

DR ISABELLE MARINA HELD

isabellemarinaheld@gmail.com
she/her/hers

EDUCATION

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM / ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

London, UK. 2016 – 2020

PhD History of Design

Dissertation: "Designing the Bombshell: Military-Industrial R&D and the Shaping of Women's Bodies in the United States, 1939-1976"

Dissertation committee: Dr Sarah Teasley (History of Design, Royal College of Art), Prof. Jane Pavitt (Kingston University), Prof. Alison Clarke (University of Applied Arts, Vienna), Dr Joanne Entwistle (King's College, London).

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM / ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

London, UK. 2010 – 2012

MA History of Design

Thesis: "Bullet Bras and Bombshells: The Shaping of a Conical Design for Bras and Breasts in the United States 1930s–1960s"

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

Epsom, UK. 2007 – 2010

BA Fashion Promotion and Imaging; First Class Distinction

Thesis: "Time Warp Wives vs. Time Warp Women: Postfeminism, Hyperreality and Consumption in a Vintage Lifestyle"

GRANTS AND AWARDS

BARD GRADUATE CENTER VISTING FELLOWSHIP

Bard Graduate Center, New York, NY, US. September 2022 – June 2023

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM POSTDOC

Washington, D.C. & New York, NY, US. October 2022 - July 2023 (\$39,800)

SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE

PRICE-DOAN 80/20 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

Philadelphia, PA, US. September 2020 - September 2022 (\$95,000)

TECHNE WELLCOME COLLECTION KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CHAMPION

London, UK. April 2020 - September 2020 (Declined)

TECHNE UK ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL (AHRC)

Doctoral Training Partnership (Fully funded PhD)

London, UK. 2016 - 2020 (£86,875)

UK AHRC INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT SCHEME

Smithsonian National Museum of American History Fellowship

Washington, D.C., US. October 2017 - April 2018 (£8,489)

HENRY BELIN DU PONT DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

Hagley Museum & Library, Wilmington, DE, US. September 2019 - December 2019 (\$6,500)

SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE SHORT-TERM FELLOWSHIP

Philadelphia, PA, US. October 2018 - December 2018 (\$6,000)

HENRY BELIN DU PONT SHORT-TERM FELLOWSHIP

Hagley Museum & Library, Wilmington, DE, US. September 2018 (\$2,100)

BARD GRADUATE CENTER AND VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM / ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART EXCHANGE FELLOW

Bard Graduate Center, New York, NY, US. August 2011 – December 2011

TEACHING

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

Visiting Lecturer in History of Design

London, UK. 2020

- Taught postgraduates "Key Concepts," a unit on critical theory and research methods designed to consider the key social, political, cultural, and

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economic issues that inform and critique the history of design.

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

Associate Lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies at London College of Fashion

London, UK. 2013 – 2017

- Taught UG and PG seminars, led tutorials, and conducted student assessment for the following courses: Introduction to Cultural Historical Studies, Fashion and Consumer Culture, Visual Culture, Moving Images, The Body in Performance, and Research Methods.
- Designed and delivered lectures on archival research as practice.
- Conceptualized and facilitated workshops on object analysis and key critical concepts utilizing the Victoria and Albert Museum's textiles archives and Asian department collections.
- Supervised theses for third year BA students in the School of Media and Communication.

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

Sessional Lecturer

Epsom, UK. 2012 – 2017

- Thesis supervision for Contextual Studies department for third year UG students.
- Sessional lecturer and assessor for Fashion Promotion and Imaging BA.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

ATOMIC BOMBSHELLS: HOW PLASTICS SHAPED POSTWAR BODIES
Manuscript solicited by Duke University Press (In Progress).

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND PLASTICS

"Curation," a chapter co-authored with Susan Lambert (Victoria and Albert Museum) as well as Rupert Cole and Helen Peavitt (Science Museum London) (London: Routledge, 2023).

DESIGN ISSUES, Vol. 36, No. 2, (Spring 2020), Published by The MIT Press

Invited Review: Design History Beyond the Canon ed. by Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler, Victoria Rose Pass, Christopher S. Wilson, London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2019, pp. 97 - 99.

CONFERENCE PAPERS, WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS, AND INVITED TALKS

"Redesigning Realness: A Queer History of 'Falsies'"
COSTUME SOCIETY OF AMERICA, 2022 ANNUAL MEETING
Minneapolis, MN. May 28, 2022

"Nylon and 'The Test Tube Girl': Reimagining Plastic Futures" (invited talk)
SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE, Philadelphia, PA, US. May 5, 2022

"Complex Conversations in Fashion History: Challenging Objects and Histories within Fashion Collections" (invited panelist)
COSTUME SOCIETY OF AMERICA
Conversations on Dress Webinar Series. April 19, 2022

"Virtual-Behind-The Scenes: Collection Highlights from The Science History Institute" (invited talk on Redefining Nude exhibition)
MUSEUM COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA
Philadelphia, PA. February 24, 2022

"Touching: Comment" (invited commentator)
REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE: A CONFERENCE ON COMMERCIAL INTIMACY AND PERSONALIZATION (HAGLEY 2021 FALL CONFERENCE)
Wilmington, DE. November 5, 2021

"The Queer Afterlives of Postwar Plastics" presented in "Technology, Aesthetics and the Body," chaired by Alka Menon (Yale University) and Alok Vaid-Menon (Rutgers University).
SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES OF SCIENCE (4S) 2021 ANNUAL

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MEETING. Toronto, Canada. October 8, 2021

“Silastic Demonstration Mammary Sizer Implant”

DIGITIZING MATERIALITY: ON THE FABRIC OF HUMAN BODIES
WORKSHOP

SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE, Philadelphia, PA, US. September 16, 2021

“Postwar Plastics and the Fashioned Body” (invited talk)

WINTERTHUR CONSERVATION CLASS: Applications of Science in Textile
Manufacture, Degradation, Preservation, and Treatment
University of Delaware, Newark, DE, US. April 8, 2021

“Designing the Bombshell: Military-Industrial Materials R&D and the Shaping of
Women’s Bodies in the US, 1939–1976”

SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE, Philadelphia, PA, US. November 12, 2020

“Nylon and the Test Tube Lady, 1939”

HAGLEY CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY AND
SOCIETY. Wilmington, DE, US. October 9, 2019

“Postwar Plastics and the Shaping of Women’s Bodies” (invited talk)

MATERIALS, SEX, HERITAGE: A Critical Heritage Symposium
Critical Heritage Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.
September 16, 2019

“Fluid Othering: Troubling American Myths of Silicone Shots in Postwar Japan”

FASHIONING INCLUSIVITY 2019 SYMPOSIUM
London College of Fashion, UK. June 13, 2019

“Outwards, Upwards, and Inwards: Plastic Foam’s Expansion from Military-
Industrial Material to Female Flesh in the Postwar US, 1939 – 1976”

PLASTICS HERITAGE CONGRESS: History, Limits and Possibilities
Lisbon, Portugal. May 29 - 31, 2019

“How Plastics Shaped the Bombshell: Military-Industrial Materials R&D and
Women’s Bodies in the United States, 1939 - 1976”

SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE, Philadelphia, PA, US. November 6, 2018

“The Mechanical Bride, Miss Chemistry and the Bombshell: Women’s Bodies
and the Domestication of Plastics”

HAGLEY CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY, AND
SOCIETY. Wilmington, DE, US. September 20, 2018

“The Bombshell Assembly Line: Plastics R&D and Women’s Bodies”

SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY
Washington, D.C., US. December 19, 2017

“Atomic Bombshells and Silicone Shots: Women’s Bodies, the Military-Industrial
Complex and Plastics in the US, 1939 – 1969”

CONFLICTED BODIES: Feminist and Queer Responses to Militarism and
Violence. Goldsmiths, University of London, UK. September 30, 2017

“Fleshing Out Foam: Polyurethane Foam’s Expansion into the Female Body”

INTIMATERIAL. Royal College of Art, London, UK. June 15, 2017

“Breaking Codes: Wartime Cryptology, Early Computing and Gender Roles at
Bletchley Park, UK”

MEMORY AND PERCEPTION, TECHNE UK AHRC Annual Conference 2016
London, UK. November 3, 2016

“Bullet Bras and Bombshells: The Rise and Fall of Conical Bra Design in America
1927 -1964”

COVERING & EXPOSING: Manipulation and Fragmentation of the Body
Conference. University for the Creative Arts, Epsom, UK. June 23, 2012

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ACADEMIC EVENT ORGANISATION

“Digitizing Materiality of Scientific Collections”
HISTORY OF SCIENCE SOCIETY 2021 ANNUAL MEETING
New Orleans, LA. November 20, 2021

Chaired and organized a panel with researchers, curators, and librarians from the Mütter Museum, Wellcome Collection, University College London Special Collections, and Science History Institute.

“Digitizing Materiality: On the Fabric of Human Bodies”
SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE, Philadelphia, PA, US. September 16, 2021
Organized a collaborative online workshop with University College London Special Collections and the Science History Institute.

“The Materialised Body, Digitisation, and Surrogacy”
SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE, Philadelphia, PA, US. September 23, 2021
Organized and hosted an online workshop with curators and researchers from the Wellcome Collection (London).

INTIMATERIAL SYMPOSIUM
Royal College of Art, London, UK. June 15 - 16, 2017
Created and organized a transdisciplinary event that exposed contemporary possibilities and dilemmas of material intimacy. Secured external and university funding.

THE TEACHES OF PEACHES
Royal College of Art, London, UK. February 6, 2017
Organized, convened, and introduced a conversation with Peaches, a musician and performance artist.

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY
FELLOW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY
London, UK. 2016

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON
London, UK. 2015-2016
PGCert Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication; Merit.

FURTHER TRAINING

ORAL HISTORY TRAINING INSTITUTE
Philadelphia, PA, US. May 10 - 13, 2021
Oral History Training Program run by the Science History Institute's Center for Oral History. The course covered practical and theoretical guidance on the interview process, such as oral history methodology, in-person and remote interviewing techniques, and recording equipment.

BIRKBECK INSTITUTE FOR THE HUMANITIES
London, UK. June 26 - July 7, 2017
Critical Theory Summer School
Units included: “What is a Symbol?” by Catherine Malabou, “Nature Reloaded” by Esther Leslie, “Totality or Assemblage?” by Slavoj Žižek, and “Black Political Culture in Britain 1968 to the Present” by Paul Gilroy.

CURATION

REDEFINING NUDE
Exhibition concept, research, acquisition, curation, programming, and cataloging
Science History Institute, Philadelphia, PA, US. February 2022 - June 2022

REDEFINING NUDE
Online Exhibition with Google Arts & Culture
Science History Institute, Philadelphia, PA, US. Launching Summer 2022

NYLON: FROM LABS TO LEGS
Exhibition concept, research, and curation
Science History Institute, Philadelphia, PA, US. October 2021 - February 2022

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NYLON: FROM LABS TO LEGS

Online Exhibition with Google Arts & Culture
Science History Institute, Philadelphia, PA. October 2021
<https://tinyurl.com/nylongoogle>

Selected as “one of the coolest virtual exhibitions” by the American Institute of Physics.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, Curatorial Work Placement

London, UK. 2008 – 2009

Internship with the Contemporary Department.

Researched the “Tuned In Soul’d Out” Friday Late event celebrating Notting Hill Carnival and assisted on projects including the de-install and cataloging of “Hats: An Anthology by Stephen Jones.”

HISTORY OF DESIGN ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART DEGREE SHOW, curation

Royal College of Art, London, UK. June 20 - July 1, 2012

THE OFF MODERN #6, video installation

Corsica Studios, London, UK. April 30, 2009

PICTOVISUAL EXHIBITION, curation and video installation

Ada Street Gallery, London, UK. January 21 - 24, 2009

SERVICE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

JOURNAL OF FASHION, STYLE, AND POPULAR CULTURE

Special Issue: Historically Marginalized Identities, Social Justice, Fashion and Style

Guest Reviewer, Edited by Kelly L. Reddy-Best, Dyese L. Matthews.
(Forthcoming, 2022).

TRANSGENDER, NON-BINARY AND GENDER NONCONFORMING ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Advisory Board Member

Center for Research in Feminist, Queer, and Transgender Studies

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, US. September 2021 - Ongoing

MUSEUM COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Public Programs Committee Member

Philadelphia, PA, US. October 2021 - Ongoing

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

THE PULSE, WHYY, NPR (NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO)

Featured Guest: “The Miracle and Menace of Plastic”

Philadelphia, PA, US. Air date: January 15, 2021

HAGLEY HANG-OUTS

Featured Guest: “Designing the Bombshell: Military-Industrial Materials and the Shaping of Women’s Bodies in the United States”

Wilmington, DE, US. Air date: August 25, 2020

BARON, BARONESS, UNDER THE INFLUENCE, THE TOWNER

Contributor

London, UK. 2014 – 2016

Regular contributor to these art and photography publications as a design historian and writer. Selection of publications:

“Forniphilia (Human Furniture)”

BARONESS, Vol 1., 2016, pp. 80 - 89.

“Sex Dream Palaces: Pornographic Spectatorship from Public to Private”

UNDER THE INFLUENCE, Issue 16, Spring/Summer 2016, pp. 103-106.

“The Madonna Inn: Behold the Kitsch Inferno”

THE TOWNER, August 8, 2016

“Breaking Codes: Wartime Cryptology, Early Computing and Gender Roles at Bletchley Park, UK”

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THE TOWNER, September 15, 2016

“A Walk Down Video Booth Lane: A History of Pornographic Viewing Booths”
BARON, Vol. 3., 2014, pp. 354 - 363.

MEDIA

GOSEE CREATIVE NEWS SERVICES

UK Content Editor and Head of English Translation
Cologne, Germany. 2006 – 2015

Managed and edited English language edition of the GoSee Creative News Services weekly digital newsletter. Contributed articles weekly on arts-related content, such as exhibition and collection reviews, interviews with designers and artists. Directed weekly German to English translation of the website.

BOOKLET MAGAZINE

London Contributor and Head of Translation
Cologne, Germany. 2006 – 2010

Directed and managed entire German to English translation of the biannual photography and fashion publication and worked as a regular contributor.

IVANA BOBIC, FILM DIRECTOR

Camera Assistant
London, UK. 2009 – 2011

Camera operator and art department assistant on film shoots including Stella McCartney commissioned work and short film “Frankie Teardrop.”

SKILLS

LANGUAGES:

English (fluent), German (fluent), French (intermediate level).

SOFTWARE:

InDesign, Final Cut Pro, Photoshop, Illustrator.

Cataloguing software: Collections Management System, Mimsy XG, PastPerfect.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

DESIGN HISTORY SOCIETY

COSTUME SOCIETY OF AMERICA

SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL STUDIES OF SCIENCE

HISTORY OF SCIENCE SOCIETY

SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY

MUSEUM COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA