

The Innovative Application of Existing Digitally Controlled Flat Bed Weft Knitting to Fashion Knitwear for the Individual Body Shape of Women, Particularly Those Above UK Standard Sizes.

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Research Questions

Is the primary value of knitted fabric on larger bodies its inherent stretch, and are there alternative methods of achieving fit?

What specific accommodations do larger bodies require in knitwear?

Background

“Although the fashion world may embrace polymorphous perversity when it comes to sex, it is narrowly prescriptive about body shape and size.”

(Evans, *Fashion at the Edge* p. 98.)

“The average British woman has a proportionally larger stomach and waist than her 1950’s counterpart, and is a size 16.” (SizeUK findings., Shabi,

One Size Fits All, Guardian Weekend Magazine, 16.10.2004.)

‘...85% of women were unhappy with recently purchased garments due to poor fit’

(“Size Matters,” *International Textiles* June 2003: p.

Aims

- W To reference larger women’s body form, posture and movement to knitwear.
- W To focus on shape not standard sizes.
- W Real-life, empirical research; case study based to maintain continuity of data.
- W To use existing flat bed weft knitting technologies and related IT to achieve 3D knitted shapes without reliance on inherent stretch to accommodate form.
- W To create new measuring and translation methods.
- W To consider current critical research on issues of idealised femininity, body shape and size.

Methods

Measuring the body

- W Between pre-established landmarks.
- W Developed from anthropometric and traditional clothing methods.
- W Establishing the body’s negative spaces, proportional girth and silhouette.

Data Gathering

- W Participant measurement, body shape classification, continued involvement, informed feedback and anecdotal evidence.
- W On-line body shape survey.

- W Retail observation.

Knitting

- W Shima Seiki SES102ff machine and SDS1 programming system at the University of Brighton.
- W 2/30s Cashwool, shrinkproof wool.
- W Single bed, links fabric provides permanent surface-pattern-to-stitch ratios to highlight distortion.
- W Combinations of stitch quality, narrowing, widening,, gathering, progressive doubling and flèche.