Mannequin-Clothing: The Prosthetic Aesthetic

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Abstract

The mannequin gives shape to the space between the body and its clothes, a space it occupies on both a pragmatic level, and a philosophical one. The mannequin, in giving clothing a body, relates to it as matter, while relating to the body as form. Thus the mannequin mediates between clothing and the body. This mediation not only creates a certain intimacy between the two, but, I argue, supports a sense of them as akin to one another. Part of this support is literal, and corporeal; the mannequin, in my reading, is a two-way prosthesis, serving a prosthetic function for both clothing and the body of its potential wearer.

This prosthetic function complicates the traditional theorisation of the mannequin as an uncanny double figure, for it situates the mannequin in a relation not only to the female body, but to clothing. Relative to clothing, the mannequin is not merely an imitation of the human, but a hinge between the matter of clothes, and that matter which is the body.

Figure 1: Blind and touching: Mannequin in window of Belinda in the MLC Centre in Sydney's CBD.[1] Photographed by the author on Oct 15, 2007.

The materiality of the mannequin is ambiguous: it is akin to clothing in the order of (in)animation, and yet akin to body in the order of dimension. If clothing is, as it is frequently colloquialised to be, a 'second skin', mannequins are its second body – or in some cases, its first. Hinging between the materiality of clothing and that of its wearer, the mannequin is both

like and unlike clothing; both like and unlike the body. It thus imparts the qualities of each to the other. Imagery which trades on a confusion between mannequin and model bodies exemplifies this intermingling of parts, and demonstrates that clothing and body may themselves be less parted from one another than they at first appear. A mannequin serves as a representative material body upon which clothing can be scrutinised; here, the trope of the mannequin serves as a theoretical body upon which to examine the philosophical status of clothing, and its materiality. Mannequins are thus both my focus, and my method; both topic, and tactic. Where one would normally understand, or adjust, clothing in relation to a body, here I understand and adjust a working and constantly reworked notion of 'body' in relation to, in accordance and discordance with, clothing.

Mannequins stand between garment and body twice over. Firstly, and most obviously, in a purely pragmatic fashion; being used for either fit or display, or both, they serve as an intermediary between the materiality of the garment, and that of its eventual wearer. Secondly, and perhaps less perceptibly, they also perform that function philosophically. A mannequin must be at once like enough to the body of the woman who encounters it to be imaginatively yoked to it, and like enough to its adornments to focus attention on them rather than itself. In his analysis of the mannequin in modernity, Tag Gronberg articulates this need, stating that the aim of early visual merchandising 'was to enumerate devices whereby the 'distracting' quality of the female body might be translated to the object for sale.'[2] The mannequin thus partakes simultaneously of both subjecthood and objecthood. It must appear to be enough the subject of its stylisation that the aesthetic it presents can appeal to a woman as being a potential self-expression, while remaining enough in the object-realm to serve as a visual conduit to the merchandise it displays. It must be woman-like, but only approximately; fetishisable, but only as a means to an end.[3]

This intermediary status renders up the mannequin to ambiguation; already double in the terms of its original sales function, it is readily mobilisable as the double to a living form. Perhaps the most infamous instance of this is the photography of Helmut Newton. In one archetypal photograph, a blonde-bobbed model in smoky eye makeup and vampish lipstick cups the breast of an identically styled mannequin,[4] while in another a sharp-featured brunette with tousled curls lies nose-to-nose in bed with her mannequin double.[5] These photographs sound echoes (albeit eroticised ones) of promotional images featuring models or celebrities with 'their' mannequins; for example those of Twiggy with her impersonators, or Violetta doubled with her mannequin self in 1990.[6] However, those images serve their promotional function by demonstrating the mannequins' closeness to the woman after whom they are modelled, and thus are invested in the notion of the model as originary. By contrast,

the Newton images work precisely through confusing that question of origins, with mannequins doubled on each other as well as on living women, and photographed by themselves in characteristically Newtonian scenes of sinister glamour as though born to it. The question of who looks like who is raised in a 1979 description of a shoot containing both live models and mannequins, of which onlookers comment both 'Look, that model looks just like those mannequins, you can hardly tell them apart' and 'Those mannequins look just like that girl!'[7] Trading on the recursivity of the resemblance between models and mannequins, lingerie designer Kit Willow's 2007 Rosemount Australian Fashion Week presentation, a self-described 'homage to Newton',[8] featured models and mannequins styled and dressed (or undressed) similarly; the lingerie garments in this instance become the hinge for the models and mannequins' mimicry of one another. In one press image, a group of models and mannequins standing on a wooden staircase frames one model cupping a mannequin's breast, echoing the afore-mentioned Newton image.[9]

The encounter between model and mannequin is staged more directly in a shoot from *Cream* Winter 1999.[10] Though dated now, the shoot epitomises the uncanniness of that relation. Model and mannequin encounter each other in various locations around a club/bar, and regard each other quizzically. The look they extend to one another, of simultaneous recognition and confusion, dramatises the uncanny ability of the double to, in Freud's terms, place 'the subject … in doubt as to which his self is'.[11] One shot from the shoot, which depicts the mannequin and model each checking their reflection in adjacent bathroom mirrors,[12] gives that look of mutual in/comprehension between a woman and her three-dimensional mirror an extra twist of entendre. The query as to which is model and which mannequin, which a viewer's look might level at the images of the shoot, is itself mirrored in the querulous glances which the two exchange within it.

That onlooking look, simultaneously inquisitive and diagnostic, is called upon by the Queen Victoria Building's current Spring/Summer advertising campaign, 'Where Summer Comes to Life'. The campaign, according to an intra-QVB Retailer Newsletter, depicts 'a store mannequin who comes to life under a Sydney summer sun'.[13] In keeping with this heliocentric conceit, all three images from the campaign depict the model/mannequin on a beach – albeit a rather fantastical one, in which the water and sky are the greenish-gold of the centre's faux metal logo, and the sand the burnished brown of wannabe-wood. Further, the simulated sky is imprinted in a manner which suggests Victoriana wallpaper with a pattern of commercialism; it is embossed with the names of the building's major stores – Guess, Oroton, Country Road, and the like – alternated with its logo. The ad stages an internal space which wants to convince us of its externality, an inanimate body which wants

to convince us of its animation. This slippage between the outdoor and the indoor, the fleshly and the fibreglass, is precisely what the campaign's gimmick relies on. For the mythology of the campaign projects the life-giving force of the sun onto clothing. The QVB is 'where summer comes to life', and the embodiment of this enlivenment is the mannequin. As the mannequin is equated with summer (that which comes to life), so is the clothing sold in the building equated with the sun (that which brings to life). Clothing from the QVB, the logic of the campaign suggests, is so saturated with summery vitality that it gives life even to fibreglass.[14]

However, powerful as the ad portrays the clothing to be, the ad itself is rather less effective. One would be hard-pressed to even follow the concept without the newsletter's explanation, since the images merely depict a woman in stock poses from the repertoire common to both models and mannequins; the imaged body's status as mannequin is notated rather than definitively marked out. Notated, in a sense akin to musical notation – 'mannequinness' is scored in the narrative behind the campaign, but only minimally, referentially, scored on the model's body. This scoring is literal: at neck, shoulder, wrist and ankle, the model's body is etched with lineate gaps, which one is expected to read as joins. To even perceive these lines requires a closeness of scrutiny beyond what would be usual in the images' target contexts. As well as being placed on posters around the building itself, the ads were also presented on bus-sides and in magazines; contexts not normally conducive to detailed visual analysis. In any case, many of the joins are concealed by clothing or accessories. Thus, to even access the intended image – that is, to see the body in the ads as a mannequin body that has been brought 'to life', rather than as just a model body – it is necessary to take it apart, to analyse how the ad has unified its narrative elements. The components: the Building, the model, the 'mannequin', the sun, the 'beach', the joining lines, which connect to create the version of the image the campaign intends us to see, like the limbs of a mannequin's idealised body, must be reassembled, as though the image itself has a composite body – the body of a mannequin being reconfigured, or re-outfitted, as a live woman.

The joins marked on the body of the mannequin model in these ads simultaneously divide it up into its component fragments, and hold those fragments together. They are what makes the model body a mannequin body; as though the difference between models and mannequins were merely a matter of the latter having detachable extremities. Further, they suggest that even though the mannequin has come to 'life', she is still a mannequin; still divisible into her component parts for the sake of convenience. She is both not-quite-woman, because she bares these marks of assembly, and not-quite-mannequin, because she

appears at first glance to be – and in the campaign's narrative, has become – a woman. This epitomises the uneasy, and uncanny, slippage between model and mannequin, which lends mannequin materiality some of its ambiguity. Ironically, what makes the campaign so exemplary in this respect makes it rather unsuccessful on its own terms – or perhaps too successful. For, as Sara Schneider puts it, 'when a mannequin looks "real", it looks like not what it is, but like a living person'.[15] In the QVB campaign, the model imitating a mannequin made 'real' ends up just looking like a model. The resemblance between model and mannequin on which the ads trade is made so acute that the two become conflated, and thus the narrative's central conceit, of a progression from inanimation to animation, is lost. The mannequin body in these images epitomises Courtney Love's maxim in 'Doll Parts'; 'I fake it so real I am beyond fake'.[16]

The ambiguation between model and mannequin created in these examples relies on a certain modality of intimated flawlessness on the part of the live models; a movement towards the condition of the mannequin which is visceral as well as imagistic. The lifelessness which becomes a mannequin's poise is echoed in the almost disembodying degree of immobility and glassiness assumed by the model. The same principle operates in reverse; when mannequin bodies occasionally exhibit signs of imperfection, wear or damage, they are much easier to humanise, and more convincingly material. They become more alive, because less perfectible, than the clothing they display. For mannequins can, and often do, become worn in a way that display clothing – being literally unworn – would never be allowed to be. This is palpable in the case of those mannequins modelled after dressmaker's dummies, whose cloth 'skin' begins, with use, to sag and fold; as though the mannequin, aged by her ever-renewed display, has developed wrinkles. Fibreglass mannequins, too, acquire fine lines, often on those parts which see most contact such as hands and face, and which give a similar impression of agedness, albeit of a strangely artificial kind. Since mannequin bodies are stylised into narrative bodies, the physical vulnerability evoked by these hints of damage is translated into emotional vulnerability.

Figure 2: '. . . the mannequin has acquired wrinkles'. Mannequin with folds in 'skin' surface in Alistair Trung's eponymous shop in Sydney's Queen Victoria Building (QVB). [17] Photographed by the author on October 15, 2007.

A similar principle operates in relation to the sensory being of the mannequin; for though it might mimic the body's shape, it can exhibit only the suggestion of its senses. Although the mannequin is designed, as discussed earlier, to draw attention in order to then reflect it onto the wares it wears, its own attention can only be sketched in; it is eminently perceptible, but unperceiving. Belinda's current window takes this literally, presenting mannequins which, though headed, are faceless, and bedecked with lace blindfolds; their nonexistent eyes given implicit sight, at least narratively, by having it precluded.[18]

Figure 3: 'Given sight by having it precluded…' Blindfolded mannequin in window of Belinda in Sydney's MLC Centre. Photographed by the author on October 15, 2007.

The mannequins seem made strangely sensory by this dressing (a dressing placed over the absent wound of their eyelessness). With their articulated wooden hands clasping props and accessories, it is as though they are engaged in a game of Blind Man's Bluff with the objects they woodenly display and palpate; the evocation of their sightlessness emphasises their articulated and poised non-sense of touch, as if attesting to the sharpening of one sense in compensation for the loss of another.

Figure 4: 'The sharpening of one sense…' Blindfolded mannequin holding jewellery and carved flower in window of Belinda in Sydney's MLC Centre. Photographed by the author on October 15, 2007.

It is as though our senses, perceiving the window, are intended to follow that shift; from their impossibly blinded eyes, our attention is drawn to their articulate hands. Their blindness is somehow touching, and emphasises their touch-which-is-not-one of the merchandise they bear. One mannequin is posed with her hand poised in mid air before her face (see fig. 1); a position which makes use of both the mobility and the fixity of this kind of articulated-armed mannequin.

The slippage between mannequin and living woman upon which these examples trade exemplifies the kind of uncanniness described by Freud, after Jentsch, as occurring when one 'doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate'.[19] The human becomes a mimicry of the inhuman, which itself, mannequins being modelled on female bodies, is a mimicry of the

human. So the models in these images become the animate imitating an inanimate imitation of inanimation; a recursion of uncanniness.

However, when mannequins are addressed in the context of clothing, there is more at stake than just uncanniness. Firstly, the slippage between real and unreal body is explicitly traded on as a point of bodily (not to mention sartorial) empathy, and is thus part of the mannequin's function as retail prop. Secondly, in relation to clothing, the slippage is not just between live woman and artificial, but between the material being of flesh, and the flesh of material – whether that of garment or mannequin. The uncanniness is thus consequential to the styling/selling function, not prior or causal. There is more, therefore, to the whole question of animation and its relativising than just whether or not the body is a woman's or a mannequin's; for there is another material body in play, that of the clothing.

It is not only in the mythology of the QVB campaign that adornment is equated with aliveness, but also in the mechanism of mannequins more generally. Clothing personifies mannequins, from being semblances of bodies to semblances of characters, imbuing them with a sense of frozen motion rather than just rigidity, attitude rather than awkwardness. In the case of fragmented mannequins, adornment holds them together into coherence, and the detachment of the body part throws emphasis upon the item it bears. For example, in the shop of Sydney designer Alistair Trung, bracelets are displayed on a collection of disembodied and bare mannequin arms and hands; the sense of touch fragmented into a frozen yet still strangely tactile tableau.

Figure 5: 'A frozen yet strangely tactile tableau…' Disembodied mannequin arms in Alistair Trung QVB. Photographed by the author on October 15, 2007.

Bodiless, the arms reach out as though striving[20] to touch something – striving, perhaps, to be able to touch. The desirous attitude they adopt is a prescient echo of the motion of desire they are intended to induce; the onlooker wanting to buy the bracelets they bear reaches out toward them, both mentally and physically, in the same way as the arms themselves reach into the beholder's view. These arms seem somehow more bared by their detachment from their original body, as though wholeness were concealment. The bracelets here operate like Baudrillard's 'bar', a mark which constitutes as phallic the body part so marked, its visual detachment from the body 'a staged castration' which, fetish-fashion, is simultaneously an iteration and a repudiation. In this schema, accessories which create a line between one part of the body and another establish the part marked off as an 'erectile part'.[21]

Figure 6: 'Bared by their detachment…' Disembodied mannequin arms in Alistair Trung QVB. Photographed by the author on October 15, 2007.

The Trung arms are thus doubly barred, by the bracelets they display, and by their raw edge. What was a joining line in the QVB ads is here a plane which marks the body's cut; joins are both where mannequins are put together, and where they come apart. As mentioned previously, the garments and accessories in the QVB shoot often conceal the joins in the mannequin's body; here, with the truncated arm on a block, the accessory is like the touch of the guillotine. The bracelets become accessories to the crime of partiality, of continually reiterated castration, which, in simultaneously hiding and echoing the joining cut, they fetishise.

Figure 7: 'Accessories to the crime of partiality…' Bracelets frame and echo the join between a mannequin's hand and arm, in Alistair Trung QVB. Photographed by the author on October 15, 2007.

As well as bearing accessories, body parts have begun to become accessories in their own right. In a shoot from *Purple* entitled 'The New Decade Starts Now',[22] masks are mobilised after the fashion of clothing and accessories, further blurring the boundaries between the body and the clothes which wear it, or are worn by it. In one image, the model's head is concealed, masked by a lilac silk Jil Sander top, in order to emphasise the doll[23] head which, made up to resemble her, sits triumphantly atop her head-turned-neck.[24] In another, a white lace Vivienne Westwood dress is adorned with masks of various kinds.[25] The surface of the body/garment is masked doubly: concealed, but also delineated, as one might line with masking tape the edge of a surface to be painted.

When body parts can adorn as well as being adorned, clothing starts to move toward the condition of the mannequin. The relation between the body and its clothing shifts; what was once the wearer is now that which is worn. Brooklyn jewellery designer Margaux Lange, who makes her pieces out of parts of Barbie bodies, points to this when she explains that, in her work, 'Barbie has become the accessory instead of being accessorised'.[26] Body parts here become surface as well as substance, and fragmentation is rendered decorative as well as visceral.[27] The materiality of the dressed body is reiterated by the material body parts which adorn it.

Mannequin-wise, the torso is the minimal condition of the dressed body. In the display of garments (as opposed to accessories), the torso is that which cannot be done away with.[28] The body is truncated into the trunk, which stands for the whole. So the limbs of the mannequin are not only made phallic by their barredness, but by their removability – and furthermore, by their capacity to stand alone. In an image from the first issue of the recently founded *Plastique: Explosive Fashion*, a truncated mannequin torso is strapped to the model's chest, lined up with and masking her own.[29] The mannequin bust is attached with a bra, as though someone has stuffed the model's bra with an entire upper body rather than the stereotypical tissues. Where the mannequin body is ordinarily a surrogate for the living body, here it becomes an addendum thereto, something wearable rather than a model wearer. There is a resonance here with Margaux Lange's work, in which bodies are both wearer and worn; as she herself states, she delights in the irony of 'wearing the body, on the body'.[30] In the *Plastique* image, the body, or its representative, is made a styling prop; revealing that, in some sense, it always is one. Ordinarily, it is clothes which fill this place, of matter which intervenes between the living body and its image, but here it is another body; a body double.

The wearing of a second body evokes a line from Kate Bush's song version of the fairy tale 'The Red Shoes': 'you can dance the dream with your body on'.[31] Or, as one dance-based image might have it, with your body off. An ad for Repetto, a French ballet slipper manufacturer which originally made ballet shoes for performance, presents an upstanding leg doing a bodiless solo *en pointe* atop the Eiffel Tower.[32] The image mobilises the body part pertaining to its product as though that part were equally product-like; a leg to sell a shoe, and, in the case of Alistair's store, arms to sell bracelets.[33] The Repetto leg has a tension in its posture which, combining fixity and grace, codes both mannequins and the obvious ballerinas – and, perhaps, a certain phallic viability. Phallic, too, is the flat shoe, here fetishised like a heel. Held erect, as though standing atop a towering heel (for which the Tower stands in), the leg demonstrates Baudrillard's maxim that 'eroticisation always consists in the erectility of a fragment of the barred body'.[34] The 'bar' here, in Baudrillard's terms, is the bow; a marker of festivity, and of unveiling. The presence of scissors and a snipped-off end of ribbon suggests the ceremonial opening of a consecrated site, as well as reiterating the castratory implications of the disembodied limb. The image calls to mind the curse of 'The Red Shoes', that the wearer must 'dance till her legs fall off';[35] a spontaneous castration by motion.[36]

Also trading on the phallicisation of legs is Nick Knight's famous photograph, for *Dazed and Confused*, of prosthetic-legged model Aimée Mullins.[37] The wood of her legs is echoed in

that of the fans which serve as sleeves, and in the stripped cane of the crinoline, making literal the resonance between body and garment; the flesh is as material as the material which clothes it. Mullins' legs are more like models of legs, which is to say like mannequin legs,[38] than they are like a movement aid. Which is to say: the legs' visuality is emphasised at the expense of their viscerality; the prosthetic becomes aesthetic. This phrase could equally apply to mannequins. The mannequin body is a prosthetic body, relative to both the clothes displayed, and to the body of their would-be owner. In both cases the materiality of this function is ellipsed by its visuality.

The process of prosthesis implies a standing-in, the performance of a function which the body so supplemented can not perform alone. In the case of clothing, mannequins perform this function in two directions. They both give the clothing a dimension and a fullness it could not otherwise have, and give the body of its potential purchaser a purchase on the ideal it represents. A successful look at a clothed mannequin – which is to say, a look of desire – must allow itself to not only rest, but also rely, on the mannequin. Sara Schneider identifies this as a dynamic of both 'projection and identification', in which 'the customer both sees herself in the mannequin and sees the mannequin's ideal body instead of her own imperfect one.'[39] Thus the viewer's look relies on the mannequin as its prosthetic body. There is a further sense of 'look' which is thus reliant. For in being dressed, the mannequin is also styled, and the potential purchaser takes her stylistic cue, or at least is intended to do so, from the 'look' so modelled. So the mannequin is both the prosthetic made aesthetic, and the prosthesis to an aesthetic sense which finds itself incomplete without it.

Another aspect of this movement is the trend for clothing to function in lieu of mannequins. The clothing of the mannequin body becomes clothing *as* mannequin; mannequin-clothing. Borrowing from the body which the mannequin gives it, clothing becomes a body in its own right; a prosthesis of the superceded mannequin. In a late 2007 Hermès window in Sydney's CBD, tutus from the Australian Ballet were presented in various positions, most memorably hanging like graceful ghosts above a mirror, in which could be seen the reflection of their undersides, complete with leotard-gusset crotch.

Figure 8: 'Graceful ghosts above a mirror…' Underside of tutus in reflected in mirror in Hermès window, Market Street, Sydney. Photographed by the author, September 9, 2007.

Both ethereal and insistent, these tutus seem more naked than skin could ever be, more fragile than any fleshly body. With both their inside and outside visible, they suggest the inside of the mannequin body; another level of uncannily visceral intimacy. The hollows in the mannequin's cavernous interior suggest a dimensionality its outer form only hints at; its plastic skin looks, from the underside, almost impossibly fleshy.

Figure 9: 'Uncannily visceral intimacy…'
Interior view from the neck of a headless mannequin. Photographed by the author.

In the Hermès window, the slippage between body and clothing, of which the mannequin is fulcrum, reaches its logical conclusion; the tutu becomes the ballerina, and vice versa.[40] As,

in Alberto Manguel's words, 'masks continue to be faces when no-one is wearing them',[41] clothing, even when removed, is still the bounding-up of space in a mimicry of human form; it continues, like the mask, to be a body even when no-one is wearing it. However, that body may not be a living one. Marcel Zahar evokes the Surrealist *Pavillon de l'Élégance* in life-and-death terms: 'Dresses that collapse and die as soon as they leave their flesh support and which do not regain their life on mannequins of wax – take here, on these delirious sculptures… a magic and new sense.'[42] The deathly quality of the shed second skin flags the uncanny character of clothing; for clothing has a materiality all its own; one which both augments and complicates that of the body. Being both form and formlessness, it is in its own right as uncanny as the mannequins which might bear it – or which it might replace.

Figure 10: 'Ethereal and insistent…' Tutus frame a sheepskin jacket in Hermès window, Market Street, Sydney. Photographed by the author, September 9, 2007.

Borrowing from the inanimate materiality of the mannequins with which it is intimate, it is not surprising that clothing can often render the woman's body less than fully animate/d. This dynamic is as much pragmatic as philosophical; a woman wearing valuable, rare, fragile, or otherwise vulnerable accoutrements, will be hard pressed not to take on their vulnerability as her own. The presence of clothing or accessories on a woman's body can thus absent her from it, drawing that body towards the condition of the mannequin; display prioritised at the expense of movement.[43] A model is, in some contexts, most useful for display purposes when she is both still, and manipulable; which is to say, when she is most like a mannequin. To borrow from Iris Marion Young's famous appellation, her intentionality is inhibited[44] in the aim of increasing her aesthetic accessibility. That very quality of inhibition is then itself aestheticised as coyness or hauteur.

It is, after all, the stillness of the mannequin that creates its desirability, that makes it both more and less material than the body it mimics. This is made manifest in Mrs Jarley's comical but evocative adulation of her waxworks in Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*. A waxwork figure is 'always the same,' she explains, 'with a constantly unchanging air of coldness and gentility'.[45] This 'coldness', as in the arena of mannequins, is not just coexistent with 'gentility', but in fact signifies it. The inanimate chill of the mannequin – what Baudrillard refers to, in similarly climactic terms, as the 'cool(ness)' of its gaze[46] – is subsumed, in a fashion context, into the shiver of chic. The uncanny combination of bodiliness and artificiality that mannequins (re)present; their fragmentation, with its attendant replication of castratory machinations; their fixity, coldness, insensibility and inhumanity; all this places them at a remove from the human, from the bodies on which they nevertheless rely for form, impact and meaning. The uncanniness of the mannequin, then, lies not just in its ability to temporarily unsettle the distinction between animate and inanimate, but in its revelation of the precarious nature of animation and embodiment more generally. The mannequin in this respect resembles clothing, from whose inanimation we borrow, as it borrows from our lack. To borrow Baudrillard's phrase, 'everybody has become a mannequin'[47] – or rather every body; even that of clothing.

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Endnotes

[1]The mannequins and mannequin proxies which I examine here are mostly contemporary, and mostly in the locale of Sydney's CBD. However, my concern is less with the state, or representation, of mannequins at a particular point in time or space, than it is with what conceptual light they might shed, as a class, upon the complex materiality of clothing. It is more mannequin as trope of material ambiguity, than mannequin as object of historical analysis that is my focus. I thus focus on the specific form that these contemporary mannequins take as a means to a particular theoretical end, not as a historical end in itself. Similarly, those examples I have chosen to focus on were chosen because they serve my conceptual purpose, not as particularly representative of mannequins, or contemporary uses thereof, in general.

[2] Gronberg, T 1997, 'Beware Beautiful Women: The 1920s shopwindow mannequin and a physiognomy of effacement', *Art History,* vol. 20, no. 3, September 1997, p. 382.

[3] Interestingly, this need for a representative body to focus attention on the merchandise it bears has also long been a tenet of catwalk modelling. For example, in her history of the Melbourne rag trade, Lesley Sharon Rosenthal recounts that, early in her modelling career, Maggie Tabberer was thought impractically attractive; her striking features distracted viewers' eyes from the clothes she presented. Rosenthal, LS 2005, *Schmattes: Stories of Fabulous Frocks, Funky Fashion and Flinders Lane*, published by the author, South Yarra, Victoria, p. 166.

[4] Captioned only 'Berlin 1994', the image appears on p. 225 of Heiting M (ed) 2000, *Helmut Newton: Work*, ed., Taschen, Köhn.

[5] 'Store Dummies II', French Vogue 1976. Reproduced on p. 248 of *Work*, *ibid.*

[6] Both by Rootstein; reproduced in, for example, Schneider, S 1995, *Vital Mummies: Performance Design and the Store-Window Mannequin*, Yale University Press, p. 77 and p. 50 respectively.

[7] Quoted in Schneider, *ibid.* p. 51.

[8] As described on Willow website: http://www.willowlingerie.com.au/lingerie/homage_to_newton. Accessed 14/01/07.

[9] Maire Claire image in Yahoo slideshow 'Willow Lingerie Presentation 07 RAFW: http://au.lifestyle.yahoo.com/b/marie-claire/1279/?page_is_popup=1&photo=3. Accessed 10/01/07.

[10] 'Socialite: Do You Come Here Often?', photography by Charles Cannet, styling by Deborah Pach, *Cream,* Winter 1999, pp. 40-45.

[11] Freud, S 1955, 'The "Uncanny"', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strache, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, Hogarth Press, London, p. 234.

[12] 'Socialite', *op. cit*. p. 45.

[13] 'Under the Dome: Retailer Newsletter', n.a., Queen Victoria Building, Sept 07, n.p.

[14] It is interesting to note that this campaign represents the return to life of a popular trope, that of the mannequin/doll/puppet who comes to life. The conceit is usually constructed as threatening – a good example of this use being Angela Carter's short story 'The Loves of Lady Purple', in which a seductive and manipulative puppet comes to a somewhat ambiguous life: 'had the marionette all the time parodied the living, or was she, now living, to parody her own performance as marionette?' Carter, A 1987, 'The Loves of Lady Purple' in her *Fireworks*. Virago, London, p. 38. Although the QVB shoot would appear to invert the traditional negative connotation attached to the animation of the inanimate, it could be argued that the uncanny aspect of that transformation/ambiguity is part of the campaign's (purported) imaginative force.

[15] Schneider, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

[16] Hole, 'Doll Parts'. From the album *Live Through This*. Triclops Studio, 1994.

[17] I am grateful to Alistair Trung, designer and friend, for permission to photograph his shop and to use those photographs in this paper.

[18] I am grateful to Liza Bahamondes for drawing my attention to this window display, and for her generous input and insight more generally.

[19] Jentsch, qtd. in Freud, *op. cit.,* p. 226.

[20] I am grateful to Liza Bahamondes for starting me on this train of thought.

[21] Baudrillard, J 1993, *Symbolic Exchange and Death,* trans. Iain Hamilton Grant, intro. Mike Gare, Sage, London, p. 102.

[22] 'The New Decade Starts Now', Alexei Hay and Sabina Schreder, *Purple Fashion,* Summer 2007, pp. 220-229.

[23] Although it is beyond my scope here to embark on an examination of the way doll imagery functions in relation to these issues of materiality and inanimation, it is worth noting that there is quite a mass of it in the fashion press presently, and that it both reiterates and complicates the slippages I am discussing here.

[24] *ibid.,* p. 221.

[25] *ibid.,* p. 229.

[26] Margaux Lange in 'Artist's Statement', 'Margaux Lange Unique Handcrafted Jewellery' (website), 'About' section. http://www.margauxlange.com/about.html. Accessed 08/01/08.

[27] Fragmentation of mannequin bodies is, of course, not a new phenomenon; what is new here, and worthy of note, is the relation of adornment into which those fragmented body parts are placed.

[28] Of course, the torso is sometimes done away with, in other contexts, as I will later explore – as in cases of clothing being displayed only on hangers, or floating unhung. However, I mean here only to establish that the most minimal a mannequin can be while still being recognisably a mannequin, is a limbless and headless torso.

[29] 'White Widow', photography by Laurence Ellis, styling by Brylie Fowler, *Plastique: Explosive Fashion,* Issue 1, Spring 2007, p. 105.

[30] Margaux Lange, *op cit.*

[31] Kate Bush, 'The Red Shoes'. From album of same title. EMI: 1993.

[32] As seen in, for example, *Another Magazine*, Issue 13, Autumn/Winter 2007, p. 139.

[33] Some other examples of this correspondence between mannequin body parts and the item they sell include: busts to display bikini tops, torsoes for underwear, heads for wigs, and hands for gloves.

[34] Baudrillard, *op. cit.* p. 102.

[35] Kate Bush, *op. cit*.

[36] On which, celebrated Barneys New York window dresser Simon Doonan and his team recreated Ann-Margret's Rockettes finale for a tribute window by motorising 'a million high-kicking Barbie dolls'. The frenzy of the chorus line overwhelmed the Barbie bodies; the 'torsos kept separating from their legs, which then ghoulishly kicked away on their own'. Spontaneous castration by motion, indeed! Doonan, S 1998, *Confessions of a Window Dresser: Tales from a Life in Fashion,* Viking Studio, New York, p. 170.

[37] The image was published in *The Guardian* on August 29th 1998, but is best known for its later publication as part of the 'Fashion-able' shoot in the edition of *Dazed and Confused* guest edited by Alexander McQueen in September 1998. It is reproduced on Nick Knight's interactive photography website at: http://www.showstudio.com/projects/incamera_nk/gallery/lg/accessible_1.jpg.

[38] In fact, there seems to be some suggestion that the legs Mullins wears in the photo are not her actual prostheses at all, but in fact mannequin legs proper. Petra Kuppers points to this when, in her reading of the photo, she describes the legs as 'artificial 'mannequin' lower legs', and observes that the legs are 'not referenced as 'model's own' in the picture blurb'. Kuppers, P 2000, 'Addenda? Contemporary Cyborgs and the Mediation of Embodiment', *Body, Space and Technology*, vol 1, no. 1. Accessed online at *http://people.brunel.ac.uk/bst/vol0101/petrakuppers.html*. Accessed 13/01/07. However, given that one of the most commonly repeated facts about Mullins is her possession of ten pairs of prosthetic legs, it seems likely that these legs are one of those pairs – likely those described in a June 2007 *Sports Illustrated* article as 'the intricately carved ashwood museum pieces she once modeled in a fashion show for designer Alexander McQueen'. Macmillan, K 2007, 'Wonder Woman: Prosthetic Legs Won't Slow Aimée Mullins Down', *Sports Illustrated* Online http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2007/sioncampus/06/20/aimee.mullins/index.html. Accessed 14/01/07.

[39] Schneider, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[40] An interesting synchronicity, on the interchangeability of ballerinas and tutus: one of the dolls designed by Elsa Schiaparelli in her late-career foray into the doll market was a ballerina named Tu-Tu. In Peers, J 2004, *The Fashion Doll: From Bébé Jumeau to Barbie*, Berg, Oxford, p. 70.

[41] Manguel, A 2006, *A Room Full of Toys: The Magical Characters of Childhood*, Thames and Hudson, London, p. 202.

[42] Zahar, qtd. in Wood, G 2007, *The Surreal Body: Fetish and Fashion*, exh. cat. for exhibition 'Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design' (2007), Victoria and Albert Press, London, p. 24. The 'delirious sculptures' to which he is referring are Robert Couturier's plaster mannequins for the *Pavillon*.

[43] A recent runway show for Brioni in Milan exemplified this trend, in posing catwalk models on individual and spot-lit circles, which then turned, jewel-box-ballerina-style, to display the designs from all angles. (The same technique was used in the show for Alexander McQueen's Spring/Summer 1998 collection, with models rotating while being sprayed with paint; perhaps equally representative of model passivity but with a lesser emphasis on creating an impression of detachment and delicacy). I

heard of the Brioni parade anecdotally, and have as yet been unable to find any commentary on, or images of it. I am grateful to Liza Bahamondes for making me aware of its existence.

[44] In her seminal 1977 essay 'Throwing Like A Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Bodily Comportment, Motility and Spatiality', Iris Marion Young identifies 'inhibited intentionality' as one of the three modalities of feminine movement, the other two being 'ambiguous transcendence' and 'discontinuous unity'. In her *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

[45] Dickens, C n.d. (c. 1940s), *The Old Curiosity Shop,* Queensway Press, London, p. 179.

[46] Baudrillard, *op. cit,* p. 109.

[47] *ibid.* p. 99, n.4.