

DR ISABELLE MARINA HELD

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she/her/hers

EDUCATION

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM / ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART
London, UK. 2016 – 2020
PhD History of Design

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM / ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART
London, UK. 2010 – 2012
MA History of Design

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS
Epsom, UK. 2007 – 2010
BA Fashion Promotion and Imaging; First Class Distinction

GRANTS AND AWARDS

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

BARD GRADUATE CENTER VISITING FELLOWSHIP
Bard Graduate Center, New York, NY, US. September 2022 – June 2023

SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE
PRICE-DOAN 80/20 POSTDOCTORAL MUSEUM 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 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.

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- 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 (Under Review).

"NYLON, INTIMACY, AND THE COMMERCIAL POWER OF TOUCH" in
Brenton J. Malin, Richard Popp, Wendy Woloson (eds) *Commercial Intimacy: Affinity and the Marketplace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2024) (In Progress).

"A QUEER HISTORY OF SILICONES"

History and Technology Special Issue: *Technologies of New Materialism* (In Progress).

"REDESIGNING REALNESS: A TRANS HISTORY OF 'FALSIES'"

Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty Special Issue: *Transgender Embodiment in Fashion and Beauty* (Submitted).

"REDEFINING NUDE: UNRAVELLING NYLON'S UNMARKED NORMS"

Journal of Fashion, Style, & Popular Culture Special Issue: *Historically Marginalized Identities, Social Justice, Fashion and Style* (Submitted).

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). (Submitted).

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Invited Review: Erica Cirino, *Thicker Than Water: The Quest for Solutions to the Plastics Crisis*, Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2021. (In Progress).

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

"Bombshells, Bullet Bras, Bikinis: Military-Industrial Synthetics and The Body" (invited keynote)

ICOM-CC TEXTILES AND MODERN MATERIALS AND CONTEMPORARY ART WORKING GROUP CONFERENCE: "Semi-synthetic and Synthetic Textile Materials in Fashion, Design and Art," Online February 21, 2023.

"Redefining Nude: Exhibition Talk" (invited talk)

FASHION AND JUSTICE SPEAKER SERIES, TEXTILES AND CLOTHING MUSEUM at Iowa State University. January 10, 2023.

"Soft Power: Plastic Foams, Design, and Postwar Bodies" (invited seminar)

HAGLEY CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY. Wilmington, DE, US. November 16, 2022

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CONFERENCE PAPERS, WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS, AND INVITED TALKS

“Nylon: Redefining Nude” (invited talk)
BARD GRADUATE CENTER
New York, NY, US. October 11, 2022

“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
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

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“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

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.

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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. June 2022

<https://tinyurl.com/Redefining-Nude>

NYLON: FROM LABS TO LEGS

Exhibition concept, research, and curation

Science History Institute, Philadelphia, PA, US. October 2021 - February 2022

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 - June 2022

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MUSEUM COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA
Public Programs Committee Member
Philadelphia, PA, US. October 2021 - October 2022

MEDIA

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:

"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"
THE TOWNER, September 15, 2016

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