

DIALOGICAL BODIES
CONFERENCE

PROCEEDINGS

A CONFERENCE ON
ARTISTIC RESEARCH
IN FASHION DESIGN

EVERYTHING AND
EVERYBODY AS
MATERIAL

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CONJURING MORPHIC IDENTITIES THROUGH DYNAMIC CUTTING

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Video still #418. Colour-Morph Textile. Donna Sgro textile design and make. Kristina Chan choreographer and performer. Clare Britton art direction. Stephen Reinhardt photography. Joan Banoit music.

The *Colour-Morph Textile* is an experimental embodied textile created through the application of my technique of *Dynamic Cutting* in the context of performance. *Dynamic Cutting* involves the handling, cutting and sewing of cloth in a way that maximises material affordances through the integration of experimental shaping. The body and material morph together when the textile is worn, coalescing to express morphic identities through the transformative nature of the textile. One is unsure where the body begins or ends in collaboration with the work. My current research focuses on the agency of materials in the pattern-cutting process. In particular, *Dynamic Cutting* challenges the static nature of working with traditional block pattern shapes on the body and systemic notions of front and back garment views. My research aims to increase material and spatial creativity when cutting garments to discover what alternative bodily expressions and identities can be conjured or formed.

When expanding the application of *Dynamic Cutting* in the context of performance, the garment interior becomes a fluid design variable, facilitating a new experience of movement and interaction that can enable unexplored bodily expressions and identities to emerge through interacting with the textile itself. The practice of *Dynamic Cutting* enables designing to evolve through the making of the textile form itself. When developing these works through *Dynamic Cutting*, my hand, body, and eye respond to the myriad encounters with the many individual textile pieces making up the work, relying on judgment using visual and haptic qualities. Combined with analyses of the performing body through collaboration with dance and choreography, these encounters with materials evolve the work piece by piece to produce an experimental outcome for wearing that is inherently transformable. In the *Colour-Morph Textile*, I embed opportunities for movement between the interior and exterior through the addition of openings, which enables the textile to be worn in many different ways. Cutting to enhance colour juxtapositions enhances the visual vibration of the textile; a personal joy that extends the morphic nature of the resulting work. This work is one of 5 experimental works through which I have explored cutting in collaboration with performance using different material types and properties. *Dynamic Cutting* was originally developed through my PhD research (RMIT, 2018). The method has since expanded through collaboration with choreographer and dancer, Kristina Chan (Sydney) and artist Clare Britton, for the development of Chan's choreographic work *Brightness*. In 2019, we participated in choreographic research development at **Critical Path Responsive Research Residency** (Sydney), where I developed new textile works in collaboration with Chan's movement choreography and Britton's art direction. The upcoming major work *Brightness*, choreographed by Chan, features two further experimental textile works in development and will be shown for **Sydney Dance Company's IN-Dance 2024**. *Colour-Morph Textile* was a finalist in the *Wangaratta Contemporary Textile Awards* (VIC) 2023. *Colour-Morph Textile* awaits activation through imaginative embodiment with participants seeking to understand the way a textile can conjure new identities and expressions when embodied.



Video still #21. *Colour-Morph Textile*. Donna Sgro textile design and make. Kristina Chan choreographer and performer. Clare Britton art direction. Stephen Reinhardt photography. Joan Banoit music.