

**FASHION & FUNCTION:  
CHALLENGING GENDER THROUGH FOOTWEAR DESIGN**

by

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

### **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT (MRP)**

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**Master of Arts, 2014  
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**ABSTRACT**

This major research project challenges the concept of functionality as a masculine prerogative and its naturalized association to men's fashion, within a North American context. I used Queer theory and concepts of gender performativity as a theoretical framework to support the exploration of the relationship between masculinity and function, and femininity and fashion. The research employs practice-led methodologies that bridge the gap between theory and practice by reflecting the process of theorizing fashion and seeing the result of its production in the real world. The project produced eight original footwear designs, four of which were fabricated using leather, rubber and plastics. I developed the footwear with the goal of creating accessibility and understandability to afford "wearability". The overarching purpose of this study was to develop footwear that cannot be classified according to normative gender identity formulations, and that makes consumers reflect on the significance of gender in fashion.

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this project to my husband, Eric Marcotte. Thank you for your love and support.

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## Introduction

This major research project (MRP) consists of original footwear designs that challenge the concept of functionality as a masculine prerogative and its naturalized association with men's fashion. The creative component of this MRP includes eight original designs and four final pairs of footwear that were produced using various materials such as leather, rubber and plastics. One of the goals of this project was to create accessible and understandable pieces of footwear intended for use in a contemporary North American context. The final designs not only reflect critical themes explored in this MRP (i.e. sexuality, history and artifice) but act as initial prototypes that will serve a larger commercial purpose (of production and distribution) in my professional practice as a fashion designer. For this reason, critically reflective practice (Aziz) forms part of the practice-led methodologies (Makaela; Collins) that were engaged. Furthermore, the items are designed with an effort to minimize costs and uses footwear forms and silhouettes currently recognizable by the public at large as a form of departure; to grant the footwear "wearability". The shoes are meant to be available in various sizes to both male and female populations in both wide and narrow versions. This type of offering addresses the very real and practical concern of dressing feet of various shapes and sizes and provides both genders with footwear of the same style. In this way, my designs mean to challenge both the wearer and observer to break with various hetero-normative gender concepts like equating femininity with small "delicate feet", or large feet with "active" masculinity. This project poses a parallel between concepts of masculinity and function with fashion and femininity as its basis for exploration.

The project contributes new research to the study of masculinity in fashion, an area that has been largely ignored in the past but that recently has attracted scholars' interest

(Edwards, *Fashion* 42). Ideas of what is fashionable and functional have varied over time and are by no means static or universal, but temporal and contextual. The scope of this project is contained in a contemporary North American context dealing with concepts of both hegemonic hetero-normative masculinity and femininity, because the dichotomy that exists between these characteristics make it difficult to evaluate one without the other (*The Codes*). Through this study, I meant to find ways to “loosen” or “break down” these gender binaries.

Current cultural norms demand that men to be active, strong, and dominating while women are seen as passive, beautiful, and soft (Calogero and Tylka, Part 3, 452). Such gendered norms connect masculinity to function and femininity to fashion. Strict gender codes are created through repeated associations, such as those that equate “masculinity with mental qualities such as character, confidence/assertiveness in addition to physicality” (Calogero and Tylka, Part 2, 605) or demand men to “assert social power and dominance” (Calogero and Tylka, Part 1, 3). As men and women conform to and act out these norms, they enable the construction of gender through a series of constant negotiations between the masculine and the feminine.

In this MRP, I investigate how concepts of masculinity are reflected in footwear design in contemporary North America. Research on the history of footwear in Western culture helped me to understand how functionality has been long been associated with masculinity in footwear design.

## CHAPTER 1

### Background: Footwear, Fashion, Function, Gender

#### 1.1 Function vs. Fashion

This MRP considers functionality and fashion as a continuous spectrum, not mutually exclusive from each other. Function is defined as design elements or physical characteristics found in footwear that are deemed practical to the wearer. Function in footwear is seen as an aid or essential to the performance of a task that requires movement and protection of the feet or required to access a physical space such as a farm or city streets. In other words, function can be seen as utility. On the other side of the spectrum, fashion is defined as elements that are superfluous, decorative in nature, or not deemed essential for the use of the footwear in question. The elements that fall under fashion may include colours, materials and shapes that speak to the current trends that are deemed appropriate for the time and space footwear is worn in. It is at this point that the idea of the spectrum is useful and helpful in drawing a parallel with masculinity and femininity alongside functionality and fashion. The idea of equating function to masculinity and femininity to fashion is well discussed in *Fashion in Focus* by Tim Edwards. He clearly states that men's fashion has been traditionally "seen primarily in terms of utility" (42). Edwards elaborates this point and explains the traditional idea of men's fashion as "practical rather than decorative" in that "successful masculinity" is gauged by a man's ability to perform in the public arena of "work, politics, (and) sports" (46). Furthermore, Edwards is very explicit when he states that:

The equation of fashion with the feminine, with the not masculine, with the effeminate, as well as with the homosexual, remains a chain of socially constructed and perpetuated links that are decidedly difficult to overcome. (43)

The concept of using a spectrum then, is essential in order to investigate in a more fluid and flexible way. As previously mentioned, ideas of masculinity and femininity, functionality and fashion are not static. This major research project investigates how footwear design might engage with continuous shifting ideas of masculinity.

## **1.2 Footwear Styles**

The history of footwear is vast. Nevertheless, observations of several shoe styles worn will be made in an effort to fully understand and describe the concepts of fashion, function and masculinity as they pertain to this project. The key pieces of footwear that are discussed are: the high heel, the boot, the sandal, and the sports shoe. These styles were chosen due to their continuous popularity throughout history and their ubiquitous presence in today's contemporary footwear market. This research is also an essential part of the design process and has certainly informed choices that were made throughout the process of this project. It is intended that the audience will view the dressing of feet with endless possibilities rather than within the rules and restrictions currently constructed by cultural norms.

### **1.2.1 The High Heel**

The high heel is arguably one of the most popular types of footwear among women in North America today and has strong associations to femininity. As stated by several historians such as Valerie Steele (2012) and Elizabeth Semmelhack (2008), history shows the association between femininity and the high heel wasn't always the case. During the seventeenth century in the high courts of Europe, most notably France, high heels were first

adopted by men and eventually worn by women in an effort to convey status and wealth (Semmelhack, *Heights*; Steele and Hill, *Shoe Obsession*). It is suspected that heels first made it into Europe due to the various economical and cultural exchanges with the Near East (Riello and McNeil eds, *Shoes*; Semmelhack, *Heights*). As it can be observed in several historic portraits, several important European men of the seventeenth century have worn high heels. King Louis XIV is most famous for his brightly coloured red heels. Such heels were only allowed to be on the feet of those in his court. What is most revealing is when Semmelhack argues: "...gender distinctions became increasingly evident. Men's heels were sturdy or blocky, while women's heels were more tapered and delicate in design, reflecting the cultural preference for a dainty female foot" (Riello and McNeil eds, *Shoes* 225). Men abandoned the style in the 1730's and the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a time when men gradually dropped decorative elements and the three-piece-suit began to take shape; this period is now known as the "great masculine renunciation" (Semmelhack, *Heights* 25). But when heels made their resurgence in men's wardrobes during the 1960's Peacock era it is evident that gender divisions were still in place because they "reinforced rather than challenged conventional conceptions of gender and sexuality" (Riello and McNeil eds, *Shoes* 327; Semmelhack, *Heights* 55). Figures 1, 2 and 3 are examples of the footwear worn by some men during this time. The Peacock era provided men with items of dress that included jewellery, high heels and colourful fabrics (Semmelhack, *Heights* 55). This era was considered a form of "liberation" in men's fashion. Nevertheless men who wore these high heels were unmistakably masculine and could hardly be mistaken for a woman, for the heels and platforms were massive and heavy and were a clear demonstration of a "don't mess with me" attitude and power (Semmelhack *Heights*). Feminine heels are designed to be the opposite of

that: thin, delicate and fanciful. The concept of feminizing shoes through the application of heels can be observed in sneakers, boots, sandals, oxfords, moccasins and almost every other type of conceivable footwear since the existence of the heel came about in Western culture. This *heeling* treatment is by no means a simple aesthetic proposition, but demonstrates the clear cultural belief of keeping genders in their “proper” space. Some of the most notable heels in men’s footwear that have persisted are those on cowboy boots; these are addressed in the following section.

Several contemporary designers, like J.W. Anderson, have occasionally introduced high heels in their collections. The use of high heels can be observed in his Fall/Winter 2014 men’s collection, presented during London Fashion Week. Even though it is clear that Anderson’s inspiration is drawn from the Peacock era, his footwear designs have an air of novelty and possess high fashion value. However, it can hardly be said that Anderson’s shoes, or the idea of high heels for men have made it beyond the runway or even a very small group of fashion enthusiasts. As history has demonstrated, it will take more than high heeled footwear for men to destabilize or alter gender constructions.

### **1.2.2 The Boot**

The boot has been worn in the West due to the proclaimed functional or utilitarian elements it possesses. It is understood that no single object is simply functional, but it also carries social and cultural signifiers (e.g. gender and status) that go well beyond its material qualities (Turbin; Riello and McNeil eds, *Shoes* 119). In this vein, the boot has been traditionally seen as one of the most masculine pieces of footwear, as it has predominantly been worn by men for all kinds of physical activity (Quinn; Riello & McNeil eds, *Shoes*; Scott).

In exceptional cases women have also worn men's utility boots (e.g. during wartime when they had to take on factory work).

There are endless kinds of boots: work boots, riding boots, hunting boots, military boots, cowboy boots, snow boots, ankle boots, worker boots, dancing boots, rain boots, motorcycle boots, police boots, desert boots, etc. The common denominator is that they are all perceived to be principally functional, allowing the wearer (usually a man) to perform the task they were made for (McDowell). Not surprisingly then, many of these boots are attached to what are perceived to be archetypal masculinities—the cowboy, the biker or the military man are as “manly” as they come. As urban landscape and lifestyles change, some of these boots fall out of favour while others persist for the sake of fashion. Cowboy boots are arguably functional: the heels allow for the securing of stirrups which are needed for proper riding; they are ideal to get around in rough terrain and are tall enough to fend off snakes in the desert. However, there is more to be said about a man wearing cowboy boots in the city. It is well known that even government officials like the ex-presidents of Mexico, Vicente Fox, and the USA (George Bush) wear cowboy boots. In the 60's and 70's groups of men that conformed to the “clone” style movement also wore them (Cole). Clones were known as gay men who adopted archetypal masculinities such as the cowboy as a way to counter the common idea that gay men were effeminate (the clone concept is further discussed in section 2.2).

To claim cowboy boots serve a predominantly practical function (e.g. to protect the feet from the elements) is a rather weak argument. In many cases cowboy boots are flashy and decorative. Fashion would therefore state that items of dress such as cowboy boots are a symbol of social belonging and self-representation (Scott; Barnard *Fashion Communication*;

Entwistle). In Hollywood films, the cowboy represents the All-American man: honest, independent, hardworking, strong and even a hero at times (McDowell; DeMello). Cultural representations such as these reinforce and naturalize ideas of masculinity until they become part of our cultural understanding of what it means to be a "man".

In time, boots also entered the feminine footwear sphere and have continued to evolve in their meaning and are used as a fashion item. For example, riding boots have persisted beyond their original function and are now not only used for horse riding but are worn by women as a fashion staple (Quinn). However, some of the earliest examples for women's boots date back to the nineteenth century. Examples from the time are heeled and made of silk satin with elaborate trimmings. Efforts to feminize boots by applying high heels and platforms in an array of shapes, colours and materials continued well into the following century up to today. Designers and the fashion system have commercialized boots in such a way that they now form an integral part of women's wardrobes and are most certainly used to assert contemporary feminine ideals (Quinn).

### **1.2.3 The Sandal**

The sandal is debatably the most ancient style of footwear and has been worn by civilizations around the world including the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans. Today, sandals can be seen on individuals worldwide for various occasions: They are worn on the beach, in rice fields, during galas and weddings, and even in the city. The sandal is particularly interesting for it encompasses the extremes of both fashion and function. It can be incredibly practical and simple in design, or very elaborate and fashionable (DeMello). The sandal also illustrates various ideas regarding gender identification. In Western culture, the idea of exposed feet can be read in several ways. By simply looking at current offerings in the market

we can notice that sandals for men are not only fewer in number but are marketed as functional items (e.g. hiking sandals, or flip flops which protect against floors and burning sand). The higher number of sandals for women implies that it is either expected or more acceptable for women to wear sandals. Women can also wear footwear that exposes the feet in various ways showing toes, heels, and the upper part of the foot or the ankle, weather permitting. In the city, in the country, at work or at school, from day to evening, styles for women abound. Today, men wanting to wear sandals need to access the high-fashion sector or resort to the "sporty functional" look. Fast fashion will occasionally offer different options, but they are clearly meant exclusively for leisure and are few and far between. In contrast, the sexualization of women's feet dates back a couple of centuries when it was indeed racy and scandalous to see a bare foot or a leg. It is perhaps the strong hetero-sexualization association with women's feet that continue to make the sandal a rather complex item to wear outside the normative confinements of gender.

#### **1.2.4 The Sports Shoe**

The sports shoe has a particular trajectory because some of the earlier models that were traditionally meant for golfing, tennis and cycling including sports spectatorship are now part of a classic and even formal narrative in contemporary North America. Some of these styles are spectators and oxfords. These masculine shoes *par excellence* are in no doubt considered as such due to their association with physical activity (sports). The sneaker eventually replaced these sports shoes when the vulcanization of rubber came about. Vulcanization is an industrial chemical process that makes rubber durable, flexible and appropriate for modern day use on products such as sneakers, tires and hockey pucks. In Semmelhack's "Out of the Box" exhibition for The BATA Shoe Museum (2013), we can

experience the trajectory the sneaker has gone through. Vulcanization not only made the invention of the sneaker possible, but it changed the face of footwear forever because soles and heels for all types of footwear began to be made of rubber due to durability, cost and industrialization. The sneaker has come a long way since its origins as a running and basketball shoe. Various historians like Semmelhack (2013) and Allison Gill explain how the sneaker is used as a social signifier of youth, 'cool'ness, and more recently, status.

Semmelhack identifies this as an important shift in masculinity. In her exhibition (2013), she states that with the rising popularity of designer brand sneakers the debate has taken on another layer where men are now encouraged to participate in the world of high fashion. These designs, which are highly decorative and are worn in a non-sporting context, clearly exemplify a transition from function to fashion (see figures 4 and 5). Other sports shoes that are seen on the feet of men outside their functional or utilitarian context are driving shoes (Tod's) and boat or deck shoes (Sperry Top-Sider). Again, the acceptability of these shoes is perhaps credited to their sporty heritage. However, they are also currently used as signifiers of gender and class. These shoes allow men to be associated with what some would consider "grown-up toys for men" such as sports cars and yachts. Moving forward, it is needless to say that several pieces of sporting footwear including sneakers underwent a transformation when applied to the female foot. In order to feminize the sneaker, heels were first applied in the 1920's. Heeled sneakers then made an appearance in the early 2000's, and more recent examples include the elevated sneaker wedges observed in Sketcher's "daddy's money" model, and in Isabel Marant's designer sneakers. Additionally and not coincidentally, the sneaker has become such an important item that Chanel (a fashion house that only sells womenswear) is currently offering them to women in a high-fashion context.

### 1.3 Gender in Fashion

Historical and contemporary observations clearly demonstrate that dress and footwear are highly gendered, and there are very few cases in which styles can be considered entirely genderless (McNeil and Karaminas eds; Semmelhack *Heights*; Turbin; Entwistle; Edwards *Fashion in Focus*; Barnard ed *Fashion Theory*). Even though fashion and ideas about function change throughout time, Western tradition often equates fashion with the feminine or the Queer sphere, while function is considered a masculine prerogative (Edwards, *Men in the Mirror*). There is an impression, that in order for men to perform active or physical tasks, they need functional or utilitarian footwear. However, historical examples like the Louis XIV heel, gladiator sandals, and riding boots can attest that there is no “natural, true, or real” style of footwear that belongs to either gender.

Theorists like Judith Butler (1999) have exposed the idea of gender not only as a social construct but claim that it is also performative. Butler explains: “Performativity is a matter of reiterating or repeating the norms by which one is constituted” (Hall *et al.* 22). Fashion (including footwear) is used as a vehicle for the expression of gender norms (Edwards, *Fashion in Focus*; Riello and McNeil eds; Semmelhack). The contradictory and overlapping ideas of what has been considered functional or fashionable throughout the centuries demonstrates the artifice in determining what is “naturally” masculine and feminine. For this reason, the creative component of this MRP refuses to classify footwear by gender as men’s or women’s shoes. The footwear is designed to instigate reflection and possibly promote anxiety in the consumer so that they might question how or why apparel is divided into the fixed gender formulations of “men’s or women’s”. An important part of this project is to help the audience recognize how unnatural and arbitrary gender assignment can

be, and more importantly to realize gender does not come hand in hand with birth, or the sex of an individual (Butler 9; Gedalof *et al.* 26). This project challenges gender binaries by offering footwear designs that allow for more fluid interpretations of masculinity and femininity.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review and Framework

The works reviewed in this section address concepts that relate to the study of men's fashion as well as the concept of utility in men's fashion. Ideas regarding gender and the body and fashion and gender are also reviewed here. Additionally, gender performativity theory is introduced as a basis to frame this major research project along with concepts of accessibility and understandability. While very insightful observations are made on the topic of gender construction through men's fashion and footwear, very few address the implications their findings have for practitioners of fashion and footwear design. The work done in this MRP explores the practical side of producing footwear with the aid of theory and therefore aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The concepts and framework found in this section are also used in the concluding analysis of the final footwear.

### 2.1 Fashion and Gender

In much of the literature surrounding men's fashion, there is a consensus that because of the dominant hetero-normative stance in which men "do", rather than "appear" or "look like", the study of men's fashion is highly complex (Giannino ed 100). The term 'men act, women appear' can be traced back to 1972, when John Berger wrote his book *Ways of Seeing* (72). This idea was instrumental for Laura Mulvey (1975) in her essay regarding film theory entitled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. Mulvey argues that women remain passive and objectified by men who actively gaze and look at them (Corrigan, White and Mazaj eds 714). In a comparable way, this same concept of 'men act, women appear' has aided in the development of fashion theories. Fashion theorists like Edwards (1997), and Entwistle have been able to identify and contrast the masculine attribute of "doing" versus

the feminine attribute of simply “appearing”, or “looking like” as it concerns the study of fashion (Reilly and Cosbey 197-208). In other words, masculine men do things—they go to work, play sports, are constantly active and presented as too busy to care about fashion or how they look. Furthermore, Malcom Barnard links masculine fashion to men’s societal position when he states, “men’s privileged access to the factory, the office and the market place was reproduced, then by the fashions and clothing that they wore, which were suited to, or suitable for, such places” (*Fashion as Communication* 125). Feminine women, on the other hand, concentrate on appearance, and it becomes important for women to see themselves as beautiful and “fashionable” (Edwards, *Cultures*; Barnard ed, *Fashion Theory*). Edwards goes as far as to suggest that men’s fashion is a contradictory term, an oxymoron because so much about fashion is seen as style and superficialities, fickle, and therefore classified under the feminine or femininity (*Masculinity* 141-142, *Fashion* 42). The feminization of fashion makes authors agree that there is an anxiety hovering over men’s fashion that inevitably questions not only a man’s sexuality, but also his gender.

Given that one’s gender and sexuality might be questioned through their association with fashion points to the fact that gender is not solidly linked to sex. Theorists like Butler and Halberstam have successfully identified and presented gender as a social construct. Butler (1999) affirms that gender is performative (see also Hall and Jagose). This means that there is no *de-facto* or natural link between gender and sex, but that masculine and feminine genders are performances that are carried out by individuals. This project argues individuals use footwear as a tool to perform gender. Halberstam (2012) has pushed the concept of gender performance even further in his latest work *Gaga Feminism*, by asking for the eradication of current norms not only regarding gender but all current social constructs so

we can start anew with a more open and fluid society (155-157). Taking these solid foundations into account, the idea of utility in men's footwear (linked to "doing" masculinity) as a naturalized element of men's fashion is studied in depth through the creative process and the artifacts presented here.

## 2.2 Men's Fashion

The need to categorize individuals into gender groups is expressed in Barnes and Eicher *Dress and Gender*. The initial chapter begins with the following observation: "Although newborn children's first dress may be gender-neutral, their sex soon prompts kin or other caretakers to provide them with dress considered gender-appropriate within their particular society" (Barnes and Eicher 1). This conception illustrates one of the main points of this project: the highly gendered aspect of fashion. Several authors have contributed important works that shed light on the associations of gender and fashion, among them, Joel Penney (2012) and his article on hip-hop dress codes, and Shaun Cole in "'Macho Man': Clones and the Development of a Masculine Stereotype". Penny and Cole make a clear relation of actual elements of men's dress, such as tight clothing vs. loose/baggy clothing and the social implications of these in regards to the construction of gender and masculinities. Cole examines the appropriation of archetypal masculine attire by queer communities in the 60's and 70's. The resulting *Clone* style consisted of gay men that claimed and appropriated traditional masculine styles such as the lumberjack and the biker to critique traditional ideas about gender and sexuality. By appropriating these styles gay men were commenting on and challenging the notion that gay men are effeminate and/or not "real men". When speaking specifically of hip-hop style in North America and the members of this community, Penney makes very insightful observations. He identifies the infiltration of high fashion into the hip-

hop world. High fashion is considered part of the feminine sphere, or that of white homosexual men. This would be considered a divergence of the norm or habitual dress that involves big t-shirts and very baggy jeans. Penney states that the perceived threat on behalf of the community is that the queering of straight male hip-hop style will blur "identity boundaries" (328). These gender identity boundaries are mediated through fashion or the specific placement of items worn on the body, including footwear. The idea that items of dress can be used as a negotiating strategy to alter traditional ideas of gender and sexuality are used to support the creation of gender flexible footwear in this MRP.

### **2.3 Gender and the Body**

In "Fiction, Fashion and Function: An Introduction and Conclusion to the Special Issue on Gendered Body Image"(in 3 parts), Calogero and Tylka examine what gender means for the body explaining, "gender is critical not only for determining what people's bodies are capable of, but also for constructing how bodies should look and be looked at to meet societal expectations for what it means to be a heterosexual woman or man" (1). The idea of expectations regarding gender is consistent with Butler's ideas of gender performativity. Butler affirms that the norms that construct gender, which are repeated time and time again in a compulsory manner, are never fulfilled to the ideals expected (*Hall and Jagose 23*). Furthermore "the presentation and internalization of gendered body ideals (i.e. Beliefs that women's bodies are supposed to be decorative, fragile... whereas men's bodies are supposed to be functional, strong...) can constrict individuals' well-being and freedoms in various ways..." (Calogero and Tylka , Part 3 452). If the welfare of individuals is at stake, exploring the creation of objects that aid in allowing flexibility and divergence in order to transform and alter gender ideals is a necessary quest; a quest that this MRP has

undertaken.

## 2.4 Functionality in Men's Fashion

Carole Turbin's (2003) article "*Refashioning the Concept of Public/Private: Lessons from Dress Studies*" speaks of the importance of dress when studying gender and how this relates to fashion and function. She believes that because men and women eagerly consume clothing and accessories and are a part of the everyday reality this allows for their comparison (44). This constant desire to distinguish men and women by way of dress attaches meaning to their bodies and is therefore an excellent way to examine gender (Turbin 44-45). When addressing functionality and masculinity in men's clothing she makes a very accurate observation: "Because men's sewn-in pockets were designed for ready access to private contents, men's position of hands inside, outside of, or thumbs only inside the pockets became a significant aspect of masculine gesture and stance in public" (Turbin 47). Her statement draws attention to the relation between the function of a garment and what this does for meaning and discourse regarding masculinity.

D. Travers Scott is among theorists such as Christopher Breward, Alison Matthews David, McNeil and Riello, and Semmelhack who have discussed masculinity as it pertains to footwear in the West. His article "*Contested Kicks: Sneakers and Gay Masculinity, 1964-2008*" offers a different and insightful reading on what can be considered a traditionally hegemonic masculine expression in the footwear item that is the sneaker. Much like Cole, he exposes what dress can do as a tool to subvert and challenge dominant culture and the status quo. In his article, he states, "sneakers are feminine and rejected in opposition to dominant culture" (147). Scott explains how the adoption of sneakers by gay individuals was seen as

unfavourable by other gay subcultures such as the early "Leathermen" and "clones". This was due in part to the labelling of sneakers as a clear sign of homosexuality (and effeminacy) on behalf of the dominant mainstream culture of the time (Scott 151). In addition, it was also due to the apparent function they served in cruising areas. They were something you would change into, in order to keep your "nicer shoes" from getting ruined when performing oral sex. It is important to note that Henry Nelson McKinney's original phrase to use as a marketing tool "sneaking around" is what gave this type of footwear their name, "sneakers" (Semmelhack, "Out of the Box"). Although this shoe has a clever nickname due to their potential function, what develops can clearly deviate from the norm.

By the early 1980's the training shoe was fully embraced by the Jock clone. The athleticism of the straight Jock and his acceptance into mainstream culture was a clear motivation for adoption. This supports Scott's second argument: "sneakers are masculine and embraced in assimilation into dominant culture" (147). That a highly feminized article of footwear was transformed, adapted, and claimed as an icon of masculine style shows the possibility of gender flexibility that an article of dress and fashion can represent over time. Ultimately though, the sneaker's trajectory has not erased gender boundaries nor altered gender divisions themselves. Semmelhack believes that the contemporary high-end sneaker may be contributing to shifting ideas of masculinity by allowing men to participate in the world of high fashion ("Out of the Box"). While this may be an accurate observation, the design and commercialization of these types of sneakers perhaps speaks more to the need for producers to obtain economic growth by capturing new markets than of their intention to contribute to the breaking/loosening of hetero-normative gender formulations. However, the footwear in this MRP can potentially challenge the normative gender identity formulations that persist in

the current North American cultural climate.

Peter McNeil and Giorgio Riello, are also important contributors to the study of footwear. *Shoes: a history from sandals to sneakers* is a comprehensive book that contains several essays from experts in the field of shoes and fashion. In his critical essay, "Fashioning Masculinity: Men's Footwear and Modernity", Christopher Breward critiques the ideas of le Corbusier (the famous Modernist architect), Adolf Loos and other commercial enterprises regarding the design and production of men's footwear in Modern times. These Modernist's stated that the functional aspects of men's shoes must be serviced above all. The shoe must be practical, made for walking, ergonomic, and they made an argument for "health" due to the "beneficial effects of physical action" (Riello and McNeil, 225) (This is the same argument that was used to sell sandals for men in the 30's). Breward exposes the Modernist's distaste and contempt for all that was fashionable due to its perceived inherent femininity. This concept has been carried since the eighteenth century by society at large and due to the continuous support by important and leading figures such as architects, designers and owners of prominent businesses these ideas are reinforced and reproduced into hegemonic hetero-normative gender concepts.

McNeil and Riello's article, "The Art and Science of Walking: Gender, Space, and the Fashionable Body in the Long Eighteenth Century" provides an important contribution to the debate on footwear and gender and outlines how history has paved the way to lead us to the shoes we walk in today. Highlights from this article are ideas about footwear that function around space and our access to it stating that: space concerns the physical, the social and the cultural (179). McNeil and Riello comment on the use of materials as a means to accentuate gender division during the eighteenth century: leather for men (because it was perceived as

durable against the elements and weather) and textiles like silk for women (perceived as decorative) (180). On the other hand, leather in shoes for women was present in peasant women in France (180). It is this last observation that proves that functionality has not only always pertained to men's footwear in Western culture. However, these women were considered unfortunate due to their lower status and their consequent failure to reach feminine ideals. These austere shoes were therefore not deemed desirable by women at large and were certainly not appropriate in any other context. Also, "the few examples of high quality leather shoes for women were normally embroidered..."(180). The addition of decorative elements demonstrates an attempt to remain closer to fashion than utility so as to remain within the feminine, rather than the masculine. Furthermore McNeil and Riello state that near the end of the eighteenth century "men's footwear tended towards functionality..."(180) proving that naturalization of the "men's footwear equals utility" equation was achieved through centuries of repetition and reinforcement. Providing tools to formulate different strategies to break with this naturalization is a subsequent step of many ahead. For this reason, this major research project is formulated as a creative project in order to provide these tools in the form of footwear designs.

While fashion scholarship has explored how dress may be used in order to express, negotiate, and aid in the identification and construction of masculine gender identities at various historical moments in history, it has not proposed design strategies that challenge gender representations in fashion. This MRP aims to destabilize traditional gender identities by offering gender flexible footwear as a viable way to express identity.

## 2.5 Framework

The framework that guides this MRP is Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity. First introduced in her initial publication *Gender Trouble* (1990), this concept was further revised and clarified in a later re-issue of this same title in 1999. The most recent formulation of Butler's performativity theory can be found in her article entitled *Critically Queer* found in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* (2013). In the article Butler confirms that it is paramount to clarify that gender performativity does not imply that gender is a choice, or that it is as simple as "putting clothing on" (22). She insists: "gender is performative insofar as it is the effect of a regulatory regime of gender differences in which genders are divided and hierarchized *under constraint*" (Hall and Jagose 22). For this project, the spectrum of function and fashion can be seen as the "regulatory regime" that an individual must operate within. The literature review clearly demonstrates the restrictive hierarchy related to footwear where acceptability for each gender and the representative of ideal masculinity and femininity dictate that men's footwear, due to its association with functionality is above banalities and concerns of beauty (fashion) found in women's footwear.

Furthermore, Butler denies the ability to completely escape or subvert gender norms and that we cannot choose gender but that we are forced to negotiate within its confines. (Hall and Jagose 26). Much like "man" and "woman" are negotiated, so is function and fashion.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology

This major research project uses practice-led research methodologies where the artifact or object that results from the creative process of making is as vital as the information it contains (Mäkelä 157). Practice-led research is “the way artists and designers connect to the field of research” and is, at its core, “the idea of knowing through making” (Mäkelä 158).

Critical reflective practice is a component under the umbrella of practice-led methodology for this MRP. Tahera Aziz (2009) suggests that reflective practice theory consists of performing the act of reflection as its own separate activity in addition to reflecting while creating or making. Furthermore, creativity involves self-criticism; this can happen when you are involved in the process of creating but also detached enough to obtain “critical reflection” (Aziz 70-71). This MRP exemplifies this concept: The creation of sketches was an initial step which contained ideas that were modified by research, that were then further modified by additional sketches, material specifications and the fabrication of designs. Ideas were formed along the way because both involvement in the making and detachment when reflecting was carried out (a detailed observation of the methodology applied is found in section 3.1). Viewed in a larger scheme, the design and creation of footwear is the chosen vehicle, but it is in hope that the exploration presented here can be applied to the broader field of fashion design.

Fashion, and in particular fashion design, is considered a creative practice with footwear belonging to this process. As Hilary Collins relates:

Research for practitioners... tends to need to be seen to possess particular benefits or a use, and this is usually a commercial one. This is not necessarily one of profit, but one of fulfilling certain industry or discipline requirements. (15)

This MRP can benefit not only the academic sphere but also the practical side of fashion.

Practice-led research can be defined as research that is not only exploratory, but experiential as well. In other words, the contribution and the creation of knowledge comes from the processes or creative practice. This MRP, therefore, engages with both the process of making and the final artifact. This approach is particularly useful due to the future commercial considerations the resulting footwear is intended to face.

### **3.1 Footwear Design as Practice**

Figure 6 illustrates the cycle that this project has gone through. Critical reflective practice was applied and is evident in that there is a back-and-forth dynamic at play between the practice or creation stage and the conceptual theorizing and reflecting stage. Figure 7 provides an illustration of the practice-theory cycle as it was applied to this MRP. The cycle was performed on several levels of the project and was repeated, re-started or even suspended depending on the specific concept that was being addressed. In addition, an elaboration of ideas for footwear designs was documented throughout all stages of the process and the project. As previously mentioned, the creative component of this project is informed by existing literature and theories regarding gender and queer theory. These theories and literature informed the decisions made, the process and the materials. At the initial stage written ideas for footwear designs happened simultaneously with the literature review. Sketches followed (figures 10 - 13) once more specific concepts were chosen (this was several months later). These sketches were elaborated over a course of 10 days after

performing a more extensive literature review; this can be considered an example of involvement. In between each sketch, concepts to engage with in each design were isolated. These isolated moments of critical reflections between sketching can be considered an example of detachment. For example, the first design for the CLEAR loafer began as a response to the idea of exposed feet as a feminine expression. The final outcome (figures 25a – 25f) is different from the original design (figure 8) due to the continuous revisiting of theory and literature after each stage of the process in addition to elements concerning fabrication. Continuing to the next step in the cycle, once the sketching phase was completed, research on materials was performed as a separate stage independent from the designs that had been elaborated. Whereas the sketching stage engaged with shape, materials, and colour, this subsequent stage was done in an effort to engage with the concepts of function and fashion in the materials (such as leather and fabric) to be used for the making of the artifacts. The choice of dyed snakeskin in bright artificial colours was made as a reference point to the idea of changing gender signifiers as a surface (see figure 14); it is a direct reference to “shedding or changing skin”. As was stated in the background section of this document, masculinity in footwear is not static but goes through continuous shifts or changes. The step of investigating and choosing materials proved to be an important one. Although the specific skins shown in figure 14 are not present in any of the final artifacts, the reflections they brought about contributed to the reasons behind material choices for the objects elaborated, such as the EEL boot (figures 15, 23, 26a - 26f).

### **3.2 The Process of Making**

*Zapateria Medina*, owned by Don Carlos Medina is located in Mexico City, Mexico and was the chosen location for the making of the footwear designs. Don Carlos’ workshop is an

all-male inhabited space: His team consists of himself, his two sons and an assistant, who is also male. Although he did have women's shoes on display, the majority of the models in the cases at the workshop were of men's shoes. It can be argued that the larger display of men's shoes reflects the fact that the majority of his clientele are men, and demonstrates his experience as an expert men's shoemaker.

During my weeklong stay in Mexico City, I visited the workshop everyday to hand off a different design (five in total). Prior to each visit to the workshops I reviewed and chose the concepts to be addressed for each designed pair. A simple, colourless, basic sketch for each of the five designs was created and subsequently left with Don Carlos as a reference. During each visit, we discussed ideas and details for the shapes, materials and finishes of the designs and made preparations for future designs. I recorded all reflections of the designs in the creative journal. The final sketches that I handed off to Don Carlos are found in figures 15 - 19. One can see that the sketches were modified on the spot, during my conversations with Don Carlos: His written points of reference and details regarding measurements, shapes, lasts, colours and materials appear on the sketches as well.

The creative process journal acts as a witness to the practice-led methodology and, more specifically, to the details of my critical reflective practice. The journal consists of both written and photographic materials (including rough sketches). Samples of written accounts and photographs of researching material are shown in figures 20 – 22. The journal documents the different stages of the work, modifications and final outcomes. During this week, I also made visits to different leather shops, fabric shops and shoe making supply shops in order to procure different materials and explore various possibilities for the multiple designs that could be elaborated. I used the journal to record ideas and register the process,

thus allowing for reflection at various stages: Initial research; design ideas; researching materials; documenting process of labour; and concepts and theories. Put more simply, the journal was an important reference point for guidance when decisions had to be made.

It's relevant to note that while Don Carlos did have opinions and suggestions regarding the making of the footwear, he was simply hired as an artisan, not a consultant or collaborator on this project. His duties were restricted to the physical act of making the final artifacts. I had final say regarding all aspects of the design of the footwear including materials, shape and finishing.

### **3.3 Limitations**

The approach to my professional practice proved to be rather useful during this project. A designer should bring the best possible experience to the end consumer through the objects designed. Quality and attention to detail should not be overlooked in the name of creativity but used to surpass limits. In this particular case, the limits surpassed mainly consist of time, cost, distance, availability of materials and manufacturing facilities. As a handmade, made to measure workshop, the main constraint at *Zapateria Medina* was time. Each pair took approximately 5-15 days to make. The high cost of local (Canadian) manufacturing made Mexico City a highly viable option. Accumulative costs made it prohibitive to experiment in all types of conceivable footwear so I made the decision to focus on a select number of models. I was in Mexico for 10 days and followed the rest of the manufacturing process from Canada. This distance impeded further modification of the artifacts while they were being fabricated and made it challenging to ensure the quality of the final outcome. Nevertheless, I found that the end products successfully expressed the ideas I intended regarding fashion and function as they relate to femininity and masculinity.

Shoe lasts, and material availability concerning uppers, soles, etc. were also important to take into account for both design and cost purposes. For this reason, work was done with materials Don Carlos had on hand, in addition to what was readily available at local leather shops. *Zapateria Medina* had a wide variety of lasts that were at one's disposal, and several modifications were made to meet the design requirements. For practical and economical reasons I used myself as the model to fit the footwear. All of the items made are size 8US or 41European. Footwear sizes 10 and over are charged at a higher price point.

I would also like to recognize that there are conditions that may have influenced or altered this project due to the manufacturing process in Mexico. Discussions regarding how this location, local culture and my own background as a male of Mexican nationality may have affected the process of making are beyond the scope of this project. They can however be considered as material for an additional project to be carried out in the future.

## CHAPTER 4

### Discussion

This section examines the process I went through to create the designs presented here and provides a full analysis of the final artifacts, including ideas of accessibility and understandability and their importance and relevance to this MRP. The footwear pieces that resulted from the creative exploration are designed as individual pieces, and will be discussed as such. A reflection of them as a whole using side-by-side observation is also included. It is vital to keep in mind that though these are early designs, they were created with the intention of producing them commercially in the near future.

#### 4.1 Accessible and Understandable

As previously mentioned it was important that the designs elaborated are both accessible and understandable. It is my intention to produce and distribute the footwear in a foreseeable future to a wide North American audience. In order to do so, sensible costs and pricing are essential to accessibility. The average cost of each sample pair of shoes constructed 1500.00MXN, or 126.61CAD (exchange rate calculated on 04/06/2014). Considering the samples are one of a kind and made to measure, one presumes that actual production in an industrial manufacturing facility in the same country would be considerably less. The concept of understandability was taken into account when recognizable forms of footwear (loafer, derby, boots and sandals) were used as a base for the design. None of the shoes exhibit qualities of extreme fashion or un-wearability. Understandability is important for the items of footwear so that they are adopted and worn repeatedly by a larger number of

individuals in a North American context. Even if an item is accessible, if potential consumers do not understand it then it will most likely not be adopted or worn.

## 4.2 The CLEAR Loafer: Functionality and Appearance

This loafer proved to have a dynamic result and the object analysis has proved useful in challenging the naturalized notion of utility as a masculine prerogative. Figures 8 and 25a - 25f show the sketch and the final result respectively. In the initial design, the shape of the loafer resembled a moccasin. The design was later modified to a more traditional formal style penny loafer for two reasons. The main reason is that a stiffer, more solid structure would speak to the durable aspect of the shoe, in this way keeping its appearance in the realm of functionality and utility. Sturdy and strong are qualities that are repeatedly attributed to the masculine sphere (McNeil and Riello 189). The second reason is the fabrication expertise of Don Carlos in this type of footwear. The white soles that contrast with the black patent leather add an additional element that brings to mind the traditional yet festive styles of the Jazz Age of the twentieth century. The heel is elevated without being considered high and is slightly slanted to hint at the Cuban heel without making it so. By applying a Cuban style heel the aim was to borrow from another item of footwear that is highly stylized but deemed functional in some respects. The Cuban heel can be observed on men's boots meant for dancing, usually salsa but also disco in the 70's as they are seen on John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*. They were also applied to the Beatle boot (worn and made popular by The Beatles in the 60's). However, Don Carlos explained that putting on an actual Cuban heel on a shoe that is not meant for dancing would be unpractical as it is "more unstable due to the slanted angle of the heel and is not good for driving". By expressing his concern, assuming that the wearer (me) would be performing several activities (such as driving), Don Carlos

was acting as a “voice of reason” that parallels the traditions of men’s fashion and its current romance with functionality. It was quite clear that Don Carlos was unknowingly exercising a “regulatory practice of gender coherence” (Hall and Jagose eds. 25). By equating physical activity with masculinity and the concept of “men” his avoidance of a heel that is too high or “unstable” became a matter of fact because such a “non-functional” heel finds its place elsewhere (on women’s shoes). Final instructions were given to make the heel a notable height of four centimetres.

The idea behind this loafer began with the juxtaposition of what is considered in contemporary North America as a classic masculine shoe (the loafer) and the more feminine attribute of exposed feet or toes in footwear. As mentioned in the background part of this document, the sexualisation of women’s feet through exposure is currently a valid form of presentable femininity. Plastic, or transparent vinyl material may hint at shoes worn by workers of the sex-trade. High-end footwear designer Christian Louboutin famously practices the idea of using elements of dress worn by sex-trade workers as inspiration for his women’s line. Our concern here is the attribution of vinyl as a fashionable material found in women’s footwear and not in men’s. As the research suggests, exposed feet currently express valid forms of femininity. On the other hand, the plastic adds to the functionality of the shoes. Since the rest of the shoe is made of patent leather, both the plastic and the leather together make the loafers virtually waterproof, just like the classic patent leather loafer. Despite having the ‘masculine’ characteristic of functionality and utility, the result does not have the aesthetics of a classic or traditional men’s shoe. I argue that the idea of functionality as an innate or natural part of men’s fashion, is more illusory than anything. It may be that it is not actual utility or functionality that is of importance, but the *appearance* of it. If we recall the

argument that appearance is supposed to be a feminine concern, there seems to be a contradiction at hand. At first glance, this pair of loafers does not appear to be fully functional in all respects, despite the fact that it is. If the appearance of function is deemed just as important, or more so than actual utility, then the concept of functionality itself is an abstract idea that pertains to fashion (the supposed feminine sphere).

Further arguing for the side of fashion, this shoe possesses a chameleon-like element. By wearing socks with the shoes, the look and style will change as many times as the socks are changed. Forging an almost infinite amount of variants, this versatile shoe speaks to the contemporary popularity of highly designed socks available for men and women. Current offerings in socks vary from high to low with brands including Happy Socks, Paul Smith, Missoni and many more. A black sock may render the clear vinyl practically unnoticeable, while a sheer or brightly coloured sock may enhance it. The reading, or analysis of this object then argues for dynamic oscillation in the spectrum of functionality and fashion without decidedly making these loafers exclusively masculine or feminine or appropriate for one gender only. This is precisely the intention of the designs that make up this project and why it successfully defies the notion of function as an integral part of men's fashion.

### **4.3 The EEL Boot: Construction of an Artifice**

The EEL boot (figures 26a - 26f) was not conceived prior to the commencement of the work with Don Carlos. This pair of boots was actually designed on the spot upon the presentation of the eel skin in his workshop. This eel skin is what replaced the previous dyed snakeskin that had been chosen as part of the materials research stage of this project. As it was previously stated the choice of exotic skin was made as a reference point to the idea of changing gender signifiers as a surface. Furthermore, exotic skins are a common material

used for their look. Contemporary high-end fashion uses exotic skins to project ideas of fashion, wealth and exclusivity. These skins are found in footwear, bags, wallets, belts, and even clothing of luxury brands. The eel skin then serves as a way to engage with materials associated with high fashion. However, the midnight blue of the exotic leather brought about recollections of police uniforms. The juxtaposition of an exotic skin with a utilitarian item such as a pair of police boots made it a suitable design idea to explore. I reflected upon the design and drafted it out during a period of 2 days.

The last chosen for the boots has a more delicate or unusual form for the toe end of the boot versus the traditional rounded toe end. A last is a three dimensional object usually made of wood or plastic that resembles the shape of the foot and is used as a base for designing and creating footwear. I made the choice to use this last to insert an additional element of fashion and femininity to the EEL boots. Additionally, the soles of shoes are generally an indicator of how footwear is worn or where they are deemed appropriate. Under normal circumstances, formal shoes are not worn on a basketball court (the soles and heels of dress shoes leave marks and damage the wood flooring). In the same manner, it is preferable to wear rubber soles in the rain or mud to prevent feet from getting wet. Moving forward, if this pair of boots is to be used by individuals outside of the police profession, then a complete rubber sole was unnecessary. Because this was a boot, Don Carlos warned against the lesser durability of leather soles, stating that a rubber sole would last longer and is better for tougher wear. His repeated concern for utility brought about another negotiation very similar to the one made while leaving instructions for the height of the heels of the CLEAR loafer. Nonetheless, instructions were successfully given to Don Carlos to apply a natural leather sole to be painted black. The sole was painted to engage with ideas of the artifice or changing

skin. With time, wear will erode with the black paint and represent the “shedding-of-skin” the boots have gone through. The soles of these boots aim to represent the established concept that masculinity and gender along with its signifiers are changeable, arbitrary and artificial.

A few words are to be said about the heel of the boot and its implications. Firstly, the height on the heel was maintained in order to keep a visible, recognizable element of the original police boot. The heel, quite similar to that of the biker boot, is useful for riding a motorcycle. This speaks to the utilitarian aspect of the heel. Secondly, the heel adds height to the wearer. The additional height in the original design of the police boot was a purposeful design element in order to make the boots more imposing or aiding the individual who wears them to exert physical presence or dominance. The figure or concept of the policeman then becomes important to consider because the role of said character is to reinforce the law. In this case we can think about the laws or norms that govern masculinity and femininity as the binaries that form the gender equation. The purpose then of this design is to re-appropriate that which governs us. The intention behind wearing these boots is two-fold: One, to realize and take accountability for our own contribution to the reinforcement of traditional gender norms; and two, to take action by using alternative forms of footwear (as it is proposed here) if one wishes to deviate from the norm, and in doing so aiding in the loosening of restrictive gender binaries.

#### **4.4 The CLOWN Derby: Excessiveness in Fashion and Function**

The derby was an original design made for English soldiers to fight in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and eventually became a highly popular shoe style for men in Western culture at the turn of the twentieth century (Vass and Molnár 62). The shoe’s utilitarian

origin and its intended use by men makes it proper ground for exploration of function and fashion. The intent is to push the design of the shoe into fashion without falling into parody, camp or theatricality. Three different elements were modified from the traditional derby design. The first and most evident is the unlikely colour purple. The second is the bubbled up toe end, and finally the third is the use of a thick rubber sole that is usually reserved for boots. These three design features speak to different sides of the spectrum of fashion and function. Images of the resulting pair of shoes are found in figures 27a -27f.

Today, colour is used in footwear as a way to construct gender difference in Western culture (McNeil and Riello 176). If we recall what was mentioned in the background section of this document, men's footwear is said to be first and foremost utilitarian, and it is the reason why sober colours and basic durable materials are prioritized (McNeil and Riello 180). This design intentionally goes against that standard. I did intensive research to find a vibrant shade of purple. It was subsequently found and bought at the *Mendele* leather shop independent of the *Zapateria Medina* workshop. The not so sober colour purple was chosen in an effort to upset the current masculine-feminine gender colour division. Moreover, the choice of purple was not just a personal preference, it was also picked because of the multiple associations and meanings the colour has. Purple is a secondary colour made up of two other primary colours, red and blue. Even though current gender roles dictate "boys-in-blue" and "girls-in-pink" traditionally in Western culture, red was once considered a masculine colour (exhibiting power and wealth as seen on the Louis XIV heels) while blue was a feminine colour (soft and celestial, observed as the colour of choice to dress the Virgin Mary in numerous historic paintings). Arguably, purple could be interpreted as the combination of the masculine with the feminine. All of these cultural attachments or symbols associated with the

colour purple demonstrate ambivalence and even instability. It is the idea of oscillation then that is brought forth and the main reason why purple was chosen, and not for one perceived exclusive meaning. The arbitrary change in meanings of colour can be seen in parallel with the arbitrary assignment of characteristics that form the masculine and feminine. In addition to said arbitrary assignment, the swapping of colours to signal one gender, and then another clearly demonstrate the artificial and arbitrary associations between design elements and gender, revealing social constructions that continue to change according to time and space.

The end shape of the toe in the CLOWN derby was originally designed to border the excessive (fig 18). To this end an actual clown-shoe last was chosen (observe figure 19). Specific instructions were given to follow the shape of the last and the sketch. Don Carlos stated that it would be made as round and high as possible without falling into the “ridiculous”. It is key to understand that Don Carlos operates within the well-accepted traditions in shoe making. The objective of this design however was to push that traditional boundary and walk on the border of the excessive. The final model exhibits the toe end with a peak height of 3.5cm. An excessive model surely measures the peak height of the toe end at 5cm plus. The particular discussion regarding the end shape of this derby is a moment of compulsory negotiation that took place. The sketch (figure 18) that was given as a reference does not present an overtly exaggerated form that falls into parody or camp, but it does have a slightly higher and rounder toe end than the final product exhibits. Evaluation of progress was demanded in order to insure faithfulness to the design (see figure 24). However, despite all efforts made, the shoes did not result as expected. In order to reach a visible blurring of the traditional line, an extra .5cm – 1cm (total 4 – 4.5cm) should have been awarded (instead of the 3.5cm). Don Carlos made the derbies in such a way to prevent what he perceived to be

a “ridiculous” look: The final artifact stayed within the norm rather than bordering with the excessive. As previously mentioned, performativity theory states that strict “regulatory practices” are performed in order to construct gender (Gedalof *et al.* 25; Hall and Jagose eds. 22). The negotiation is a clear example of how present and strong these “regulatory practices” can be. In this particular case, the fear of punishment for not following conventions of footwear making for masculine shoes came in the form of exposure to ridicule.

To continue in the vein of excess, the large soles applied to the CLOWN derby were chosen as a utilitarian element used for the sake of fashion. The derby shoe is originally meant for tough wear and comfort. By borrowing from another style of masculine footwear that is the worker boot and literally adding an extra layer of comfort, durability and protection the intention was to push this design towards the utilitarian side of the spectrum. The calculated exaggeration was in the hopes to obtain an artifact that displayed a highly visibly excessive element that is seen as fashionable but can still be read as functional. The look of the sole that resulted in the final artifact is similar to that of creepers, a style of shoe worn by military men after World War II and later adopted by the Teddy’s in the 50’s and then by the Punks in the late 70’s. These three distinct groups of masculine identities or archetypes show the diverse use the creepers have gone through. Perhaps due to the continuous popularity of punk as a style trend within the world of fashion, creepers can be seen on the feet of both stylish men and women of today. The combined design elements of the CLOWN derby however expressly demands excessiveness to be explored not just in fashion as a feminine characteristic, but in function as well. In fact if we attribute excessiveness in function, then the result can perhaps be both masculine and feminine. This rather complex idea with multiple avenues for exploration successfully instigates concern and

reflection regarding the label of “men’s” and “women’s” shoes. Once individuals accept, wear and adopt these shoes these concepts can be explored further.

#### **4.5 The BOOT Sandal: History, Function, Fashion**

The initial idea surrounding this pair of shoes was in performing an amalgamation of two styles of footwear that appear to be polar opposites. The parallel drawn is the boot as functional and masculine, and the sandal as fashionable and feminine. Because the design of these shoes is to remain understandable (like all the other footwear created for this project), research examined current styles in an effort to identify pieces of footwear that would approximate the visual idea of a sandal-boot, or boot-sandal. Most examples found were classifiable as more of one than the other. Either clearly a boot that exhibited small flashes of skin, or sandals that barely covered the feet but hinted at a boot because of a single element such as a blocky heel or rubber sole. Several contemporary examples that may have fallen in the boot-sandal category exhibited hyper-sexualized feminine sexuality with sky-high stilettos and ideas of bondage. The representation of sexual availability through the exposure of the feet is one of the central ideas that I have already explored with the CLEAR loafer (figures 8, 25a -25f). In order to avoid redundancy, examples of bondage style boot-sandals were not used as a basis or inspiration. Attention was then directed at more historic examples. The design solidified once an ancient sandal was identified that met the criteria. The silhouette of the sandal exhibited in sketch no 4. (figure 11) was found in John Peacock’s book *Shoes: The Complete Sourcebook* (11). The footwear in question is a “Babylonian king’s sandal c. 500 BC” (Peacock 26). Interestingly enough, the origin of this sandal was also ideal for exploring ideas of time and space. Reviving historical items of dress is not new in the practice of fashion design. What this strategy does do, when observed closely, is reveal the arbitrary assignment

of fashion and items of dress in an effort to separate and oppose the two genders. Gladiator sandals are the perfect example. Originally worn by men in Ancient Rome, they are today mostly presented on runways of women's fashion, and indeed, a large part of the wearers in North America of this style are women. If very active men wore this type of footwear then these sandals could clearly provide protection for the feet and allow for movement and even comfort. It is bewildering that these styles of footwear are not part of the "men's shoes" category, given that they possess the aforementioned qualities. Because of the aesthetic proximity of the Gladiator sandal with the Babylonian sandal, the objective then was to use the Babylonian sandal as a means to try to understand this conundrum.

The original design of the Babylonian sandal, as presented by Peacock, is brightly coloured and bejewelled. These elements were no doubt used as a signifier of the wearer's importance. In order to bring these sandals up to modern times, the sandal was stripped of colour and jewels and was instead fabricated in white patent leather. The colour (clinical white) and the finish of the leather (patent) are treatments that were only possible after industrialization in the West occurred. Additionally the continuous popularity of these finishes speaks to contemporary trends in the North American footwear marketplace. The final result is exhibited in figures 28a – 28f. By stripping the sandal of colour, it allows for a clean uninterrupted visual of the actual shape and silhouette of the shoe. The posterior and lateral parts of the shoe strongly resemble the look of a contemporary boot (see figure 28c). While the open front and straps clearly state that it is also a sandal (see figure 28d). The final result resembles futuristic visions from the 60's. This is a reasonable association due to the combined elements of the silhouette, the stark white and the sheen of the patent.

The adjustable Velcro fastening fulfills the functional aspect of the sandal, allowing for comfort and the accommodation of varying feet sizes. Even though the sole is painted white to fit the overall desired design, the rubber soles provides comfort and durability. The fashionable aspect of the sandal lies in the blatant exposure of the feet. Unlike the CLEAR loafer this model does not offer the illusion of exposure but it does in fact expose the feet and toes quite substantially. Although the patent is water resistant, its function to protect the feet from getting wet is inconsequential due to the large open front. We can observe that the fashionable element of exposed feet overrides the functionality of the shoes. When we transpose this idea into our spectrum lens it is difficult to assume or conclude that femininity (fashion) cancels out masculinity (function) in this particular artifact. The specific instance of wet feet perhaps speaks more to weather suitability of the shoe than an informative analysis regarding the topic at hand.

For further consideration is another functional element of the BOOT sandal—the Velcro fastening. Although at the time of conception, this choice was made to provide comfort, the consequent object analysis provides additional readings of this fastening. In other contemporary examples of footwear found in North America, Velcro is used on sneakers and children's shoes.

As it was mentioned in the background and literature review, the concept and elements of the sneaker is currently found in a great variety of footwear offerings for both men and women. It is important to remember that the sneaker is currently being used as a masculine item of dress to encourage men to participate in the world of high fashion (Semmelhack, "Out of the Box". The sheen, the rubber sole and Velcro, may not be enough to qualify the sandal as a sports shoe *per se*, but these design details may be enough to classify it

under the concept of “sport-like” or “sporty” in addition to classifying it under a currently fashionable item. Even though these shoes may be perceived as unique and conceivably fashion-forward, if we agree that they reflect ideas that are currently fashionable, the sandals still stand within the concept of understandability and wearability and are therefore an adequate result for this project.

The idea of possibly bringing the BOOT sandal to the feet of children extends this discussion into uncharted territory. Envisioning this sandal under the “children’s shoe” category recalls the experience undergone when creating the EEL boot. To think about “mandatory” or “essential” elements needed to classify the BOOT sandal to children is again an example of auto-regulation during the design process. This touches on the appropriateness in the design and construction of shoes for “boys” and shoes for “girls”. It is fair to say that the concept of gender performativity still applies. The added category of children adds to the complexity of gender binaries. Indeed, in the same way that the categories of men and women are socially constructed so is the category of children. If we consider that gender identities are not only present but also fiercely reinforced during childhood, it is perhaps additionally fruitful to cover this ground and provide gender-flexible footwear to adult men, adult women *and* children. In the same way that this project was set up, clothing and footwear on children is both utilitarian and fashionable and carries multiple signifiers (gender, status, etc).

However, the issue grows more complex when we consider that children have arguably less control over what they wear for it is the parents that ultimately make the decision of what to buy and dress their children with. These complexities, while important, also fall outside of the current scope for this project and would be best explored in full in other research.

Nevertheless, the BOOT sandal proves to be a successful item to identify areas for further

examination in addition to currently contributing to this MRP as an item of footwear that provides intrigue by using the concept of history as a basis to explore function and masculinity and fashion and femininity.

#### **4.6 Simply Shoes**

Functionality or utility is an element considered by designers who create objects of fashion for the purpose of consumption by a larger public. Designers that work within the fashion industry (including footwear) whose designs serve some sort of commercial purpose, would need to at least meet the minimal requirements so the object designed is used in some way. In the case of footwear, these minimal requirements could be that the object remains securely on the foot, and that the wearer may be able to move. In this sense, all of the footwear presented in this MRP, meets those requirements (see fig. 29a and 29b).

However, the pivotal element that is being proposed here is to strip gender labels off of the objects. If the maker, designer or brand is responsible for providing fashions meant to be worn by individuals and they label them "men's" or "women's", this makes them part of the structure of power and hierarchy that aids in the reproduction of gender through fashion. If we believe that the designer or brand has a certain degree of power, privilege and influence, (at least in the ability to label the items they design) then a possible first step in upsetting gender norms is the refusal on behalf of the maker or designer to categorize the objects according to one label or the other. It is therefore deemed an essential part of this project to offer up the resulting footwear to both female and male populations without gender labels.

Another additional strategy may be the following: Keep all of the elements of the project processes such as accessibility, understandability, unique designs etc., but instead of assigning one gender, use the identifications "men's" and "women's" inclusively for all

designs. If an identical shoe is labelled both men's and women's this will perhaps also instigate reflection for observers and wearers alike. However, for this reflection to happen, it is necessary for the individuals to know that the items in question are labelled as such. It would be futile to segregate or market the shoes separately to each gender even if the shoes are exactly alike for there is no guarantee that anyone would recognize or make the connection that they are labelled as such.

It is important to emphasize the ubiquity of footwear in contemporary North American society. If shoes are worn on a regular basis, they play an indispensable part in reproducing and reinforcing masculinity and femininity with their repeated use. It is why the footwear created here needs to be worn in order to fully participate in the larger conversation of fashion and the social construction of gender, and one of the main reasons why these items are to be produced and distributed in a commercial context.

## CHAPTER 5

### Future Research and Conclusion

#### 5.1 Future Research

This MRP is only an initial step in a much larger project that has been envisioned. Part of this vision includes the future creation of a complete footwear line to be commercialized so as to extend the findings of this research to a wide audience. Additionally we can speak of brand building and product extension (other items of dress in addition to footwear).

Marketing, distribution, sales and economic feasibility are some of the areas that would need to be addressed. Looking at the topic of gender in footwear through a commercial or business lens with the aid of artifacts is therefore an important area to be explored. One of the hurdles to cross is the actual structure of the retail market. The said strategies of absent gender labels in items of fashion would require independent and stand-alone sales points where the footwear is merged together and not divided by gender, as is the case in the vast majority of sales points and retail sites. Additionally, clever marketing strategies will need to be conjured in order to navigate the gender divisions found in the traditional marketing structures found within the fashion industry (e.g. women's or men's fashion magazines, men's or women's fashion weeks).

Another area for future research is the observation of the adoption of the objects by end consumers or wearers. It has been stated that wearers give meaning to clothing and dress (Entwisle 2000). Without the wearer it is perhaps difficult to develop fuller meanings of the footwear presented herein. The relevancy of creating and analyzing elements of dress that are not worn may be called into question. The wearing of the pieces of footwear that were designed in this MRP by actual individuals will bring the shoes to life and fulfil their

purpose as items meant for use. Also, ideas of context (e.g. when and where the footwear is worn) should most definitely be considered. Analysing how individuals engage with the footwear can surely bring new ideas to the table. For the analysis to happen, the acknowledgment of agency in wearers is essential. The shoes are designed as an aid in negotiating masculinity and more broadly, gender. The artifact or object can hardly create new complete strategies or discourses on its own. It is through the wearing of the footwear by individuals who may (purposely or not) use them to negotiating gender that new or variant formulations of masculinity and femininity may begin to take shape.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

In an effort to fulfil the interest of a professional practice in fashion design, the artifacts that this project contains are to be considered initial prototypes made for future commercial use. Furthermore, this major research project applied a creative process formulated under a critically reflective practice found within practice-led methodologies to design footwear that challenges utility as an innate characteristic of masculinity and how it has been naturalised to the point that it is perceived as a fundamental part of men's fashion. The research was conducted by exploring the traditional formulation of equating fashion to femininity and functionality to masculinity. A thorough background was given regarding relevant styles of footwear that served as a guide and inspiration for this project, such as the high heel, the boot, the sports shoe and the sandal. Moreover, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken exploring the following themes: Fashion and gender; men's fashion; gender and the body; and functionality in men's fashion. Through the lens of queer theory (performativity), it was found that navigating the spectrum of function and fashion is a constant negotiation highly comparable to that of masculinity and femininity. In addition to the

various sketches, the pieces of footwear that were fabricated for his project were: The CLEAR loafer, the EEL boot, the CLOWN derby and the BOOT sandal. Following an individual analysis of each artifact, it was proposed that a possible way to bring about the breaking of societal gender norms as they are represented or found in footwear today requires a compilation of elements. The intention on behalf of the designer in altering and upsetting gender formulation through the items designed is needed. The absence of labelling footwear into the traditional gender formulations of "men" and "women" is another. And finally, contemporary concepts of wearability, accessibility and understandability are elements that should be included in the equation.

## APPENDIX



Figure 1. Men's high heel shoe from the Peacock Era. Canadian. Photography by Zent Keymole. Artifact from The BATA Shoe Museum Archives. Toronto, ON. Canada. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 2. Men's high platform shoe from the Peacock Era. English. Worn by manager of the Beatles. Photography by Zent Keymole. Artifact from The BATA Shoe Museum Archives. Toronto, ON. Canada. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 3. Men's high heel platform shoe from the Peacock era. Worn on stage. Photography by Zent Keymole. Artifact from The BATA Shoe Museum Archives. Toronto, ON. Canada. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 4. Men's Jeremy Scott sneaker for Adidas. Photography by Zent Keymole. Artifact from The BATA Shoe Museum Archives. Toronto, ON. Canada. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole



Figure 5. Men's DSquared<sup>2</sup> Sneaker. Photography by Zent Keymole. Artifact from The BATA Shoe Museum Archives. Toronto, ON. Canada. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

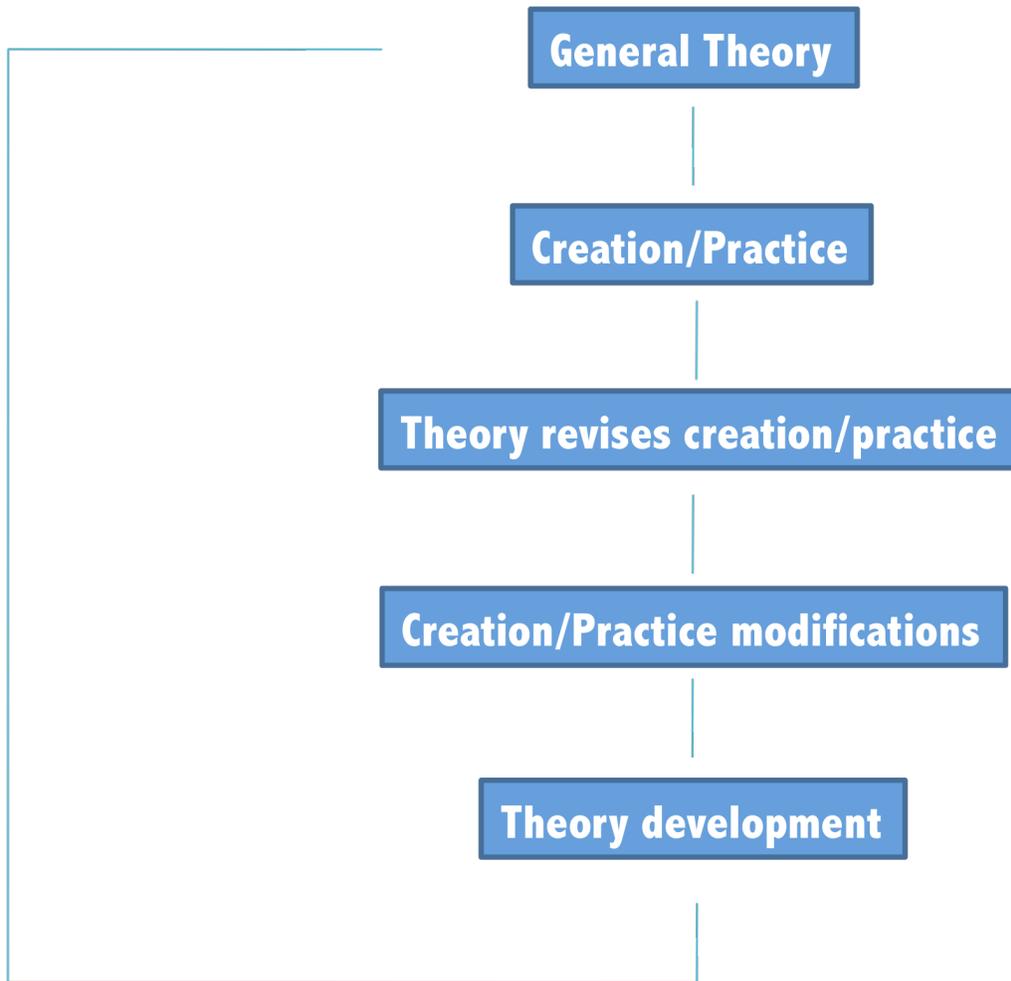


Figure 6. The Creative Project Cycle. Diagram. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

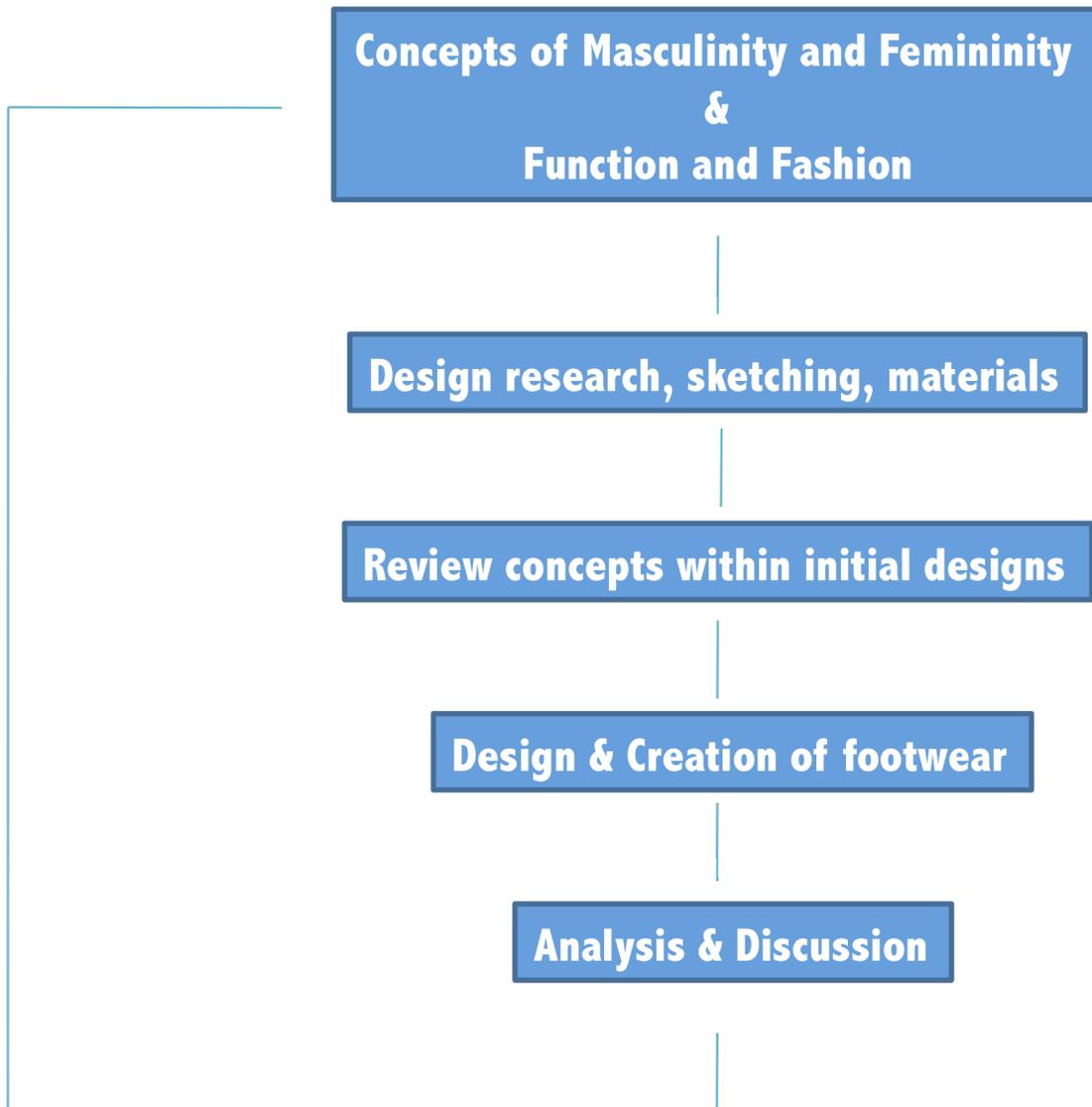


Figure 7. Application of the creative project cycle. Diagram. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

## CLEAR loafer

- Soft moccasin style loafer
- Patent leather in black and purple
- Clear vinyl upper
- Leather sole in white

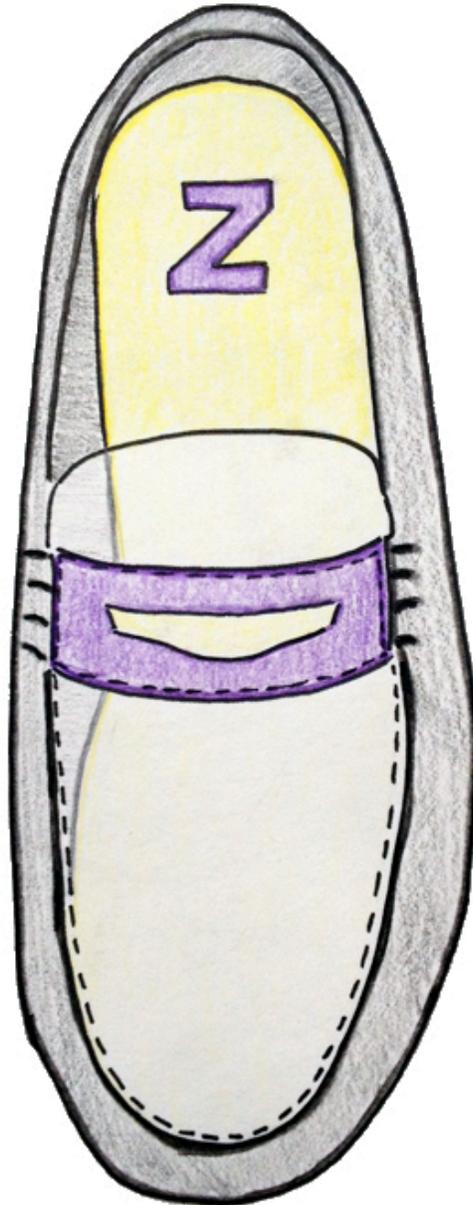


Figure 8. Original design no. 1: CLEAR moccasin/loafer. Copyright © 2013 Zent Keymole.

MELT derby

- Classic round toe derby
- White suede leather
- Bright pink plastic appliqué
- Black shoe laces
- Leather soles in black



Figure 9. Original design no. 2: MELT derby. Copyright © 2013 Zent Keymole.

## HAIRY biker boot

- Biker style boot
- Patent leather in white and red
- Pony upper in red
- Hardware in gold
- Leather sole in white



Figure 10. Original design no. 3: HAIRY biker boot. Copyright © 2013 Zent Keymole.

## BOOT sandal

- Sneaker base fashion sandal
- Patent leather purple straps
- White suede leather posterior
- Leather lined interior in white
- White and black rubber sneaker soles



Figure 11. Original sketch no. 4: BOOT sandal. Inspired by "Babylonian c. 500 BC"

(Peacock 26). Copyright © 2013 Zent Keymole.

## SNEAKER sandal

- Sneaker base fashion sandal
- Patent leather purple straps
- White suede leather posterior
- Leather lined interior in white
- White and black rubber sneaker soles

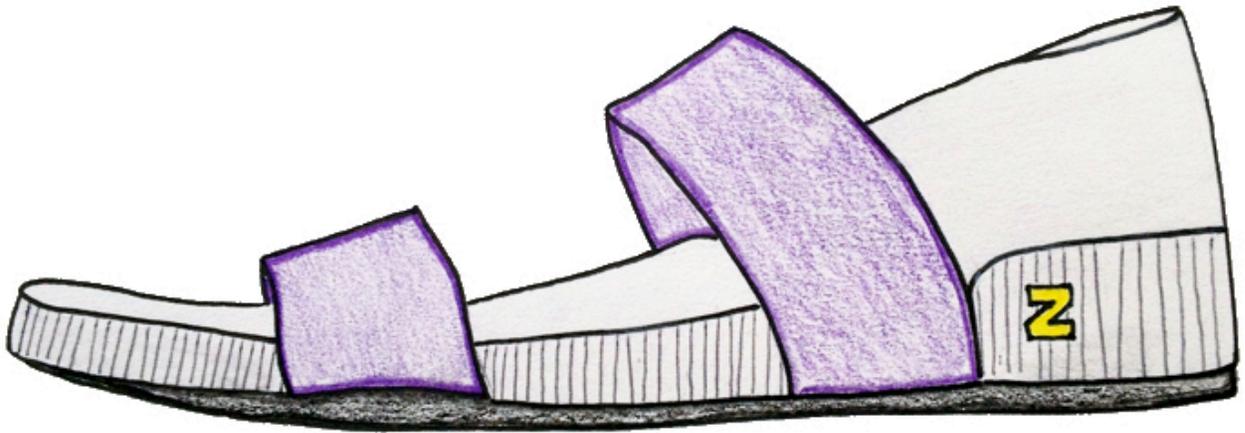


Figure 12. Original design no. 5: SNEAKER sandal. Copyright © 2013 Zent Keymole.

## PONY sandal

- Cross strap sandal
- Straps in fuchsia pony leather
- Tanned leather soles

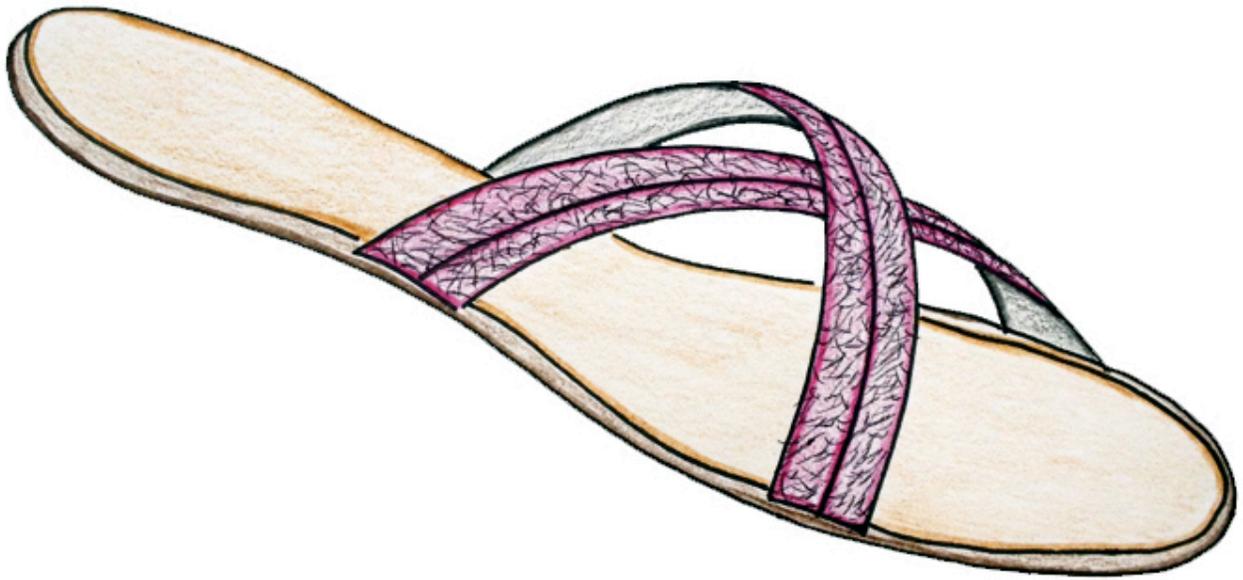


Figure 13. Original design no. 6: PONY sandal. Copyright © 2013 Zent Keymole.



Figure 14. Dyed snakeskin. Photography: Zent Keymole. Origin: Mexico City, Mexico.

Materials researched prior to shoemaking. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

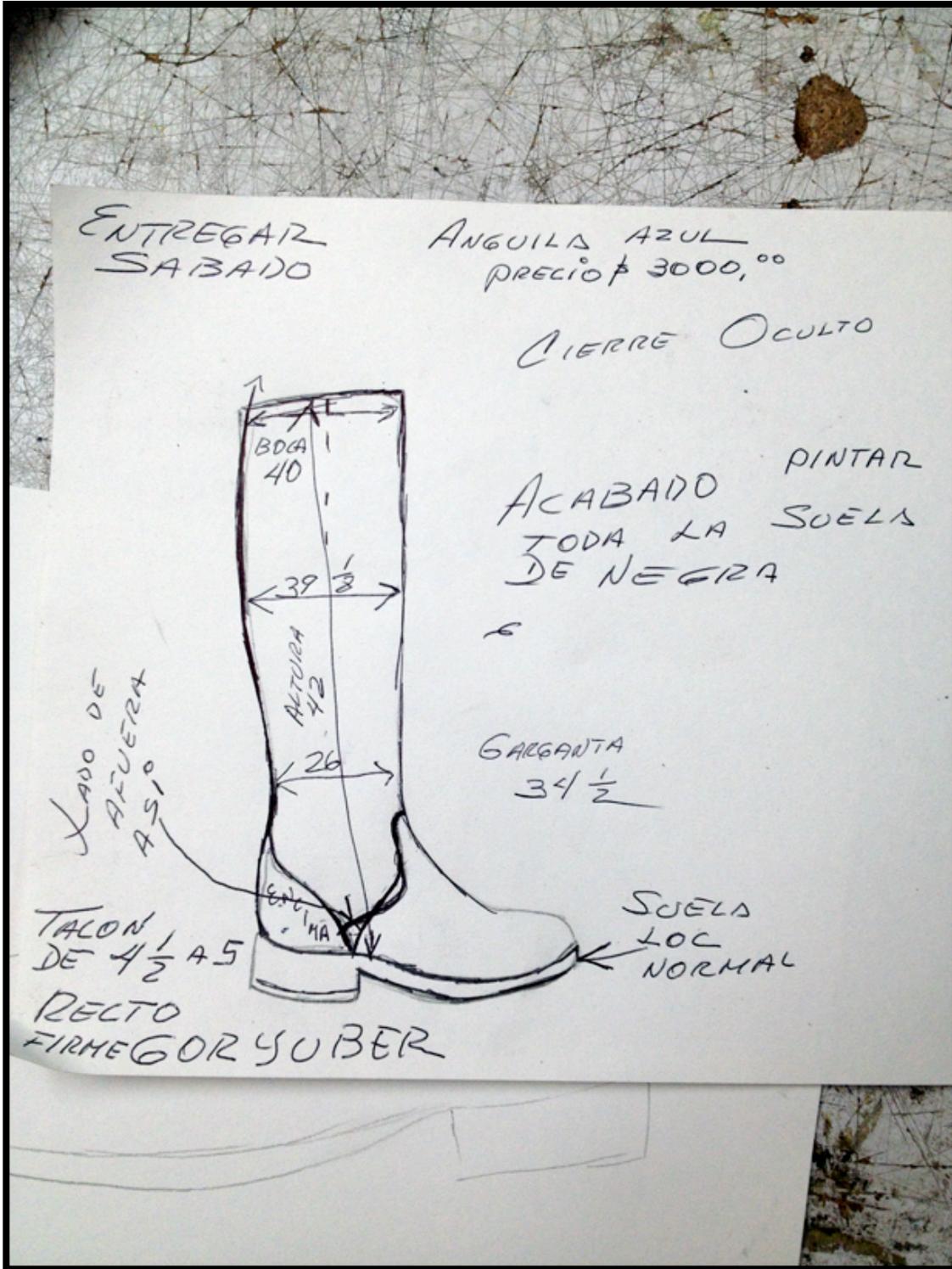


Figure 15. The EEL boot design by Zent Keymole. Technical specification sheet. Photograph taken at *Zapateria Medina*. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

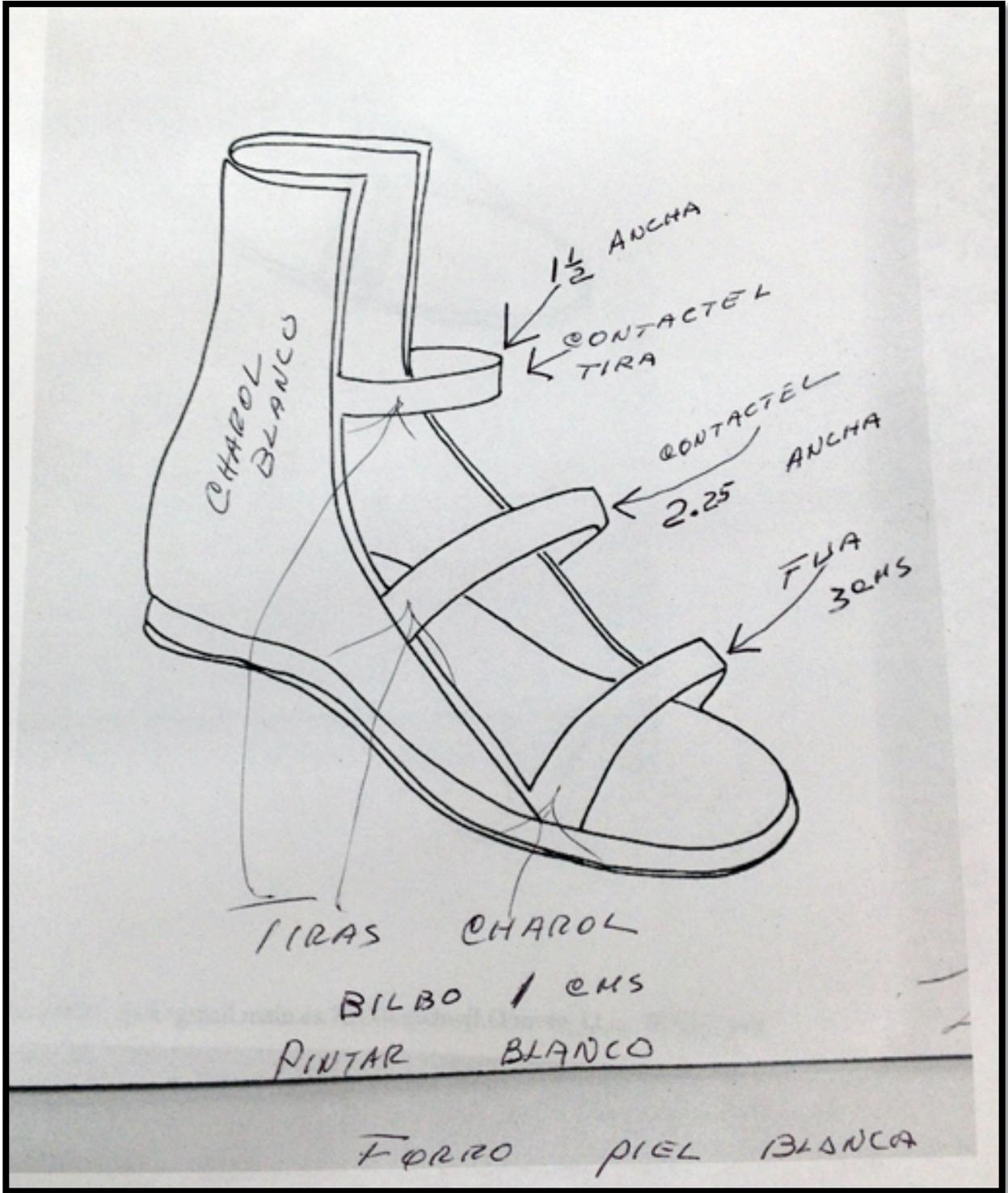


Figure 16. The BOOT sandal design by Zent Keymole. Technical specification sheet.

Photograph taken at *Zapateria Medina*. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent

Keymole.

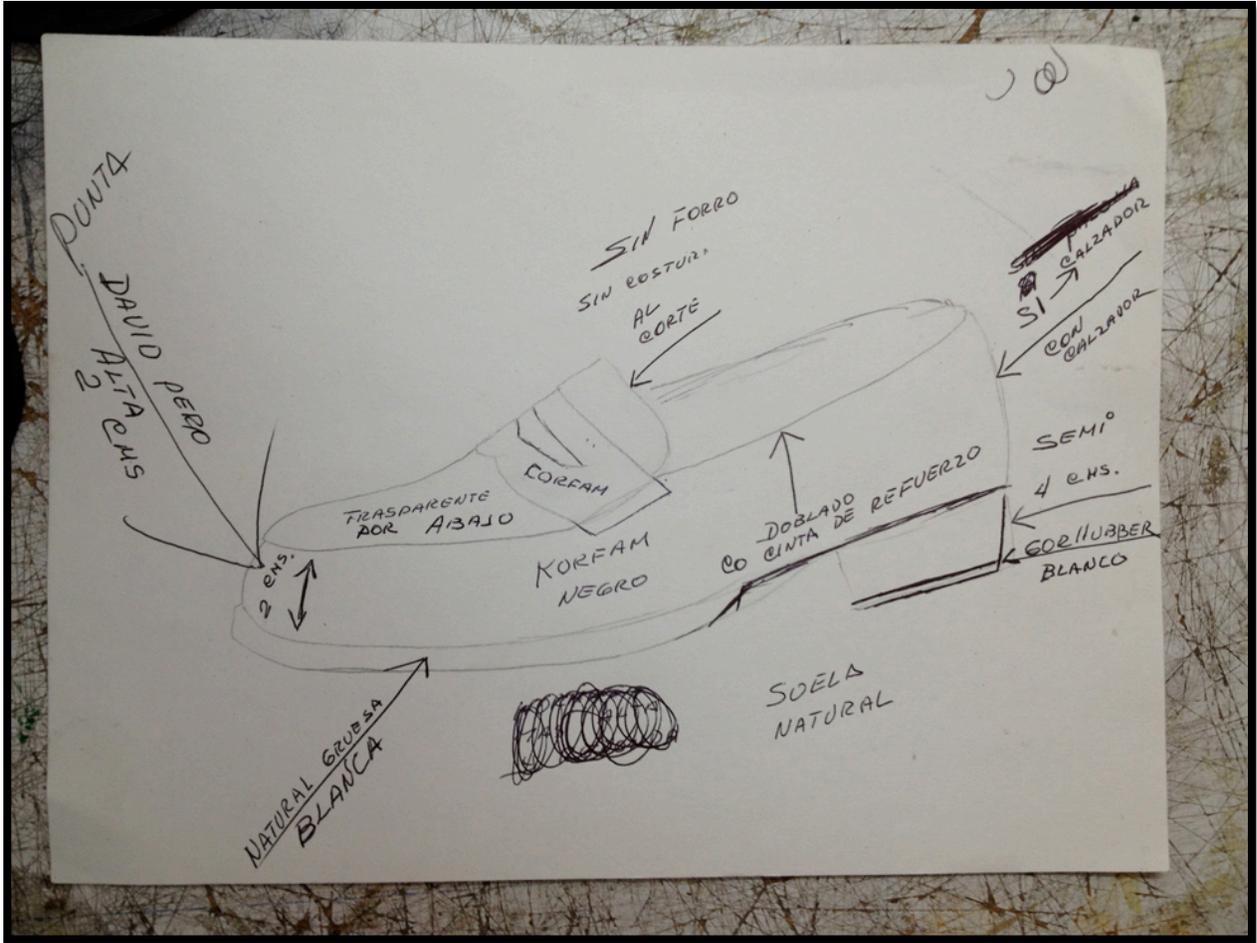


Figure 17. The CLEAR loafer design by Zent Keymole. Technical specification sheet.

Photograph taken at *Zapateria Medina*. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

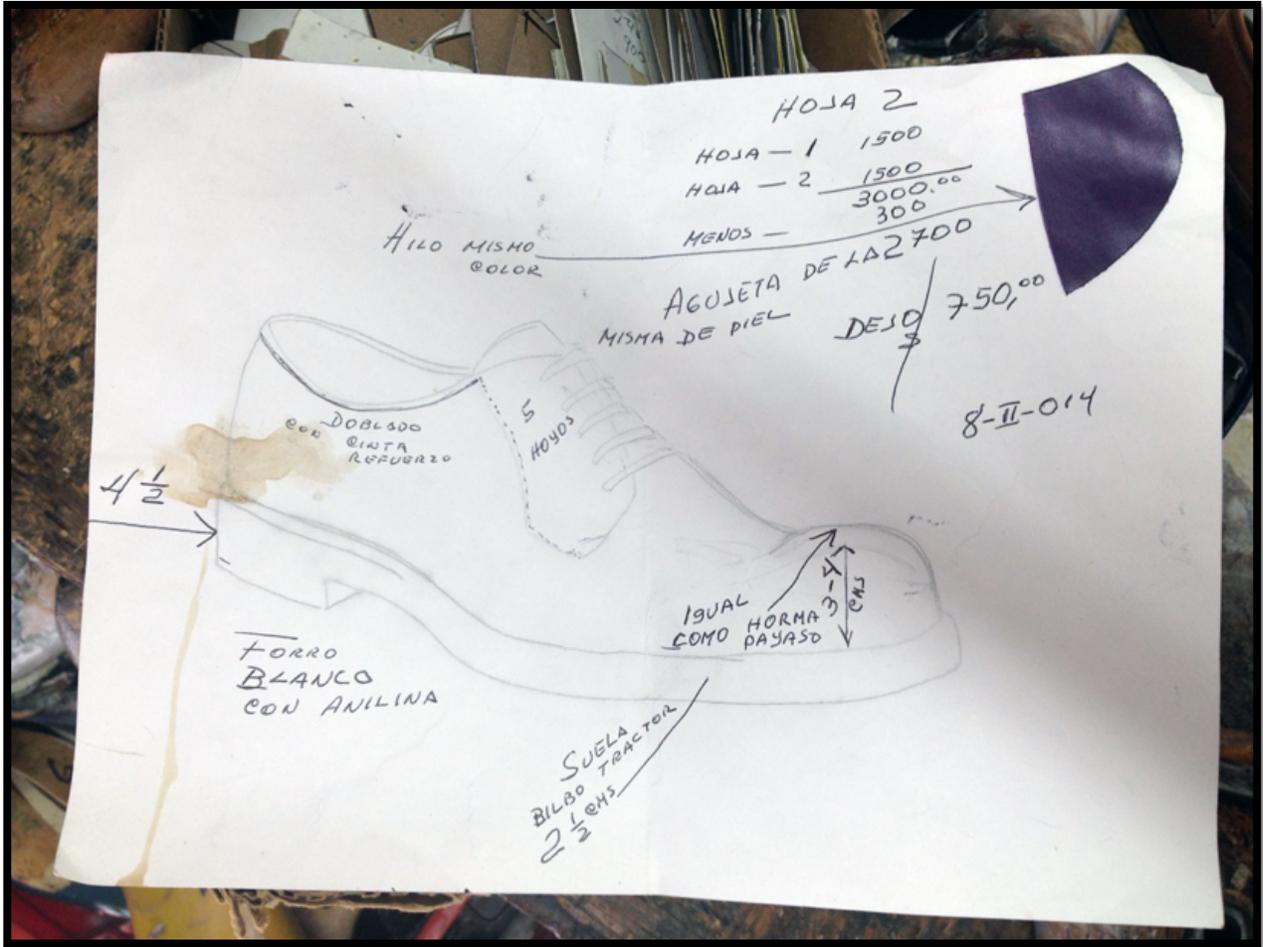


Figure 18. The CLOWN derby design by Zent Keymole. Technical specification sheet.

Photograph taken at *Zapateria Medina*. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 19. Photograph of The CLOWN derby design details. Technical spec sheet and lasts.

Photograph taken at *Zapateria Medina*. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent

Keymole.

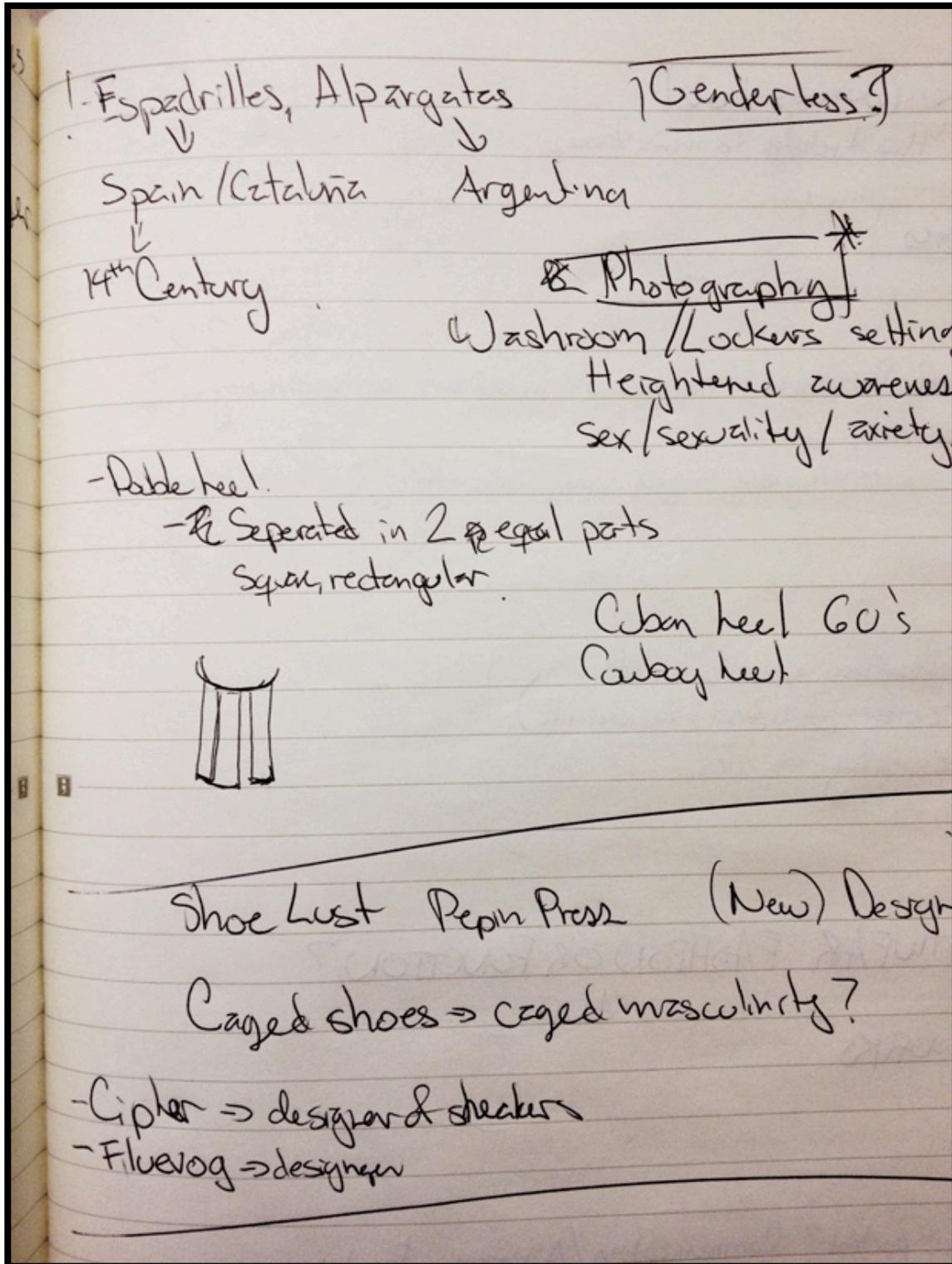


Figure 20. Sample of the creative journal: Written accounts and reflections.

Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 21. Image of leathers at *Pieles Mendele*. Photograph taken at the *Pieles Mendele* leather shop. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 22. Close up image of metallic leathers. The *Pieles Mendele* leather shop. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 23. Shoe last chosen for the EEL boot and original sketch. Photograph taken at *Zapateria Medina*. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 24. The CLOWN derby design in various stages of fabrication. Set of photographs showing the process of making. Photographs taken at *Zapateria Medina*. Mexico City, Mexico. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

## CLEAR loafers

- Classic round toe loafer
- Black patent leather
- Clear vinyl uppers
- 4cm cuban style heel
- Leather soles painted white
- Leather lined interior in white



Figure 25a. The CLEAR loafers. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright

© 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 25b. The CLEAR loafers. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 25c. The CLEAR loafers. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 25d. The CLEAR loafers. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 25e. The CLEAR loafers. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 25f. The CLEAR loafers. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

## EEL boots

- Knee high boots
- Eel skin in navy blue
- 4.5cm block heel
- Black leather soles
- Leather lined interior



Figure 26a. The EEL boots. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 26b. The EEL boots. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 26c. The EEL boots. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 26d. The EEL boots. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 26e. The EEL boots. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 26f. The EEL boots. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

## CLOWN derby

- Derby shoe
- Leather in deep purple
- Matching purple laces
- Black boot style rubber soles
- Leather lined interior in white



Figure 27a. The CLOWN derby. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright

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Figure 27b. The CLOWN derby. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 27c. The CLOWN derby. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 27d. The CLOWN derby. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 27e. The CLOWN derby. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 27f. The CLOWN derby. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

## BOOT sandal

- Sneaker base fashion sandal
- Patent leather purple straps
- White suede leather posterior
- Leather lined interior in white
- White and black rubber sneaker soles



Figure 28a. The BOOT sandal. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright

© 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 28b. The BOOT sandal. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 28c. The B00T sandal. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 28d. The BOOT sandal. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina.

Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 28e. The BOOT sandal. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 28f. The BOOT sandal. Designed by Zent Keymole. Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina. Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 29a. Final artifacts viewed side by side. All footwear designed by Zent Keymole.

Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina.

Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.



Figure 29b. Final artifacts viewed side by side. All footwear designed by Zent Keymole.

Handcrafted in Mexico City, Mexico at *Zapateria Medina* by Don Carlos Medina.

Photography: Zent Keymole. Copyright © 2014 Zent Keymole.

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