cloTHING(s) as conversation
provoking discussions about persistent habits of making, distribution and exchange connected to the garments we wear.
Funder(s).
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada,
GRAND SHREXP

Acknowledgements.
collaborator’s institutions: London College of Fashion, Concordia University, UBC
affiliations: Brooklyn Fashion + Design Accelerator
advisory board: Louise St Pierre, Katherine Soucie, Philip Robbins
Context.
What is it about the cloTHING(s) we wear and their link to the way we connect?

Can we reframe the understanding of clothing from a unidirectional entity (the fashion statement) to one of multidirectional interchanges and dialogue?
The project.

Our goal is to affect the manner that clothing is consumed - to use conversation as a medium to explore and seed new modes of production, use and expression for the clothing we wear.

We are developing prototypes for new clothing propositions, novel mechanisms for clothing construction, and systems for shared expression on the body.
The design process.

Methodologies from creative research are being used in conjunction with insight from psycholinguistics, sociology and human computer interaction.

Artifacts and didactic from practice-led inquiry will be applied to empathy studies, an interactive exhibition and co-creative events. They will serve in dissemination and provide critical feedback loops.
We are connected to the Brooklyn Fashion and Design Accelerator's Brain Trust which will assure that research findings and initiatives produced by cloTHING(s) as conversation will extend outward to other fashion research and industry based initiatives. Designed to foster and support fashion design innovation, this newly formed design incubator, is situated in and tightly connected to one of the key hubs of the global fashion industry – New York City.
There are links between mechanisms of conversation and the way we use clothing. Clothing and the act of wearing, the statement, and being in public are inherently linked to the social. The propensity to imitate our contemporaries' vestiture can be viewed as a visual and embodied desire for mutual understanding. Using conversation as a focal point provides a unique approach to design research that is relevant to sustainability in the garment trade, social innovation and developments in wearable technology.
Concurrent with traditional clothing systems are applications and explorations introduced to textiles and fashion. 3D printing, additive manufacturing, open-source wearable hardware and social media afford new platforms for shared local solutions and cultural expression. Developments in these areas have the potential to significantly change our concept of, and interaction with, clothing. To date they are most often applied within the current consumption paradigm. CloTHING(s) as conversation looks to reframe this assumption.
Skill Training and Design Education

The project engages students from the undergraduate and graduate levels of design at Emily Carr University. They are trained in a variety of skills in two dimensional and three dimensional design practices including 3D printing and Computer Aided Design technologies, Industrial Design techniques, and Communication and Interaction Design. The students actively participate and help guide the project.
Job Creation

Canada’s creative economy has the capacity to integrate and act upon social media driven material production and processes. This project is situated within this context of innovation. By addressing contemporary clothing consumption patterns in conjunction with novel applications for social media and shared open source technology for local solutions research assistants will be trained in a range of topics key to art and design disciplines.
As part of our research, uni + form explored possible narratives in using the plus shaped garments. We asked what is the insight to be found in wearing what we have redesigned.