete aesthetic of the hallway further represented the stoicism and rationality of masculine norms. By using a space that represents hegemonic masculinity to showcase men's fashion practices, I blurred gender boundaries by celebrating the epitome of femininity and a diversity of men's gender expressions

in it. This contrast emphasized and exposed the arbitrary and symbolic construction of patriarchal gender binaries without harming participants.

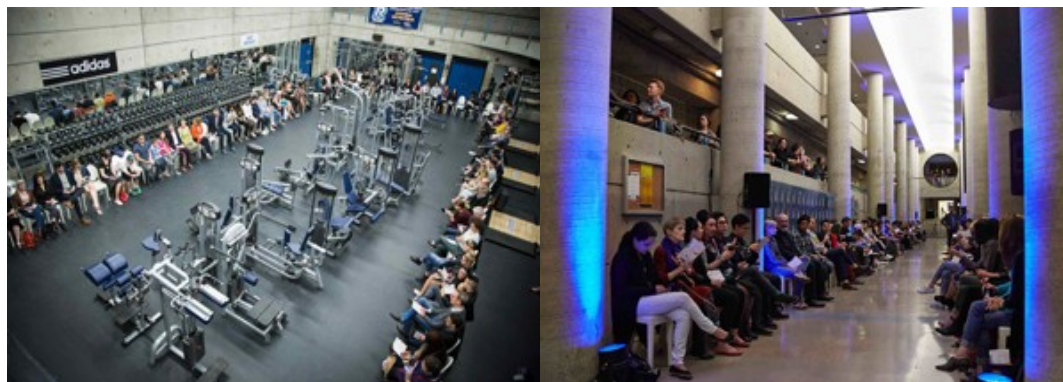


Figure 2: Runway configurations for "Refashioning Masculinity" fashion show [20]

The inclusion of diverse men and gender expressions also allowed me to confront any sexism and hegemonic masculinity that was uncovered in the interviews through embodied resistance and empowerment without distressing participants. Male fashion models primarily represent a white, youthful, tall, toned and able-bodied appearance: these features are associated with the masculine qualities of strength and discipline (BARRY, 2014). Similarly, common menswear styles are influenced by masculine archetypes, such as sports and military themes, which connote strength, discipline and rationality. Suiting, with its associations of power, also maintains a prominent place in men's fashion (CRANE, 2000). While Western women have adopted in part men's styles to communicate power and authority, men have traditionally avoided clothing that is gendered feminine as it symbolizes impracticality and frivolity. This hypocritical style phenomenon reinforces the superiority of hegemonic masculinity and leads men who adopt feminine clothes to have their masculinity questioned (ENTWISTLE, 2000). Featuring men who represented and expressed diverse masculinities on the same runway and in the same fashion show disrupted the dominant masculine hierarchy. While these men were positioned differently in relation to hegemonic masculinity, they were equally celebrated as masculine. Figure 3 provides images of some of the participants who took part in the fashion show.

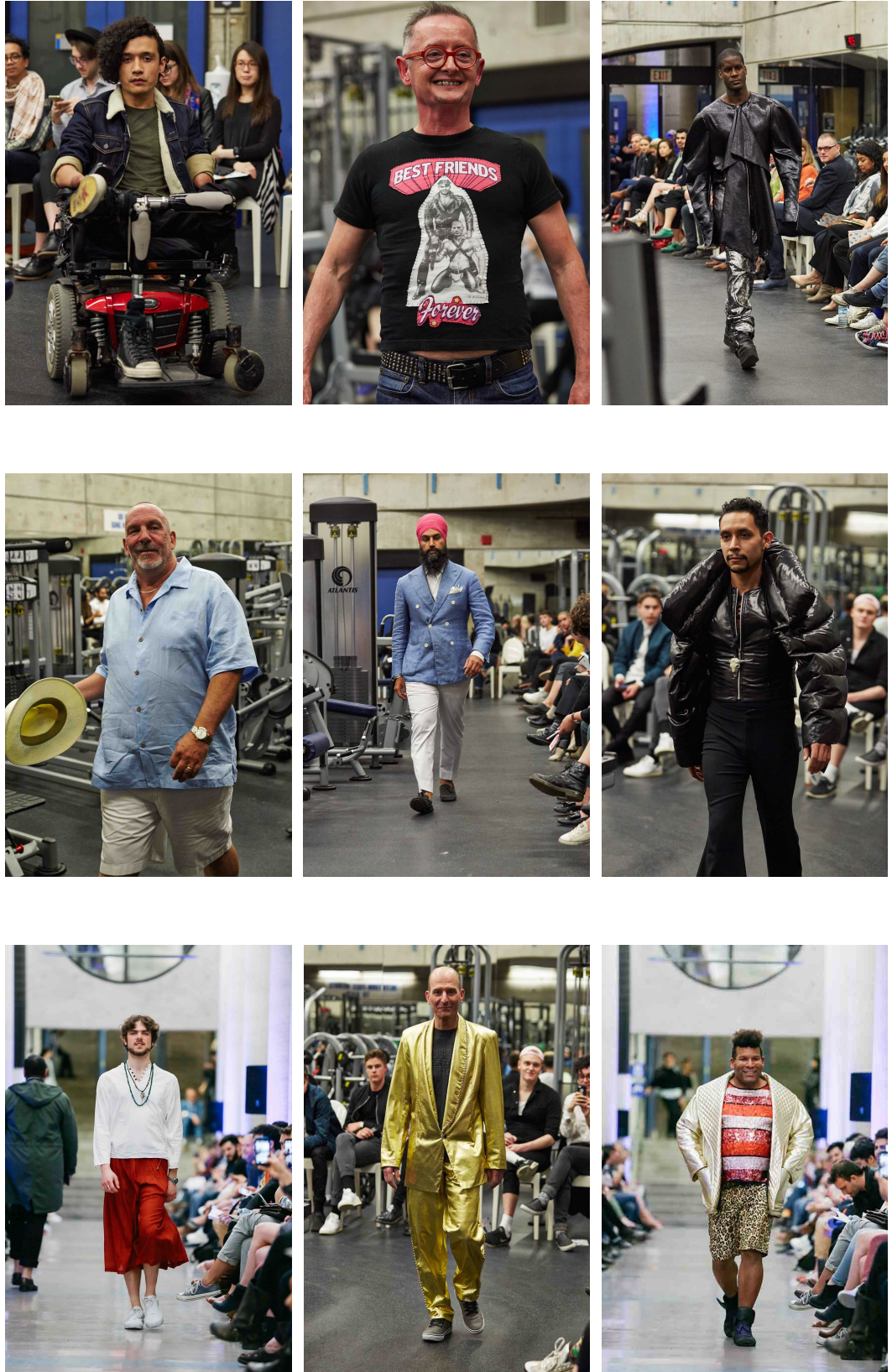


Figure 3: Examples of participants in "Refashioning Masculinity" fashion show [21]

The core activity of the fashion show—self-styled participants in motion—shares knowledge inaccessible through static images or verbal descriptions. WOODWARD (2016a) argues that qualitative researchers have difficulty accessing knowledge from clothes because clothing practices are part of people's everyday routines; subsequently, clothing engagement is automated and invisible to wearers. Although people are often unable to explain this tacit knowledge through words, their bodies feel the impact of clothing (KLEPP & BJERCK, 2014). HAJO and GALINSKY (2012) developed the theory of "enclothed cognition" to explain the relationship between the mind, body and clothing. In a series of experiments in which participants performed tasks wearing white coats, those who were told their coats were doctor's coats rather than painter's coats were more attentive. The researchers concluded that people embody the symbolic meaning of their clothes and this meaning influences their behaviors. As previously noted, fashion theorists have highlighted that clothes possess knowledge about people's lived experiences because garments envelop the body (ENTWISTLE, 2000; WOODWARD, 2016b). However, fashion theorists fail to account for the fact that the clothed body is dynamic: it is primarily in motion. Because the body, and particularly the moving body, is vital to conveying knowledge about clothes, data from clothing needs to be shared through an embodied, dynamic platform. [22]

The fashion show is an ideal research method to share knowledge derived from clothing. Building on "enclothed cognition" (HAJO & GALINSKY, 2012), I introduce "enclothed knowledge" to conceptualize information conveyed from arts-informed fashion shows: the dialogue between people's minds, bodies and clothing. Watching people's bodies move in their own clothing shares the material, tacit and embodied knowledge that underpins their lived experiences. In particular, enclothed knowledge disseminates insights about gender that cannot be told through most modes of sharing qualitative research. Euro-modernity has organized gender into binary categories of masculine and feminine. Although a plurality of gender expressions exist, language constrains the ability to understand gender diversity because it presumes definitions based on existing binary categories (KAISER, 2012). In contrast, enclothed knowledge articulates gender and intersectional identities through various fashion materials and styles. WOODWARD (2016a) views fashion as an activity, as fashioning, in which people assemble, edit and then embody their clothes. By fashioning looks from their wardrobes, participants articulate the nuances of gender beyond the boundaries of language through the ways they style and wear their own outfits. Moreover, participants in fashion shows reveal how gendered dress is embodied through diverse gendered movements because their bodies are in motion. The fashion shows therefore provides a platform to make visible information that cannot be communicated by verbal or static accounts. [23]

## 7. Representation of Participants

Fashion shows are notoriously associated with objectification. EVANS (2013) charts the birth of fashion shows in early twentieth century France and the U.S. and argues that this period established modeling as a profession for women. To be successful as a model, women's movements in fashion shows had to appear mechanical, giving the impression of a lifeless body and creating a performance that was hollow and repetitive. EVANS's characterization of the mechanization of models in fashion shows during the modern period remains relevant today. Scholars have regularly critiqued contemporary fashion marketing for erasing women's personhood and turning them into objects (KILBOURNE, 1999; MEARS, 2011). Over the past three decades, they have also noted that men in fashion media are represented through objectified visual codes (ENTWISTLE, 2009; GILL, HENWOOD & McLEAN, 2005). In the fashion show, models have little agency: control over their appearance and presentation—from what they wear to how they move their bodies—is decided by designers, stylists and producers rather than the models themselves (MEARS, 2011). Furthermore, the media's representation of non-hegemonic people removes their personhood by depicting them through narrow stereotypes associated with their particular group (ATA & THOMPSON, 2010; GARLAND THOMSON, 1997). [24]

Academic research might seem far removed from the dehumanizing practices of the fashion media and the fashion industry, but it, too, has also been critiqued for the objectification of researchers and participants. Since the 1960s, feminist scholars have argued that researchers take a singularly masculine position by failing to acknowledge their influence on the research process and findings. For example, they often see themselves in the hierarchical position of expert and ignore how their own positionality informs the research topic and process (OAKLEY, 1981; PEASE, 2013). Moreover, BREWIS (2014) asserts that academic writing tends to objectify the experiences of participants because they are commonly reduced on the written page to two-dimensional caricatures that represent archetypes of particular groups. When writing about people's experiences, the complexity and individuality of participants is lost as, according to JOSSELYN (1996, p.62), "language can never contain a whole person, so every act of writing a person's life is inevitably a violation." As the primary form of research dissemination, academic print publications fail to honor the full personhood of those who share their voices. [25]

From the fashion show's creation to execution, I sought to respect participants' personhood. Participants selected clothing from their wardrobes, coordinated their outfits and styled their appearance for the fashion show. They also directed their own runway performances because I instructed them to express their personalities through their movements and gestures. As participants moved down the runway, they danced, marched and sashayed. They also donned a range of facial expressions from wide smiles and to sexual stares. Some participants wore clothing styles that were gendered for either men or women, while others put together outfits that combined pieces from both women and men's fashion. By empowering participants with agency over their representations, I aimed to

change the subject-object binary of fashion shows and the research process. Harnessing participants' subjectivities through their directional choices also honored feminist methodology because participants were involved in the interpretation of their lives (RICE, 2009). Moreover, the fashion show transformed the objectifying practices of academic dissemination by creating a three-dimensional platform that captured the individual embodiments of participants and enabled them to author their complex representations through multiple creative mediums. Despite my efforts to minimize objectification, however, I could not fully eliminate it. GARNER (1994, p.38) theorizes that the performing body operates as both subject and object in all performance contexts: the performing body is the subject in its embodiment, while it is also objectified as a "spectacle to be processed and consumed by the perceiving eye." In this way, objectification cannot be completely removed during performances despite a producer's efforts. [26]

Mindful of the omnipresence of objectification in the fashion show performance, I explored other strategies to honor the personhood of participants. I followed a participatory research approach (McINTYRE, 2008) and developed a workshop to co-create the fashion show with participants. The workshop was based on a generative worksheet specifically developed for this project (SANDERS & STAPPERS, 2013). As seen in Table 2, the worksheet included anonymized quotations in the column on the far left. I selected four quotations for the worksheets from the fashion show narrative that represented each theme. Beside each quotation was a series of rows, each of which listed different creative elements, followed by blank spaces for participants to write down their ideas. When participants arrived for the workshop, we discussed the fashion show's purpose and reviewed images of the venue. Participants were given a worksheet and told that their goal was to help translate the interview quotations into a fashion show format by using the worksheet's creative elements to guide them. Each quotation was then read aloud. After hearing the quotation, participants individually completed the rows alongside it and shared their ideas with the group. They then engaged in a facilitated dialogue during which they discussed and expanded upon each other's ideas for the fashion show.

Quotes	Creative Elements	Your Ideas?
"I'm walking on the street, looking at my fellow men. You'll take style cues from each other. I'm like, I like how he's dressed. I never thought of pairing this with that, or the pattern on pattern."	Colors Sounds Visuals Clothes Words Performance Other	



Quotes	Creative Elements	Your Ideas?
<p>"Putting on a suit is like putting on a suit of armour. I thought of society as a form of battle and I wanted to insulate myself from some of the racism that I experience. So I thought if I looked very crisp in a tailored suit, I would be able to show confidence and express something that would maybe deter someone who wanted to treat me in an inappropriate manner."</p>	<p>Colors Sounds Visuals Clothes Words Performance Other</p>	

Table 2: "Refashioning Masculinity" fashion show generative worksheet [27]

Coordinating participation in the workshop was challenging. Only one workshop with five people occurred because personal and work responsibilities prevented participants from taking part in both the workshop and fashion show. Because involving participants in all aspects of the project is a common challenge in participatory research, McINTYRE (2008, p.15) suggests that participation be framed as a flexible process, and she advises researchers to focus on "the quality of the participation that people engage in, not the proportionality." Participants who attended the workshop played an instrumental role in developing the fashion show. For example, the idea to alert the audience to quotations posted on social media through a "ding" notification was developed in the workshop. Irrespective of their engagement in the workshop, however, all participants helped create the fashion show because they selected their outfits and directed their presentations. McINTYRE also suggests that researchers work with participants to define practical ways for them to participate in the research in order to prevent participation being seen as an imposition. Participants who could not attend the workshop were emailed the worksheet and instructions, and were told that their input was still valuable. Seven participants completed the worksheet remotely, and their ideas were incorporated into the fashion show. [28]

## 8. Engagement of Communities

The fashion show proved to be an effective medium to disseminate research to diverse audiences. No fee was charged for admission, but guests were asked to register in advance through an online ticketing portal that allowed us to collect information about them. This data revealed that the audience represented participants' networks; faculty and students from local universities; media representatives; policymakers; fashion industry professionals; staff from nonprofit organizations; and the public. Throughout the show, the audience was encouraged to share commentary on social media and identify their posts with the specific hashtag #refashioningmasculinity. This hashtag trended on Twitter for the duration of the show, indicating a high level of social media engagement. Articles about the show were also published in the fashion sections of two major

newspapers and on several fashion blogs. This amount and breadth of media coverage suggests that I was able to leverage the appeal of a fashion show to engage audiences who might not have expected to read about academic research. Additionally, the press and social media coverage shared the fashion show with people beyond the in-person audience. Attracting this diverse audience required the development of a marketing and media plan which, as I am an academic, was not in my arsenal. I overcame this challenge by ensuring the research team had backgrounds in marketing, graphic design and website development. I also collaborated with my university's public affairs office to develop and distribute a press release. [29]

While the fashion show shares research with a diverse audience, the platform is especially effective for engaging participants themselves in knowledge circulation. Providing participants with opportunities to create the fashion show allowed them to activate social change. McINTYRE (2008) asserts that participants do not need to change policy or eliminate injustice to make a difference. Instead, they only need to address the issues that concern them in "humanizing and authentic ways" and subsequently "concretize local knowledge" (p.47). Through the fashion show platform, participants used their everyday clothing and runway performances to share their experiences and promote inclusiveness. The fashion show also provided diverse participants with a range of creative tools to share their knowledge. MIKKELSEN (1995, p.118) argues that visual, hands-on activities equalize the power "between the literate and illiterate, between the marginalized and the self-confident" in research. To disseminate their views on masculinity, participants selected clothing and made creative decisions for the fashion show. Many men did not have the vocabulary to discuss hegemonic masculinity or fashion because the former is culturally invisible and later is gendered feminine (KAISER, 2012). The creative and participatory activities—from selecting the music to styling their outfits—helped them express experiences that are difficult to verbalize. Additionally, the fashion show brought together men who occupied various intersectional identities. They showed each other their outfits and had conversations about them backstage before and after the show. In this way, the fashion show enabled diverse participants to engage with each other in common pursuit. [30]

Engaging participants, however, was difficult because some men were hesitant about being in a fashion show and publically revealing their identities. In his research on young black men, ALLEN (2012) observed that although participant photography is intended to empower participants by centering their voices, his participants were hesitant about visually exposing their lives to others. ALLEN argues that participant photography is "not empowering in and of itself, but finds its power in the negotiation between the moral commitment of the researcher and the agency of the participant" (p.452). To negotiate the involvement of participants, I engaged them in dialogues that required my own affective labor. I had individual consultations with each participant to discuss the purpose of the fashion show, the risks and benefits of participation and address their questions. Although I explained that participants would be publically sharing their identities and experiences, I assured them that they would have ultimate control over their

representations in the fashion show. I also discussed how being on the runway would provide personal inspiration and social transformation for audiences; by seeing and hearing participants, viewers would be inspired to expand their perceptions of masculinity as well as to feel empowered in their diverse subject positions and gender expressions. While these conversations varied from an email to a three-hour meeting, the consistent factor was that participants wanted to speak with me. I had initially assigned these consultations to the research assistants. However, most participants did not respond to their emails or told them that they wanted to speak with me. Because I had conducted the interviews, participants and I had already developed a relationship. I might have also had more credibility with participants given my status as a professor versus a student. [31]

Moreover, ALLEN speculates that his insider status as a black man influenced his credibility with participants because they believed he was committed to advancing their lives. Although most of the participants and I differed in various subject positions, we all identified as men. Participants therefore related to me because of this shared positionality and, in line with ALLEN's observation, likely thought that I understood their perspectives and was invested in challenging restrictive masculine norms. While my roles as the interviewer and as a professor might have been more important than my gender, it is interesting to note that the research assistants who had originally contacted participants for consultations were female. I also participated in the fashion show alongside participants to demonstrate that I empathized with their feelings. RICE et al. (2015, p.514) argue that researchers who use artistic methods of self-representation need to feel vulnerable during the research process in order to empathize with participants and help them "edge out" counter-narratives. To feel vulnerable, RICE et al. made digital stories about their experiences of bodily difference. In my context, some participants were anxious about being in the fashion show and reluctant to share their concerns. These men were likely influenced by gender norms that deem fashion, being on display and vulnerability as feminine. Many of the participants were also anxious of being on the runway because they did not meet the norms of male attractiveness typically glorified in fashion shows. It was important that I also experienced being in the fashion show in order to feel vulnerable, empathize with participants and support their authentic performances. [32]

Engaging participants in the fashion show required the development of a research ethics strategy that was tailored to the context of the project. As previously discussed, the identities of participants were not concealed during the fashion show because it was a public performance. The show was also filmed and photographed by the audience and by the research team, and these visuals were widely shared. In qualitative research, informed consent is a precondition for participation, and ethics committees require that details of participation be formalized through written consent at the outset of project (MILLER & BELL, 2012). When men first responded to the call for participants, I had a discussion with them about the lack of anonymity during the fashion show and I ensured that this was clearly articulated in the consent form through statements such as:

"Your likeness will be utilized during the fashion show and for dissemination of the fashion show through photographs and videos in academic publications and at academic conferences as well as on social media and the project website."

"Any media resulting from the show will be put onto the Internet and could be widely and publically distributed." [33]

I was initially concerned that participants would be uncomfortable being photographed and having their images widely disseminated. However, participants did not express this concern during discussions of informed consent. In her research on using digital photography of participants, WOODWARD (2008) found that people were comfortable having digital photographs taken and shared. This comfort represents the integration of digitally documenting and disseminating photographs of ourselves in daily life (LASÉN-EDGAR & GÓMEZ-CRUZ, 2009). To foster confidence about participation in the fashion show, the consent forms offered participants the right to withdraw at any point during the study and to take part in the wardrobe interviews without having to participate in the show. [34]

MILLER and BELL (2012) argue that consent to participate in research can become problematic when it is unclear where participation begins and ends. They argue that consent should not be viewed as fixed but as renegotiated between researchers and participants. Similarly, COX et al. (2014) recommend that arts researchers separate consent into a series of stages throughout the creative process. The goal of the fashion show was to analyze and disseminate the interview findings, and so all creative decisions about the fashion show were only determined after the interviews had been conducted and coded. Participants therefore initially consented to participate in the fashion show and share their interviews in this format without knowing the specific details of their involvement or use of their interview material. For example, it was only during the production process that we decided to use quotations from participants in the fashion show's audio. Subsequently, I had to ask participants to consent to the use of specific quotations as well as to record them in a studio. During this process, some participants wanted to edit their quotations that would be used in the fashion show while others withdrew as they were uncomfortable publically sharing their interview data. The boundaries of participation in an arts-informed fashion show are fluid and require researchers to view consent as an ongoing process of renegotiation because participants could opt out at any time. [35]

## **9. Conclusion**

Based on my analysis, I argue that the fashion show is an unrealized and valuable method of dissemination in arts-informed qualitative research. Fashion shows share embodied knowledge that is inaccessible through static and verbal descriptions. To access this knowledge, researchers actively engage participants in their self-representation. Agency to make production decisions, choose outfits and craft runway performances enable participants to shape knowledge circulation. Researchers can also leverage the fashion show's associations with

glamor and spectacle to attract new audiences to their research while then subverting their expectations by engaging them in critical commentary through the fashion show performance. By exploding the binaries of language, engaging participants and making research accessible, the fashion show serves as an ideal research method to empower marginalized voices and ignite systemic change. According to WOOD (2007, p.4), "attainable micro-utopias" are temporary and truncated spaces of perfection. Fashion shows manifest attainable micro-utopias through the creation of research sites where the visual, aesthetic and embodied richness of human difference is celebrated and where people from various axes of privilege and marginalization engage in a common pursuit. In this way, fashion shows have the potential to challenge and transform not only the thinking of audience members but also that of participants. [36]

One limitation of this article has been the sole use of my reflexive experience. My future work will explore the perceptions of the audience to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the fashion show as an arts-informed method of research dissemination. My analysis has nevertheless begun to document the potential of using the fashion show in arts-informed qualitative inquiry. As a mode of research dissemination, the fashion show operates at the junctures of spectacular performance, everyday aesthetic practice and social research. By blurring these boundaries on, in and through the body, it accesses new ways of sharing knowledge that is tacit, sensory, material and embodied and which honors the agency of participants and engagement of communities. Given that the fashion show is inherently about the body, embodiment and identity, qualitative researchers who study these topics are encouraged to produce a fashion show to share their work. Participants wore their own clothes in the fashion show, but participants could also create and/or co-create their own garments that communicate their lived experiences and then wear their clothing creations in a fashion show to disseminate the research findings. I therefore call on fellow qualitative researchers to advance the power and possibilities of the fashion show by incorporating it into their dissemination strategy in an effort to communicate the diverse ways human lives are lived and experienced. [37]

## **Acknowledgments**

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the FCAD Centre for Fashion Diversity & Social Change at Ryerson University, Canada. The fashion show would not have been possible without the commitment, courage and confidence of the participants who shared their diverse styles. Through their fierce performances, they introduced new understandings of gender onto the runway and into the world. Thank you to the research team who made the fashion show a reality through their creativity, organization and passion: Alyksandra ACKERMAN, Daniel DRAK, Rebecca HALLIDAY and Stephanie ROTZ. Photographs of the fashion show were taken by Lawrence CORTEZ and Brody WHITE and are published with permission.

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## Citation

Barry, Ben (2017). Enclothed Knowledge: The Fashion Show as a Method of Dissemination in Arts-Informed Research [37 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18(3), Art. 2,  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-18.3.2837>.