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Abstract

'HOPE: A SENSORIAL STORY OF LOCKDOWN'

This fashion research aims to test the functions of storytelling and stretch the view of storytelling as an artisan view of communication. It investigates experiences of lockdown, and how layers of sensorial storytelling can draw out the meaning of living through this period, socially distanced yet collectively bound.

The study uses narrative inquiry methodology, taking an autoethnographic approach to gathering field data through the process of creating and gathering rich, complex stories interwoven with theoretical concepts. As narrative inquiry embraces a synergy of interdisciplinary practice, this research utilises the three-dimensional commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place, within which narrative modes of thinking can thrive. Its aim is to analyse personal experience to illuminate broader cultural, social and political issues.

As a presentation, the field data is shared as vivid, multi-layered communication: firstly, as a piece of performative oral storytelling, revealing the researcher's spontaneous observations, analytical thought and reflexive realisations of lockdown. To accompany this, photographs of the researcher's journey through liminal spaces are shared, such as the fashion messaging in closed shop windows, to reveal the people behind brands, individuals behind community action, the business of being human. There is also an audio soundtrack capturing the sounds of lockdown, which acts as vivid aural backdrop. Theoretical concepts from the fields of politics, philosophy, social activism and psycho-analysis are built in as part of the critical, contextualising process, considering how notions of heterotopia, freedom, belonging and resilience are tested through the prism of the lockdown experience. Altogether, this fashion research presents sensorial field data in the midst of 'narrative becoming', giving an insight into individual liminal experience in flow, in a collective world in flux.

Keywords

storytelling, fashion, lockdown, narrative inquiry, autoethnography

Biography

Catherine Glover is Programme Leader of Masters of Research Design and Senior Lecturer in Fashion Communication at Northumbria University, UK, where she lectures on sustainability, activism, fashion public relations, brand strategy, journalism, brand copywriting and editorial publishing. She is also a PhD student researching into transnational storytelling, specifically how social and brand communities enact story processes that inspire grassroots action. She has published articles on the luxury brand Rapha, Harris Tweed and her role as a *madoguchi*, reporting on British fashion, design and architecture for Japanese avant-garde publication, *Hanatsubaki*. Glover's research has appeared in the *Critical Journal of Fashion and Beauty*, *International Journal of Fashion*, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* and *Understanding Luxury Fashion: From Emotions to Brand Building* (eds. Cantista and Sábada, 2019). She has presented her research to peer and industry audiences at the Global Fashion Conference 2016, 2018, 2020 and the Design History 2019 'Cost of Design conference'. Prior to academia, she worked in industry as a luxury fashion PR, design journalist and editorial coordinator in arts publishing.