

# F/fashion Narratives

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## ABSTRACT

This workshop introduces F/fashion Narratives as a new interdisciplinary field to critically explore F/fashion's role in the lifecycle of stories that people and communities share to galvanize their self and social identities. Fundamental to this field is the acknowledgement that fashion possesses two meanings that frequently coincide and collide. Fashion, a capitalised noun, which refers to one of the world's largest industries, responsible for 2% of global GDP, that developed within the 'west'<sup>1</sup> during the nineteenth century. And fashion, a verb, that encompasses people's use of dress in the negotiation of their public identities across diverse chronologies, cultures and geographies.

F/fashion Narratives explores how far meanings and practices between these terms coincide and collide by connecting disparate areas of fashion-related research activity and researchers, from the philosophical to the practical, design to business. In so doing, it seeks to clarify the cultural impact and narrative potential of F/fashion and bring stories from minoritized voices, especially from beyond the 'west', which are typically marginalized or wholly ignored within fashion-related research, into a conjoined discourse that can support the fashion industry and fashion education to tackle the global challenges they pose.

**Keywords:** Narrative; Storytelling; Interdisciplinary; Research approaches.

## OBJECTIVES

The workshop objectives are three-fold: (1) to map thematic and methodological gaps in F/fashion-based research; (2) to identify people and communities who are under-represented in this research; (3) to understand the divergent perspectives these people can bring to supplement, and enhance, the transdisciplinary study of F/fashion.

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<sup>1</sup> 'West' is placed between inverted commas because the noun is a concept and not a specific and unified geographical region. Capitalization is rejected to avoid the suggestion that the concept should be invested with a singular status.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The workshop takes as its starting point the 'internal' gap that exists between research that engages with 'Fashion' and 'fashion'. It acknowledges that each focus possesses its own thematic and methodological differences. Consequently, the session, which is divided into two parts, will engage participants through explorative discussion, and ask:

### **Part 1 'Where are we now?'**

Workshop participants will be randomly assigned to two groups ('Fashion' and 'fashion'). For each term, groups will be asked to identify the following to summarise the current research landscape:

- Research priorities
- Key figures/studies
- Key approaches and methodologies

A group discussion will pursue these reflections by asking all participants to consider 'what are the missing narratives?' and 'what are the barriers that exclude them?'. The workshop concludes by asking participants to identify the interventions that they want to make to create a more unified field going forwards:

### **Part 2 'Where are we going?' and 'where do we want to get to?'**

Returning to their initial group, participants will respond to these prompts by creating a 'call to action'.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The outcome, and chief impact, of the workshop will be to embolden researchers from F/fashion and non-F/fashion backgrounds to critically, creatively and collectively interrogate their positionality and to identify how their research can facilitate greater awareness of and harmonisation between Fashion and fashion.

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