

The genesis of the idea for Painted Garments came from my PhD research and subsequent book which focussed on the customised 'battle jackets' worn in metal music subcultures. Through making detailed paintings of these jackets, as well as talking to their makers, my central aim was to situate the unique garments within wider visual and making traditions. Painting offers a tool for close looking and reflection, whilst clothing traditions can re-frame painting histories. Painted Garments takes this starting point of a reciprocal exchange between clothing and painting to invite diverse perspectives and approaches, from artists, historians, critical thinkers, designers and more. From the performative to the reflective, with examples spanning the past five hundred years, we are excited to have such a rich selection of contributors to this first Painted Garments symposium and hope that the event provides fertile ground for future creativity and scholarship.

Tom Cardwell

The painted garments I love are tools for ritual, or social commentary. The stab-proof vest worn by Stormzy at Glastonbury 2019, for example. Customised by BANKSY with a hand-painted, desaturated Union Flag, thus calling out racial disproportionality in the UK criminal justice system. Alexander McQueen's *No. 13 Finale* dress (1999) was spray-painted by robots live on the catwalk and forewarned of sexual violence in emerging technologies. Historically, Egyptian high priests (First Century CE) used painted garments to shapeshift during funeral rites. Linen robes painted with rosettes to mimic the pelt of a leopard allowed the wearer to become animal, invoking protection during journeys to the afterlife. Certain Indigenous Amazonian Peoples select plant, animal, and mineral materials specifically for their energetic properties to make sacred garments. Painted with cosmic maps, the Tree of Life and intricate geometric patterns, they bring about encloded cognition when worn, actively assisting Shamans to enter into altered states of consciousness.

Sarah Kate Wilson

Rosalind McKever

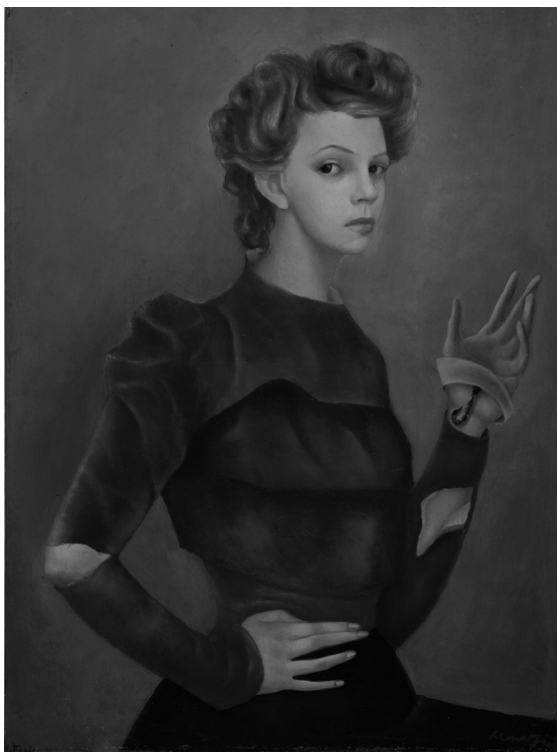
A Frock from Schiaparelli Ranks Like a Modern Canvas

Rooted in new research undertaken for the V&A exhibition *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* (2026), this paper highlights the art historical grounding of the Italian-born French couturier Elsa Schiaparelli (1890–1973). It focuses in on the role of *trompe l'œil* in her work, and argues for its centrality to her wider project of dissolving the boundary between modern art and modern life. Beginning with her pioneering 1927 bowknot sweater, Schiaparelli consistently deployed *trompe l'œil*'s capacity to deceive, delight, and destabilise hierarchies: between two dimensions and three, between painting and decoration, between artifice and reality. Drawing on the new scholarship of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition *Cubism and the Trompe l'Oeil Tradition*, the paper situates Schiaparelli's practice within the broader modernist rehabilitation of this long-unfashionable artistic tradition, tracing its trajectory from Cubist collage to Surrealist collaboration.

Dr Rosalind McKever is Curator of Paintings and Drawings at the V&A. She specialises in modern European art and its dialogues across time, geographies and media. Her V&A exhibitions include *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* (2026) and *Fashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear* (2022) and researches the entwined relationship between modern art and fashion. She has published widely on 19th and 20th century art, including the books *Vanessa Bell: Modern Living* (2025) and *Boccioni in Brazil* (2022) and essays on the friendship between Herbert Read and Peggy Guggenheim, and a 1938 exhibition of British Surrealism in São Paulo. Rosalind has held fellowships at the National Gallery, London, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and taught art history at the University of Sussex and Kingston University.



'The Tears Dress' and veil, Elsa Schiaparelli with Salvador Dalí, Summer 1938. Circus collection Paris, Viscose rayon, silk, V&A: T.393&A 1974, Given by Ruth Ford. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Leonor Fini, *Fini Autoportrait au Scorpion* (Self-Portrait with Scorpion), 1938. Oil on canvas, 80 × 60 cm

Timea Andrea Lelik

Dressed to Resist: Dress, Authority, and Female Sovereignty in Leonor Fini's Painted Garments

Leonor Fini's painted garments constitute a sustained feminist inversion of surrealist spectatorship. Where mainstream surrealism positioned the female body as passive object of the male gaze, Fini's canvases systematically reverse this logic through her self-portraits and portraits of women. Dress functions as a pictorial instrument of that inversion with armour, ceremony, and sovereignty replacing erotic availability, refusing the spectator's consuming look. Drawing on Fini's practice across painting, fashion, and costume design, the paper argues that garments are co-producers of meaning and the canvas is the space where female self-fashioning becomes an unambiguous declaration of bodily sovereignty.

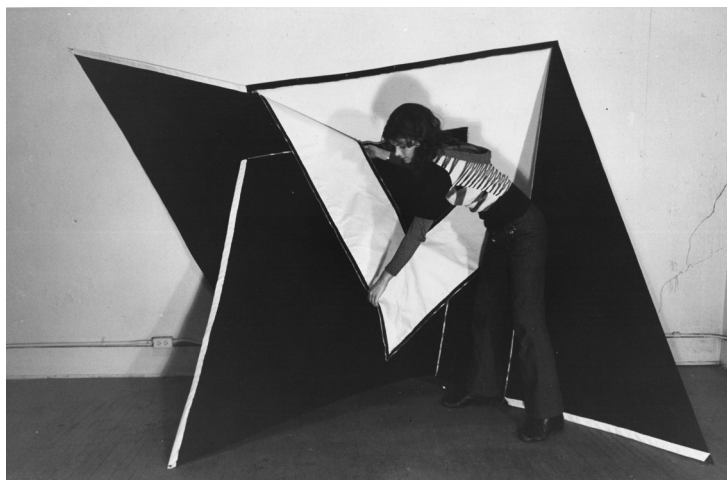
Dr Timea Andrea Lelik is an art and fashion historian, writer, and curator, and Senior Lecturer in Fashion History at Amsterdam Fashion Academy, The Netherlands, where she leads the History, Theory and Research department. Her research focuses on feminist art history, portraiture, surrealism, and the intersections of fashion and visual culture, with a current project exploring art's transformative and therapeutic dimensions. Her writing spans modern and contemporary scholarship, with essays published in international catalogues and conference publications. She has curated exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad, and has been a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) since 2016.

Craig Staff

Making Soft: The Zipper Paintings of Karen Carson

'Making Soft: The Zipper Paintings of Karen Carson' will consist of two principal areas of focus. Firstly, it will examine the significance of Carson's Zipper paintings with regard to the extent by which they challenged what Anna Chave has contended was the 'domineering and sometimes brutal rhetoric' of Minimalism. Secondly, it will consider the extent to which Carson's paintings anticipated a number of other strategies whereby as the 1970s unfolded, artists sought to approach painting as a fundamentally textile-based practice. To support this claim, Harmony Hammond's Floorpieces and Al Loving's torn fabric works will be considered.

Dr Craig Staff is a Professor of Fine Art at the University of Northampton. His current research interests are primarily focused on the agency of both modernist and contemporary painting. He is the author of several books including *Painting, History and Meaning: Sites of Time* (2021) and *Weak Painting After Modernism: Material Strategies 1968–1978* (2023). The second edition of his research monograph, *After Modernist Painting: The History of a Contemporary Practice*, has recently been published by Bloomsbury. Together with Dr Donal Moloney, he is co-editing a Routledge Companion on contemporary painting which will be published next year.



Karen Carson with *Untitled*, 1972
Black canvas, white duct tape, and zippers
120 × 72 inches



Samia Halaby in her studio, 2016
Source: Wikimedia

Marian Mazzone

Pattern Thinking: Garment, Image, and Computational Form

This paper proposes the garment as a computational image rather than a decorated surface. Drawing on Samia Halaby's kinetic painting and Joanna Berzowska's electronic textiles, it argues that pattern, iteration, and programmed behavior operate across both image and cloth. In these works, form is not fixed but unfolds in time, structured by systems rather than composition alone. Painted garments sit within this shift: they are not simply worn images but material processes that organize movement, perception, and the body itself.

Marian Mazzone is Professor and Chair of Art & Architectural History at the College of Charleston, USA. Her research focuses on modern and contemporary art at the intersection of art and computation, with particular attention to computational creativity and artificial intelligence. She is affiliated with the Art & Artificial Intelligence Lab at Rutgers University. Her work examines how computational systems reshape artistic process, visual form, and art historical analysis.

Helen Westgeest

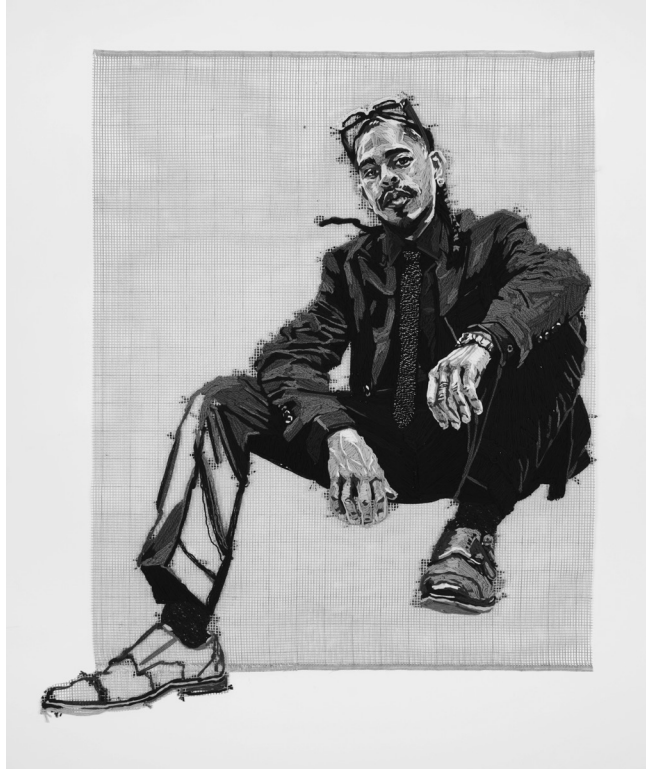
Painted Garments as Shehzil Malik's Medium for Feminist Activism

What women are supposed to wear in public space, is mainly decided by cultural conventions that often result from patriarchal hegemonic systems. A fascinating sociocritical act of protest is Pakistani artist Shehzil Malik's feminist street art, including murals and paintings on garments as sociocritical medium. In general, her pictures focus on women's experiences in public space. In 2017, Malik launched Pakistan's first feminist fashion collection. My theoretical framework combines studies on sociocritical garments with studies on feminist painting for answering the main question of my paper: how do Malik's painted garments relate to sociocritical wearing and feminist painting?

Dr Helen Westgeest is a senior researcher affiliated with Leiden University, where until recently she was employed as an associate professor of contemporary art history. Her research focuses on comparative studies of media in contemporary visual art, in particular the role of intermediality in the meaning production of artworks. She has published articles in peer-reviewed journals, as well as several monographs and edited volumes. Her book publications include *Skin Color and Whiteness in Contemporary Art* (Routledge, 2025), *Slow Painting: Contemplation and Critique in the Digital Age* (Bloomsbury, 2020) and *Video Art Theory: A Comparative Approach* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).



Shehzil Malik 'Step Out!' fashion line,
mural in background



Kandy G. Lopez, *Dandified Luis*,
2024. Yarn and acrylic on hook
mesh. Image courtesy of the artist

Keidra Daniels Navaroli

‘Swagga Like Us’: Clothing, Culture, and Rhetoric in the Fiber Portraits of Kandy G. Lopez

Historically, swagger portraiture is rooted in displays of perceived social superiority, but the work of Afro Caribbean artist Kandy Lopez reconfigures these associations by positioning the Black body as a canvas for new narratives. Lopez’s experimental approach to the layering of yarn imbues her monumental subjects with spatial and conceptual depth. By painting garments with yarn and embroidered floss, Lopez transforms the invisible labour often associated with craft into an enmeshed and unapologetic declaration. Contextualizing the artist’s portraits with historic and contemporary analogues, this paper demonstrates the ways in which rhetorical dressing considers the individual, the community, and ‘the culture’.

Keidra Daniels Navaroli is an independent curator and McKnight Doctoral Candidate at the University of Central Florida. Her research focuses on the intersections of academic museums, digital technologies, and underrepresented communities of textile practice. Keidra received an MA in art history from Florida State University; completed internships with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Sotheby’s Auction House; and is an alumna of the Getty Leadership Institute’s NextGen Program. In addition to service on the boards of the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries, the Mennello Museum of American Art, and the Surface Design Association, Keidra is the manager of digital art history for the open access journal *Panorama*.

Caroline Herma

Embroidered Illusions: Painted Copes as Image Carriers between Textile Materiality and Corporeality in Late Medieval Panel Painting

The paper examines Michael Pacher's predella painting from the altarpiece of St Wolfgang am Wolfgangsee (1475–1481), depicting the salvation of Emperor Trajan through Pope Gregory the Great, and focuses on the painted cope of Gregory as an autonomous image carrier. Pacher imitates the three-dimensional qualities of late medieval relief embroidery to blur the boundary between textile materiality and bodily presence. The embroidered saints, painted with such corporeality that their textile nature recedes, function as theological actors within the scene, reinforcing Gregory's role as intercessor for Emperor Trajan. The painted textile thus operates not merely as decorative garment, but as a theological argument embedded within the image.

Rooted in the visual worlds of late medieval liturgy, the research of Caroline Herma (MA) explores sacred goldsmithwork and textiles and their interplay as image ensembles in liturgical practice. She is a doctoral researcher at the Institute for Art and Visual History at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In her doctoral dissertation, she investigates the role of late-medieval morses as movable image-carriers within the liturgy, examining these objects through art-historical, liturgical, sensory, and reception-aesthetic lenses as part of a complex system of visual and semantic relationships. Alongside her research, Herma is committed to communicating art-historical knowledge to a broad audience, including through podcasts, with the aim of fostering enthusiasm for the Middle Ages and making academic research more accessible.



Chasuble cross made of relief embroidery,
between 1475 and 1525, Halberstadt,
Cathedral Treasury. © LDA Sachsen-Anhalt,
Photo: Juraj Lipták



Christine Binnie painted and photographed
by Wilma Johnson, 1981

Neo Naturists

Body Paint is the Ultimate Painted Garment

Christine Binnie and Wilma Johnson, founders of the Neo Naturists, will give an experimental performative lecture wearing body painted clothing. 'We will talk about what inspired us to use paint as clothing in 1980 and why we continue to do so to the present day. We will talk about our work in the context of anthropological, historical, and contemporary use of body paint in ritual and as protest. We will also talk about our interactions with the fashion world and illustrate how body paint is the oldest form of art and the origin of clothing as identity.'

The Neo Naturists are a live art collective founded by Christine and Jennifer Binnie and Wilma Johnson in 1981. During the 1980s they performed at venues ranging from underground clubs such as Taboo and Heaven, to the Royal Opera House. They collaborated with artists including Michael Clarke, Derek Jarman, Leigh Bowery and Grayson Perry. Recent exhibitions and performances include *The Neo Naturists* retrospective at Studio Voltaire in 2016, including *A Night with the Neo Naturists* at the ICA, *Re/Sisters* at the Barbican (2023) and *Women in Revolt!* at Tate Britain (2023), National Galleries of Scotland (2024) and Whitworth Manchester (2025). They also gave a body painted lecture at Tate Britain in 2024 during the *Women in Revolt!* exhibition.

Anne Reimers

‘Dressed in Paint: Time, Labour, and Materiality in Paint-Stained Artists’ Dress and Luxury Fashion’

What painters wear in staged photographs or self-portraits is part of the myth-making process surrounding them. A boiler suit, painter’s coat or everyday garment thickly covered in traces of paint can act as visual and material evidence of the time, labour and dedication invested in their creative output. Drawing on theories and approaches from fashion studies and art history and theory, this paper considers the different temporal, aesthetic, material and semiotic registers at work in the paint-stained clothing worn by artists who paint in comparison to the recent trend of paint-splattered garments sold by luxury and streetwear fashion brands such as Maison Margiela and Gallery Dept.

Dr Anne Reimers is a Senior Lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies at London College of Fashion (UAL), specialising in the relationship between art and fashion. She holds a PhD in History of Art from University College London (UCL). Her *Otto Dix and Weimar Media Culture: Time, Fashion and Photography in Portrait Paintings of the Neue Sachlichkeit* (Oxford: Peter Lang) was published in 2022. Since 2006, she has worked as a freelance art market journalist, covering contemporary and modern art gallery exhibitions, auctions and art fairs.



Close-up of Celia Paul's clothing taken by
photographer Alice Zoo for *The New Yorker*,
2025



Delaine Le Bas & Ronke Osinowo,
NO Performance for Un-Fair-Ground at
the Whitworth, Manchester.
Photo by James Speakman

Delaine Le Bas

Istory* ... Born in Worthing 1965. Disrupted education between the age of five to sixteen. Listening to Poly Styrene in 1978 dressing in vintage and handmade clothes. 1980 goes to local art school. 1984 The House of Le Bas is created. 1985 Damian James Le Bas joins. 1986–1988, Saint Martins School of Art London – art, clubbing, fashion and keeps travelling as a Lifeist** and Performalist*** in and across the UK and Europe, South Korea, Zimbabwe, Canada and Rajasthan. Works included in Venice Biennale, Prague Biennale, Gwangju Biennale and other art institutions internationally. It all continues ... It's where you come in ... Delaine Le Bas, 2022. With many thanks to Sands Murray-Wassink (1974). It all continues ... *Delainia: 17071965 Unfolding* Tramway for Glasgow International 2024 ... *Rags Of Evidence* at John Marchant Gallery 7 September – 13 October 2024 ... Turner Prize Tate Britain 25 September 2024 – 16 February 2025 ... *+Fabricating My Own Myth – Red Threads & Silver Needles*, NCA Newcastle, 31 May – 2 August 2025 ... *Un-Fair-Ground*, Whitworth Manchester 13 February – 31 May 2026

* Istory – Carolee Schneeman (1939–2019)

** Lifeist – Linda Montano (1942)

*** Performalist – Hannah Wilke (1940–1993)

Amrita Dhallu

We Live in Clothes, We Live in Buildings – Do They Fit Us?

In a conversation with menswear designer Grace Wales Bonner, artist Lubaina Himid shared that 'pattern, cloth and texture are like a language that permeates all through things'. From painting confident female protagonists in well-structured, tailored clothes to producing installation pieces that follow the flow and drape of East African kangas, Himid uses women's dress to instigate a poetic spatial consciousness. This paper will explore how Himid embraces the structural and decorative logics of textile, attuning us to our own corporeal agency in space.

Amrita Dhallu is an independent curator, editor, and researcher based in the South East of England. She provides support structures for artists through commissioning, editorial projects and creating artistic networks. Working across installation, performance, publishing, and aural records, she builds embodied curatorial frameworks that centre polyvocality and collaborative research. She is currently Associate Curator at Grand Union, Birmingham.



Tom Cardwell, *How the West Country Was Won* (2016). Oil on canvas, 120 × 100 cm

Dr Tom Cardwell is an artist and researcher based in London, UK. His research focuses on DIY subcultures, clothing and image traditions. Tom's book *Heavy Metal Armour* (Intellect, 2022) employed painting practice and ethnography to examine the customised 'battle jackets' made by metal fans. He contributed a chapter on clothing in metal scenes to the *Cambridge Companion to Metal Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), and to the forthcoming volume *What's Left of Metal* (Revol Press, 2026/7). From 2022–23 Tom was Kone Arts Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies where he researched the urban 'message boards' found on the streets of Helsinki. The artworks from the project were exhibited at Kiasma, the Finnish National Gallery of Art, Helsinki (2025). Other recent exhibitions include *Music Was My First Love*, Filter, Berlin (2026). Tom Cardwell is Senior Lecturer in Painting at Camberwell, University of the Arts London.



Sarah Kate Wilson, *Untitled Ballet* (rehearsal), 2025, London. Paintings and sceneographic elements (hand painted costumes, props, sets, lighting and soundscapes). Performance by Maria Isidora, Music by Patricia Auchterlonie. Photography by Thierry Bal

Dr Sarah Kate Wilson is an artist and researcher based in London. She is a Senior Lecturer in BA Painting at Camberwell College of Arts, UAL. Wilson's multiform practice includes performance, costume, tapestry and ceramics, but centres on painting. Her research is crystallised around painting's liveness. She is a chapter author for the forthcoming *Routledge Companion to Contemporary Painting* (2027). In 2024 she gave a Keynote for the symposium *Painting in the Expanded Field*, MTU Crawford College, Ireland, and published a paper in the *Journal of Contemporary Painting*. She co-convoked a panel for the AAH, Brighton (2019), and presented a paper at the CCA Conference, Chicago, (2020). She has presented work at Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Royal Academy of Arts (London), BALTIC 39, (Newcastle), The Bauhaus Museum, (Dessau), The Museum of London, Cervantes Institute, (New Delhi), The Tetley, (Leeds), The Armory Centre, (California) and recently exhibited within the 5th Edition of the Biennale Internazionale Donna, Trieste, Italy (2026).