



School:Bath School of Design

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Project Title: Dressing For Evacuation

UOA: 32

300-Word Statement

Dressing for Evacuation is a series of life size photographic portraits, shown as part of the *Tentworks* exhibition at the *Feverish World Symposium*, 2018 in Vermont, USA, and the *Fashion and Textiles FutureScan 4 Conference* at the University of Bolton, UK in 2019. The project is the first in Curtis's ongoing series of participatory works, *Imagining Neutopia*, fabricating and documenting fictional events to further Climate Change discourse. Exploring notions of identity, value, and choice, *Dressing for Evacuation* asks:

1. Could fictional participatory scenarios prompt a re examination of our preparedness for a national emergency?
2. Can this project offer valuable insights into our instinctive responses to getting dressed and selecting possessions in a survival situation?

Impulses driving how we dress each day, are generally informed by short term notions of protection and identification but not for indefinite survival.

Dystopian fiction and film often portray characters in clothing that require high tech production, but if humanity survived a global cataclysmic event, a rapid return to factory produced performance fabrics or even simple hand woven, naturally dyed or leather-worked garments is unlikely. When considering post apocalyptic futures, it is more probable that survivors would dress in the clothes 'they stood up in', or garments reworked from existing clothes and fabrics.

Staging an alert to an imminent large-scale evacuation the project asked participants to dress and take limited possessions as if into an unknown future. Their responses, informed by age, gender and experience, were recorded in a photoshoot and accompanying survey

Achieving a further post pandemic relevance, *Dressing for Evacuation* offers insights into our potential responses to a major disaster, shedding light on what clothes and objects we might deem essential, and suggesting an imminent re evaluation of our relationship to the 'clothes on our back' and dressing for survival.