

# Missed Fit

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## KEYWORDS:

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## Abstract

This article examines how the technical fit of a garment can affect an individual's ability to fit in. It challenges the tool box used by practitioners working with anthropometric data (the surface measurements of the human body) and has produced new methods that are less reliant on published averages. Some of the article's questions are: how does anthropometric data and the study of human anatomy influence notions of an ideal body? In what ways do anthropometric data and patternmaking principles include or exclude diverse body types? And what tools can be developed to assist designing for diverse bodies? The article takes a multi-method and multi-theory approach to the research and investigates concepts of fit through phenomenology, semiotics and anatomy. By exploring experimental methods in cut, it challenges the meaning of a key example of conservatism and uniformity in tailoring, the grey flannel suit, and reflects on the question, what is good fit?

## INTRODUCTION

*Missed Fit* has been a journey, one with many tangents and false starts, an academic continuation to a career-long question on how to find good fit. I started my research with one question: has the human form in Western civilizations changed physically over the last two hundred years? Certainly, lifestyles and occupations have changed. In Western culture, there has been a trend towards a more sedentary workplace and home life, but has that affected the shape and proportions of the human form and how Western culture perceives the concept of fit? I thought that the issues I faced as a custom tailor in finding the resources I needed to fit individuals reflected a need to update quantitative data on the human body. I found early in my research that it was my reliance on this quantitative data that caused the problem in the first place. These early questions are explored in the sections *Issues with mobility* and *How do you find fit?*

I looked to historical tailoring texts from Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, and France for insights into our past ideas on finding fit and, in them, I found historical records and theses on anthropometry, or the geometry of the human form. Anthropometry is defined in the Gage Canadian Dictionary (Avis 1983) as “the branch of anthropology that deals with measurements of the human body” (48). Anthropometric data is often published for use in various design fields including tailoring, industrial design, and architecture. This is a practice-based and qualitative research project that challenges the use of quantitative data on the human body, as it is applied in fields where this body is considered.

**Exploring good fit is important to me. As a practicing tailor, people come to me every day because of the challenges they experience finding clothes that fit them.**

The goal of this research is to expand the ways practitioners in fashion consider what is deemed to be good fit. What I have learned from my study of historical tailoring texts and through apprenticeship is that, traditionally, tailors define good fit as a garment that hangs in a balanced way off the shoulders and sits on the body without excessive folds or creases while the wearer is in a comfortable standing position. As a researcher, I learned that good fit is determined by the wearer and is different for every individual.

The creative body of works I have produced as part of this research explore the written theories that I have found in my search for good fit, demonstrate that mechanical fit influences psychological fit, and that there are tools that can be developed to produce diverse approaches to fitting the body. The creative work challenges conventional attitudes to fit. Some other examples of this challenging of conventional attitudes to fit can be seen in the works of Japanese fashion designer Rei Kawakubo for the brand Comme des Garçons (Bolton 2017), in the past creations by Belgian designer Martin Margiela for his Paris-based brand Maison Margiela (Samson 2018), and in the designs of American fashion designer Thom Browne. *Missed Fit*, the exhibition of my creative work, forms the body of this research. A key part of my methodology is the exploration of fit from a variety of perspectives as well as being open to new concepts of fit as they opened up during my research process. Many of the

initial findings from the literature review can and should be explored further by other makers. These findings have been included as they help to form a full picture of the complicated experience of getting dressed. This article first journeys into fit from a wide range of theories and fields using a variety of research methods, and concludes in the making and exhibition of works that advance knowledge in these areas.

### A FIT, FIT

**Every experience I have had of pleasure and excitement about a world opening up has begun with the ordinary feelings of discomfort; of not quite fitting in a chair, of becoming unseated, of being left holding onto the ground. So yes, if we start with the body that loses its chair, the world we describe will be quite different.  
(Ahmed 2006, 154)**

Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* (2006) gives me the perfect platform to queer our experiences of getting dressed, to quite literally bend the lines or seams in a garment. Through this paradigm, I explore how we experience dress, the differences in the experience for each individual, how we interpret dress, and why a new approach to defining good fit is important. I have explored two concepts of fit in this research: *mechanical fit*, such as when two parts are required to fit together to drive a machine, and *fitting in*, or how we measure and compare ourselves against one another.

Mechanical fit is specific and inherently provides for the right amount of looseness. The amount of ease or looseness required in the fit of a garment, however, is always up for debate. One individual with a jacket that cannot be buttoned closed may complain that it is too loose, and tell their tailor that it needs to be taken in. Another individual may complain that a very boxy jacket is too tight, and needs to be let out. As a tailor and clothing designer for almost two decades, I have made the crafting of garments that fit perfectly my primary goal, studying anthropometric data in a desperate search for a good standard and working tirelessly to flawlessly clothe individual bodies. I have witnessed first-hand the positive effects this can have on a person. Through my craft, I have had the opportunity to help clients heal from the pain of a physical injury or health issue.

**I have aided individuals in coming to terms with a new body, and built new wardrobes so that individuals can feel comfortable operating in environments with specific codes of dress.**

In his book *The Botany of Desire*, Michael Pollan (2002) likens the human species to apple trees using the term heterozygosity (10). He writes of the extreme genetic variability of apple trees. If you take the seeds from a single apple and plant them, the trees that grow from those seeds will not resemble the tree the seeds were taken from, nor will they resemble each other (Pollan 10-11). Of course, every tree grows a bit differently, but with apples each of the new trees allowed to grow will have different bark, different leaf shapes, different fruit of different colours, sizes, and taste from the original, a much more extreme variability than is seen in other species (Pollan 1-58). The human species is also heterozygous. The tallest verified medically recorded man was 8-feet, 11.1-inches tall (“Tallest Man” 2019), while the smallest adult man verified and recorded is 21.5-inches tall (“Shortest Man” 2019). How these two individuals experience fit is going to be vastly different.

Sara Ahmed (2006) describes the experience of not fitting into a chair (154) and I relate this to how an individual experiences the fit of clothing. Ahmed writes of how we inhabit space and objects, arguing that by repetitive inhabitation and use of a space by a particular group of people it becomes a comfortable lived space (134). What do we usually describe as “good fit”? I think Ahmed would describe this term as objects or spaces that extend our reach without thought, items and spaces that become normalized, or made a part of our everyday lives. My experimenting with fit has taken me out of my normalized space, and I have done so to open myself up to new opportunities.

Jacques Derrida’s *Différance* (1982) provides me with an action, a chance to challenge structuralism and binary oppositions. As Flavia Loscialpo outlines in *Fashion and Philosophical Deconstruction: A Fashion In-Deconstruction*

(2011), Derrida's text highlights the idea that language is not a whole, that it has more than one interpretation, and often many conflicting interpretations (9). I apply this action of deconstruction to the signification of fashion and dress. *Différance* provides a theoretical framework that allows me to clearly highlight that the fit of a garment is a very personal phenomenon. Fit is experienced and perceived differently by everyone (Derrida 1982, 1-27). When relating this back to Ahmed's theory, not everyone's experience of not fitting in a chair will be the same. In my crossing of disciplines, you even find places where the same language needs to be re-defined depending on which discipline it has been applied to. Drafting a pattern in tailoring, for example, can be described as the process of finding a flat shape that can be used to create a three-dimensional piece of clothing. In weaving, drafting describes the planning of a weave structure, a binary code that when followed produces a woven pattern. You can see how language is easily misinterpreted and in need of definition. Dress, or the way one adorns oneself with clothing, complicates semiotics even further as it, too, crosses disciplines. Dress is not without meaning, but defining that meaning proves challenging, and the complex interpretation of dress, has an effect on the experience of getting dressed.

Roland Barthes' *The Language of Fashion* (2017) opens up a dialogue, questioning what an article of dress means. Barthes contemplates what the small details such as buttons signify independently versus in combination with other materials (27). Barthes concludes that it is not a single element that gives dress its meaning,

but rather the culmination of details. The meaning of these small details is explored in my creative works in the section Weaving. Elizabeth Wilson's *Adorned in Dreams* (2003) takes Barthes' theories further. Wilson argues that the wearer of clothing imparts the meaning behind the garments. In Wilson's text, she explores the struggle of studying dress. Wilson identifies that dress challenges the boundaries of the self: do we end where our bodies end? Do tattoos and other permanent adornments to the body become part of the self and, if so, does this include temporary adornment such as clothing (2)? The experiences of dress as an extension of the self is discovered and explored in the works *Dome Shirt* (Figure 16) and *Photographs of A Suit Made Not to Fit* (Figure 19).

*The Suit* (2016) by Christopher Breward outlines histories of the suit, the methodology and meanings in its making, and its past and current contexts. Throughout this text, Breward traces the history of how this uniform has been used to spark political and social change and its value as a signifier and carrier of different messages, reinforcing my choice of the suit as a vehicle to explore identity and challenge conservative notions of fitting in.

These texts speak to the experience and the meaning of dress, or how we wear clothing. I'm using them to highlight the nuanced way dress is interpreted by the wearer and by others observing that individual. An issue of mechanical fit in clothing can have an impact on the wearer's ability to feel at ease. I'm applying these theories to my practice-based research to explore new principles in fit.

## THE GREY FLANNEL SUIT

My approach examines and experiments with the methodology of patternmaking in tailoring. The pattern can also be referred to as the cut of a garment. The technical fit of a garment has mostly to do with what flat shape has been cut before it has been pieced together. My research looks to historical and contemporary methods of cutting, along with principles or adaptations for issues with fit and challenges, exaggerates, and breaks the rules of garment cutting. Julian Roberts' work *Subtraction Cutting* (2008) is a patternmaking text that explores experimental cutting for clothing. He describes an approach that relates to the method I have taken:

Fabric is not like wood, concrete or cardboard, and designing in cloth requires a fluid way of thinking that isn't stiffened or restrained by inflexible rules and traditions. When you explore new techniques and methods of making, you deal with chance, luck and hope (15).

Roberts' writing and work focuses on the idea of designing patterns, rather than creating patterns for designs, a cause and effect way of working that leads to new designs that could not have been conceptualized the other way around.

**I have worked with this chance and discovery, cause and effect as a form of Research Creation — or Research for Creation — to determine a study of the ways I produce garments.**

Research Creation is well described in Chapman and Sawchucks' article *Research-Creation: Intervention, Analysis and "Family Resemblances"* (2012):

Research-creation "theses" or projects typically integrate a creative process, experimental aesthetic component, or an artistic work as an integral part of the study. Topics are selected and investigated that could not be addressed without engaging in some form of creative practice, such as the production of a video, performance, film, sound work, blog or multimedia text. (6)

In my case I have used the cut, development, and construction of a garment as a creative process to explore my questions around fit.

Grounded theory is a method of discovery, much like Roberts' approach. I have used grounded theory as illustrated by Melanie Birks and Jane Mills in *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide* (2015) as a loose way of organizing this research (4). Grounded theory requires an immersion in methods, methodology, and theory, allowing new theory to emerge. When using grounded theory, the research questions evolve, and each new discovery directs the research forward. Auto-ethnography has put me in the clothing I have made, to first hand put theory to the test of practice as described. Brent Luvaas in his chapter *Urban Fieldnotes: An Auto-Ethnography of Street Style Blogging* (2016) writes: "...auto-ethnography is a powerful tool, grounding insights gleaned from elsewhere within the lived realities of everyday experience. It subjects theory to the test of practice" (98). This has allowed me to build on the theories outlined in my literature review and add a sensory experience and a perspective of someone not just immersed in the practice of making fashion to the field of fashion studies, but also from the experience of the wearer.

## The suit is my medium, but it is also part of my methodology.

Appropriating the suit and taking it out of its usual context brings into question its usually held meanings. Jan Verwoert writes in his article *Apropos Appropriation* (2007) that appropriate appropriation is about "performing the unresolved," bringing into question the untold (6). He describes appropriation as a way of evoking ghosts (Verwoert 6). The suit as a symbol of uniformity and conservatism is a way of conforming to Western ideals, a way of fitting in. It is this meaning associated with the grey flannel suit that I hope to appropriate and decontextualize.

Sloan Wilson's 1955 novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* explores the associations we have with this form of dress. The story follows an ex-military man, Tom Rath, trying to fit back into regular life in New York's upper working class. Tom is unable to shake his time spent in war, and cannot re-assimilate into his past life. The title of the book is a metaphor for his struggles to fit in. Similarly, American fashion designer Thom Browne's work can serve as a case study with regard to how I have appropriated the grey flannel suit. Browne pushes the boundaries of this type of garment, almost exclusively, collection after collection, successfully evoking ghosts of tradition, conservatism, uniformity, masculinity, and an attempt at fitting in. Browne does this by presenting experimental and non-conformational pieces that still resemble a grey flannel suit.

## ISSUES WITH MOBILITY: AN ANATOMICAL STUDY

My earlier quantitative questions around changes to Western bodies over time led me to a study of anatomy. How can I describe my understanding of good fit for dress, without a clear understanding of the human body? This section highlights the fluidity of the human body, and focuses not just on the body and its parts, but how the body moves. In this section I explore how the body impacts dress and how mobility in dress plays a role in our experience of dress. Clarence Poulin writes in his text, *Tailoring Suits: The Professional Way on What is Good Tailoring* (1952):

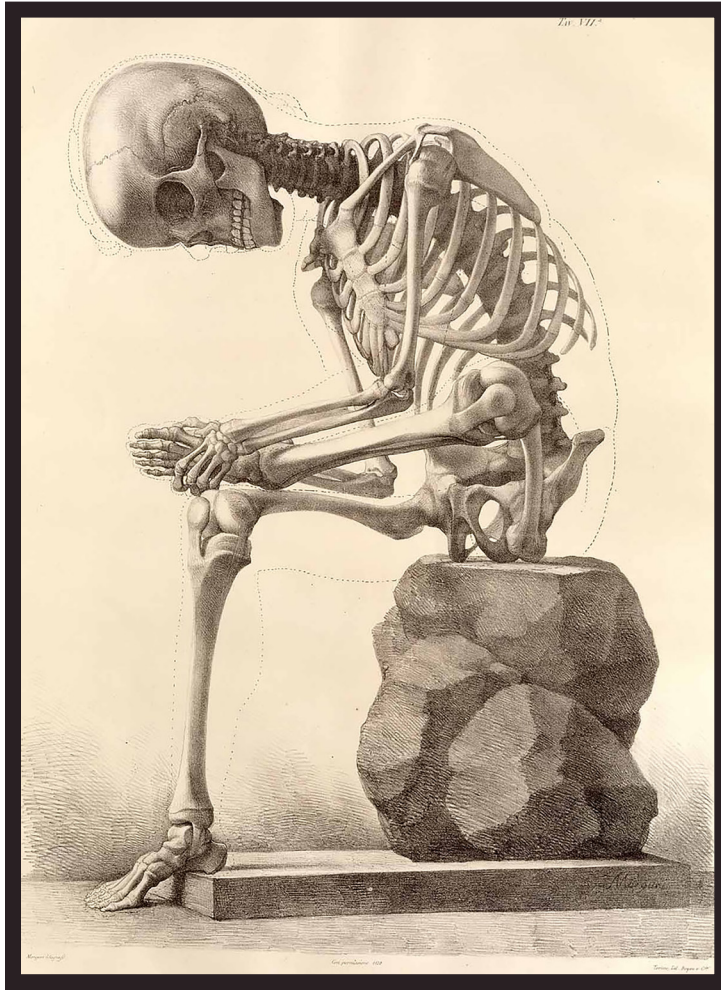
A good coat has straight seams and straight collar edges all over. There are no crooks or puckers. The front edge is smooth, and not stretched at any point... The sleeves hang clean with no diagonal fluting. The collar sits close around the neck but is neither tight nor loose. (15-16)

In order to find what Poulin writes, I start with an observation of the body. I would like to note that finding a natural or comfortable position is difficult. Part of my job is to distract an individual I'm hoping to fit, move them away from the mirror, and

trick them, if you will. Any notes taken on an individual's posture while they face themselves in the mirror will be incorrect. (When I get dressed in the morning and face myself in the mirror, I'm aware that I suck in my belly and puff out my chest, so I'm conscious of how paying close attention to one's own posture and proportions can alter the body's shape.) A suit made up with observations taken in this setting will inevitably come back to me for alterations.

It has helped me to start with a description of the frame of the human body using the anatomical terms from Elaine N. Marieb, Patricia Bradley Wilhelm, and Jon Mallat's book *Human Anatomy* (2011). The human skeleton is described as having two regions. The *axial skeleton* (Marieb et al. 145-181) is the vertebral column (backbone) along with the skull and ribcage. In humans, the vertebral column has a gentle S-shape when upright, with curves in the neck and low back areas that are concave in an opposite way to the curves in the ribcage and sacral areas. The other region is called the *appendicular skeleton* (Marieb et al. 182-205), consisting of the upper and lower extremities. The upper extremity includes the bones of the arm along with the scapula and clavicle, and the lower extremity includes the bones of the leg along with the pelvis (Figure 1).





**FIGURE 1** This illustration shows a human skeleton seated, highlighting a position that a tailor also must consider when fitting a suit on an individual. Francesco Bertinatti. *Skeleton*. 1837-39. National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland. In *Human Anatomy: Depicting the Body from the Renaissance to Today*. Thames & Hudson, 2011. Cover.

Why does a change in posture or gesture matter to a tailor? As noted, in an upright position, there is a soft “S” shape, but when seated one’s position is more of a “C” shape. This changes the balance, or distribution, of cloth over the body significantly. When setting out to make a suit for an individual I must also consider the occupation of the individual and the occasion during which the garment will be worn. My study in anatomy did not lead me to any answers on mechanical fit, instead these issues with mobility further complicate the idea of good fit. While anthropometry is published as static data, the human body is not static. Its measurements change with the movement of the body. Not only is every individual’s idea of fit going to be different, but the measurements we use to establish fit are always in changing. This ease of movement is challenged in creative pieces I made: *Abduction* and *Upside Down* are further described in the section *How do you experience fit?*

## MISSED FIT: RESEARCH CREATION

In my exhibition *Missed Fit*, I aimed to distort the experience of getting dressed by exploring exaggerated principles of fit in garments. The results, expressed through elements that investigated the process of designing clothing, how garments are made, and the feeling of wearing them, questioned one's sense of fitting in.

**The goal was to expand the ways practitioners consider and find what is deemed to be “good fit.”**

The creation and exhibition of works for *Missed Fit* reinforced the concept that mechanical fit influences psychological fit, and that there are tools that can be developed to produce diverse approaches to fitting garments that don't rely exclusively on anthropometric data. The exhibition was divided into four sections, each introduced by a question.

### PART ONE: HOW DO YOU FIND FIT?



**FIGURE 2** “Il Tagliapanni” is more properly translated from Italian to English as “the cutter.” In tailoring, the role of the cutter is to interpret the pattern and cut the cloth for an individual. A tailor assembles the cut pieces. The work in *Missed Fit* started with an exploration in cutting. Giovanni Battista Moroni. *The Tailor (Il Tagliapanni)*. Painting. 1565-1570. The National Gallery, London.

The first element is a collection of research materials, process work, and tailored garments made purposely not to fit that question the idea of fitting in through dress (Figure 2). I started my research looking for a system of drafting that might accommodate all body types, going back to some of the earliest known texts on tailoring, and found only instruction on how to make the most economical use in the layout of a pattern on fabric and some basic instructions on types of stitches that are used to assemble a piece (Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5).

FIGURE 3

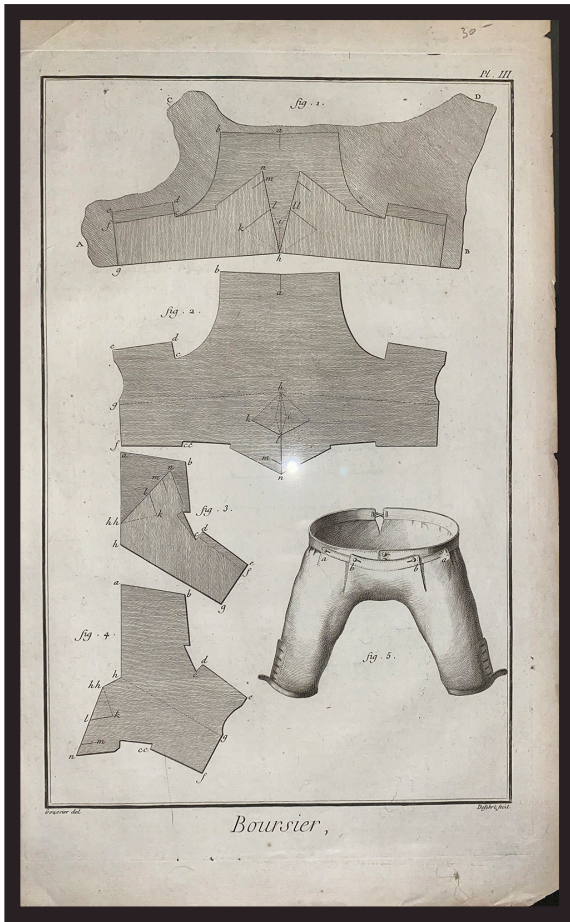


FIGURE 4

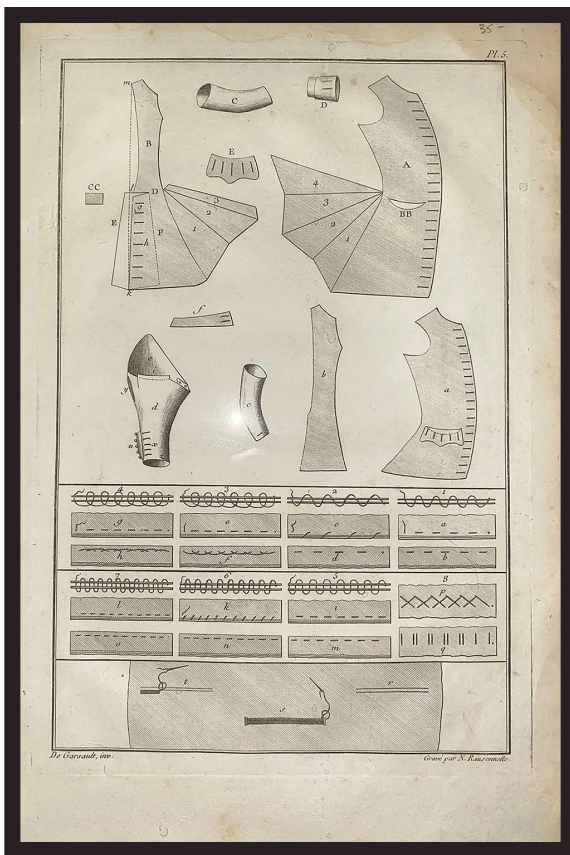


FIGURE 5

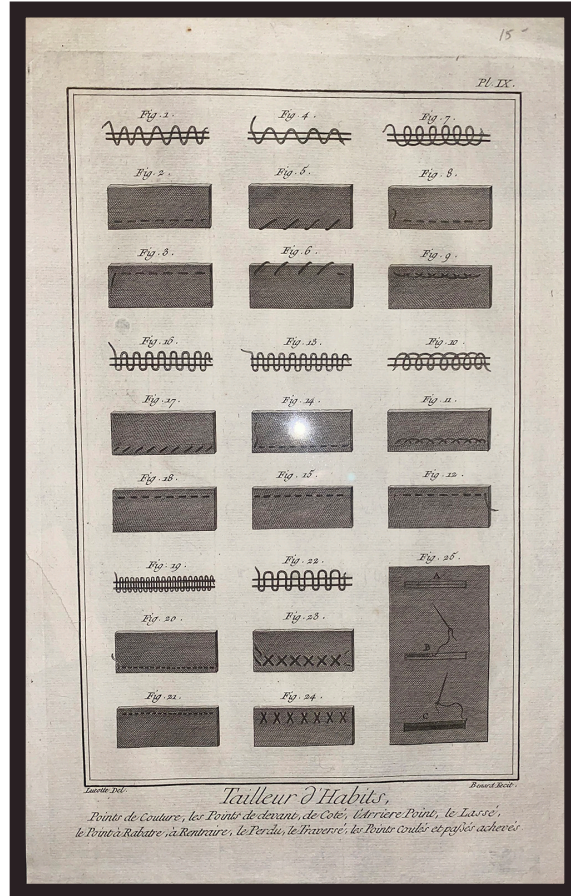
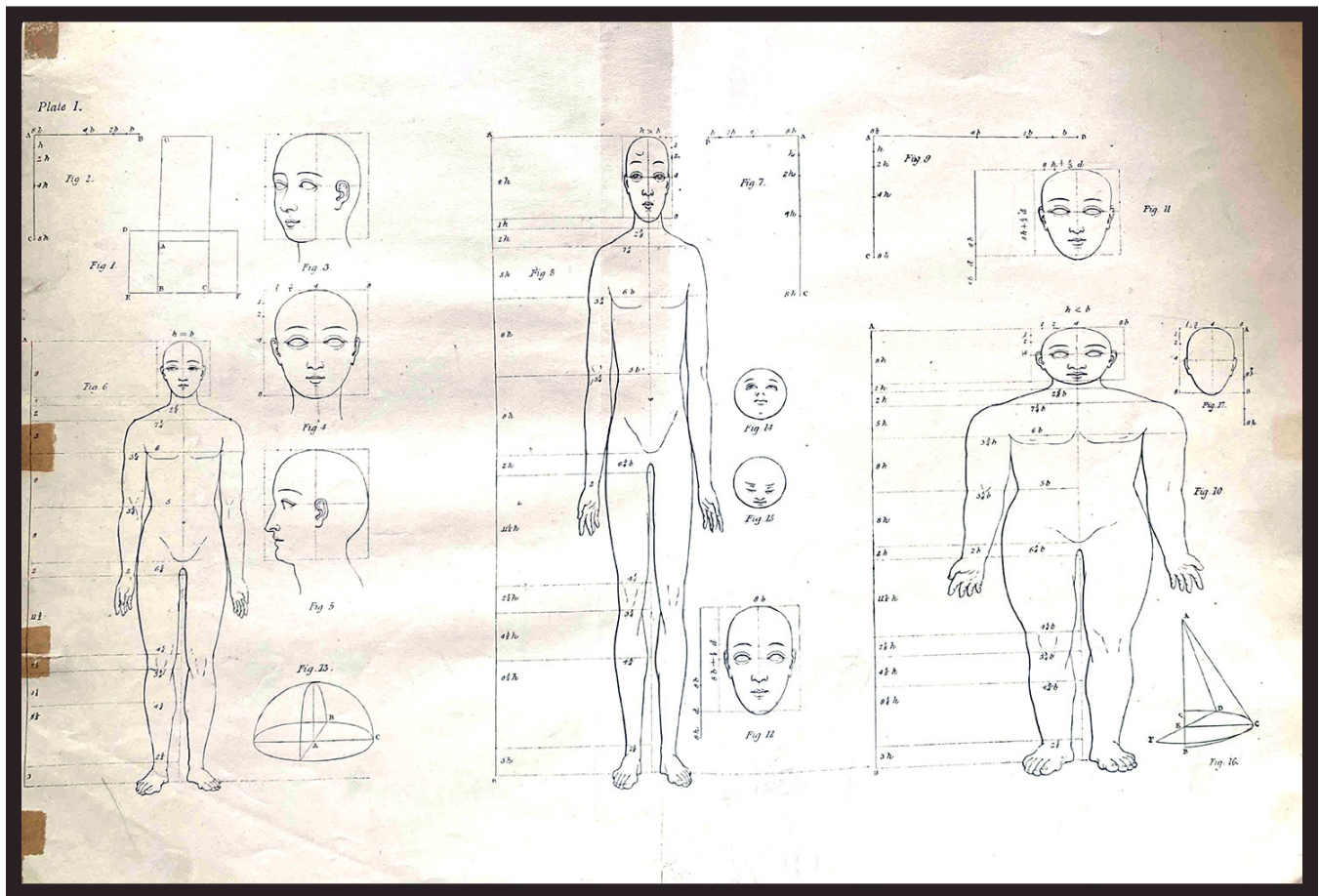


FIGURE 3, FIGURE 4, AND FIGURE 5

These plates, illustrating the methods used by the tailor, are examples from one of the earliest known texts published on tailoring, predated by the Spanish text by Juan de Alcega, *Libro de Geometrica, Práctica y Traça* (1589). Both of these texts focus on the optimal layout of patterns on cloth and stitches used in the garment's assembly. Neither book discusses how the shape of the cut is determined. Plate III, Plate 5, Plate IX. 1751-1772. In *Encyclopédie, Ou Dictionnaire Raisonné Des Sciences, Des Arts Et Des Métiers*, by Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond D'Alembert. 1751-1772.

In the hopes of finding some lost system from the beginnings of the tailoring trade, I explored Wampen's *Anthropometry* (1864), one of the earliest texts to theorize how garments could be made into sizes that would work for the general population. Wampen's text consists of a set of mathematical equations that are meant to address the more complex differences in proportions of an individual (Figure 6).



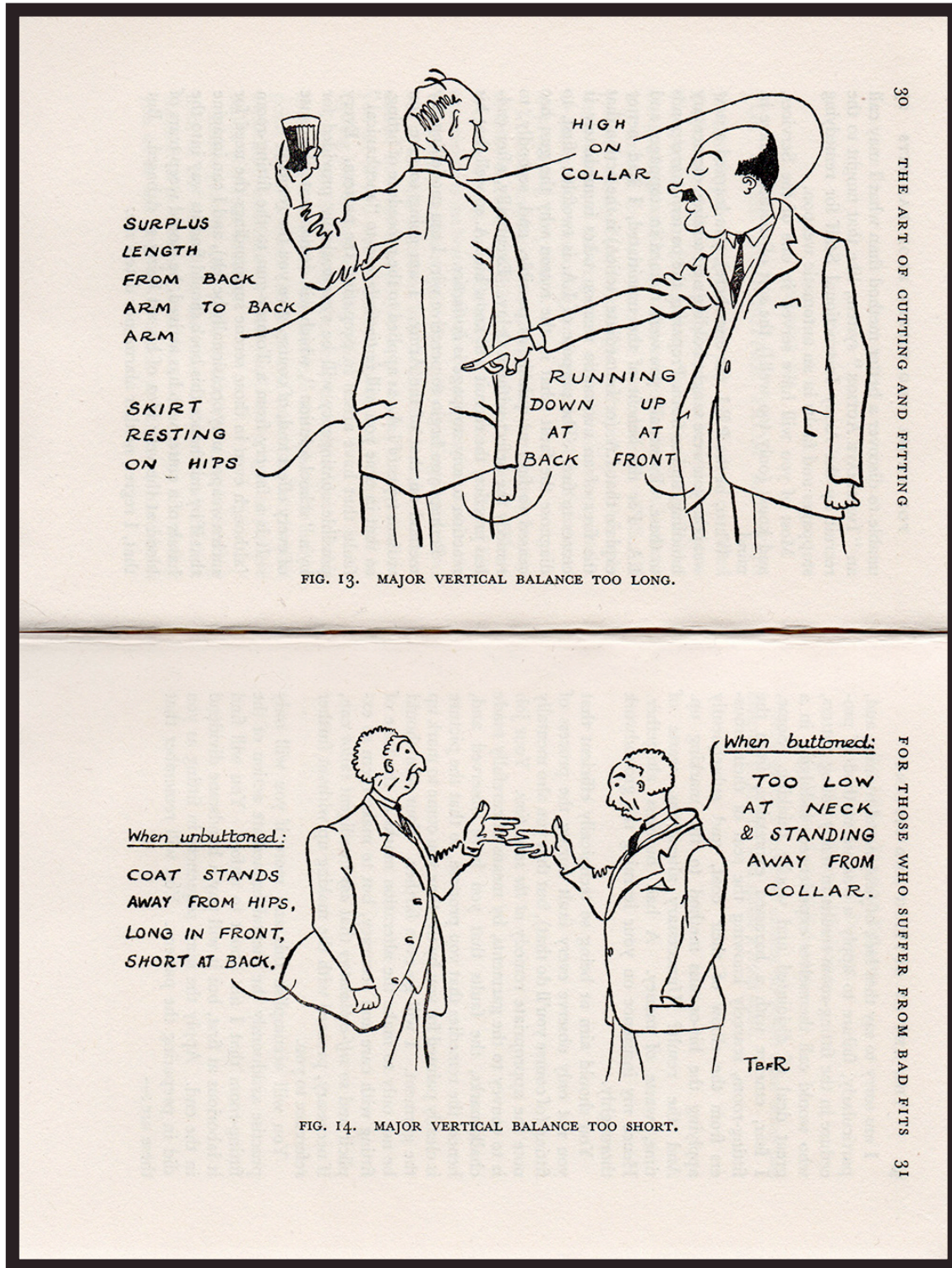
**FIGURE 6** This plate highlights the fact that changes in this human form's height and breadth proportions are more complex than simply scaling up or down. Henry Wampen. *Hymenean Form, Mercurial Form and Herculean Form*. Illustration. In *Anthropometry: Or Geometry of the Human Figure*, by Henry Wampen. London: John Williamson Company Limited, 1864. Plate i.

The search for resources yielded many results, especially throughout the nineteenth century. Many early books on pattern drafting, including Wampen's text, make claims that the art of cutting is scientific and that a skilled craftsman should also be a mathematician and be able to use mathematical formulas to find the right answers without the need for a fitting (Wampen Part Third 1864, 9). It is theories like Wampen's that have been proven wrong in my professional experience, and challenged my sense of mastery of my profession. In other texts, I found concepts that helped to expand my new understanding of fit. *The Art of Trying-On or Fitting* cautions that even if a cutter's skills are at this level, their interpretation of good fit for an individual may not be what the individual interprets as good fit (Shaw). In Shaw's text I found language that I find more preferable as a tailor: a "try-on" as opposed to a "fitting". I prefer a "try-on" as the term doesn't assume a right and wrong answer as a "fitting" might.

J. King Wilson's (1948) book, *The Art of Cutting and Fitting*, is a mid-twentieth century text and a landmark study in finding good fit (Figure 7). Wilson's text is not about drafting, but adapting a pattern, or adjusting a draft to accommodate an individual. A pattern in tailoring and clothing construction refers to a paper template that is used to cut cloth in the construction of garments. The pattern controls the final

shape and size or fit of a garment. Patternmaking in tailoring and clothing construction is a system for adapting previously developed patterns for fit or style. Pattern drafting in tailoring is the creation of a new patterns from scratch, usually from a mathematical formula.

Throughout the text, Wilson breaks down the art of fitting into a series of independent patternmaking moves that address one issue with fit at a time. Earlier texts, such as *The Art of Trying-On or Fitting*, worked with the premise of tailored clothing being made from moldable and thicker woolen cloths that could be easily stretched and formed with an iron (Shaw). These techniques dealt with several issues of fit in one movement of cloth. Mid-twentieth century spinning and weaving processes produced cloths that don't allow for this type of manipulation. J. King Wilson's (1948) text gave me a starting point to explore fit. I was able to look at each one of Wilson's isolated movements and apply a variety of extreme exaggerations in the right or wrong direction. I produced a series of twenty experimental jackets in muslin. *Pattern Piece for A Study in Vertical Balance – Passing up the Back* (Figure 8) is a framed pattern piece shown in a state of manipulation and presented as a piece of art to be contemplated. *A Study in Vertical Balance – Passing up the Back* (Figure 9) is the three-dimensional results of this flat piece.



**FIGURE 7** J. Wilson is the first to break down the art of fitting into adjustments that address a single difference on the body. Previous texts use complex movements that address two or three aspects of the body at one time. Theodore B. F. Ruoff. *Major Vertical Balance Too Long, Major Vertical Balance Too Short*. Cartoon. In *The Art of Cutting and Fitting: A Practical Manual*, by J. King Wilson. London: Crosby Lockwood & Son, 1948. 30-31.



**FIGURE 8** Philip Sparks. *Pattern Piece for A Study in Vertical Balance - Passing up the Back*. 2018. Toronto.

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**FIGURE 9** Philip Sparks. *Pattern Piece for A Study in Vertical Balance - Passing up the Back*. 2018. Toronto.

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This exploration hinted at new and exciting ways to explore fit, but still did not answer my question of how to best draft for an individual. This brings me back to the anthropometric data that I was so interested in when I started this research. Has our anthropometric data changed across time? Surely our lifestyles and occupations have changed, but have our bodies changed too?

My personal experience of working with pattern drafts (both historic and contemporary) have led me to the conclusion that they don't accommodate individual bodies.

## Mathematical pattern drafts rely on anthropometric data and individual bodies don't follow any prescribed set of proportions.

For example, if I am tasked with drafting the pattern for a jacket and the client has a waist circumference that is larger than their chest, this is a challenge as most drafts published assume a smaller waist to chest ratio. As a tailor, I am more often than not faced with a body that doesn't conform to published standards. *New Standard Chart of Proportions* (Figure 10) from *The New Mitchell System of Men's Designing*, published in 1951, is an example of a set of anthropometric proportions. In my practice, I have not yet measured an individual whose measurements conform to any of the many charts I have gathered.

# NEW STANDARD CHART OF PROPORTIONS

	BREAST	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
WAIST		30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
Height	SEAT	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
5'5"	Scye Depth	8 $\frac{3}{8}$	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	8 $\frac{3}{8}$	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	8 $\frac{5}{8}$	9	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	9 $\frac{3}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{5}{8}$	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	10	10 $\frac{1}{8}$
	Waist Length	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$
5'6"	Scye Depth	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	8 $\frac{3}{8}$	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	8 $\frac{7}{8}$	9	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	9 $\frac{3}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{5}{8}$	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	10	10 $\frac{1}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$
	Waist Length	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$
5'7"	Scye Depth	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	8 $\frac{3}{8}$	8 $\frac{7}{8}$	9	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	9 $\frac{3}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{5}{8}$	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	10	10 $\frac{1}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$
	Waist Length	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{4}$
5'8"	Scye Depth	8 $\frac{7}{8}$	9	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	9 $\frac{3}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{5}{8}$	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	10	10 $\frac{1}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{3}{4}$
	Waist Length	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$	17 $\frac{1}{4}$
5'9"	Scye Depth	9	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	9 $\frac{3}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{5}{8}$	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	10	10 $\frac{1}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$
	Waist Length	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$
5'10"	Scye Depth	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	9 $\frac{3}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{5}{8}$	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	10	10 $\frac{1}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$
	Waist Length	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$
5'11"	Scye Depth	9 $\frac{3}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{5}{8}$	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	9 $\frac{7}{8}$	10	10 $\frac{1}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	10 $\frac{3}{8}$	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	10 $\frac{7}{8}$	11
	Waist Length	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
6 Ft.	Waist Length	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
	Strap	12	12 $\frac{1}{4}$	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 $\frac{3}{4}$	13	13 $\frac{1}{4}$	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	14	14 $\frac{1}{4}$	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 $\frac{3}{4}$	15	15 $\frac{1}{4}$	15 $\frac{1}{2}$

**OTHER IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS**

1—SLEEVE INSEAM: same as waist length.      2—YOUNG MEN: 5-inch difference between chest and waist.      3—STUBS: 2-inch difference between chest and waist.      4—STOUTS: Chest and waist equal.      5—CORPULENTS: Waist larger than chest.      6—RISE OF TROUSERS:  $\frac{1}{4}$ th seat on the square, plus  $\frac{1}{4}$ th height, plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.

**FIGURE 10** This is an example of anthropometric data, a chart of proportions used in the drafting of a pattern. If the proportions listed in a patternmaking text are not followed, the formula will not work, like trying to find the diameter of a circle without using Pi. A pattern will still be adjusted to an individual using principles of fit. Frank C. Doblin. *New Standard Chart of Proportions*. Chart. In *The New Mitchell System of Men's Designing*. By Frank C. Doblin. New York: American-Mitchell Fashion Publishers, 1951. 16.

Size North America (Size North America 2017) is an example of a current study that is using a body scanner to collect measurements from over 20,000 volunteers across North America. It is funded by corporations such as General Motors, the Gap, and Hanes. I question such studies as they aim to provide businesses with an easy average to use, but as I've already shown,

establishing such averages rarely provides a practitioner with the information they actually need to fit individuals. Figure 11 is an illustration of the fifteen size ranges offered by the French tailoring firm Eversmart circa 1950, once considered to be necessary to accommodate individuals. Today, most firms offer only one size range. My research into historic tailoring also revealed many

tools aimed at simplifying the taking of measurements of individual bodies. These ranged from complex rulers (Figure 12) to an advertisement for photogrammetry circa 1960 using a Super 8 film camera. I can across this advertisement while rummaging through articles on tailoring at La Galcante, a newspaper clippings store in

Paris, France. All of these tools quickly fell out of use, most likely due to inaccuracy, and I can't help but feel the more recent attempts at using digital photogrammetry (body scanners) will also fail to provide insight into the needs of individuals outside of what is considered the new average or standard, and for different activities.

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AUX GALERIES LAFAYETTE

FOIT NORMAL MINCE

EXTRA COURT COURT NORMAL LONG EXTRA LONG

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PRÉSENTE UN CHOIX DE  
**10.000**  
VÊTEMENTS  
PRÊTS A PORTER  
ET  
**350**  
MODELES  
DE TOUTES  
CONFORMATIONS

**EverSMART** A MIS LA CONFECTION BIEN FAITE A LA PORTÉE DE TOUS

FIGURE 11 Eversmart. "Eversmart: Exclusivite Des Galeries Lafayette." Pamphlet. n.d.

**FIGURE 12** The Mesurite Co. "Clothes Value-Plus Fit." Advertisement. In *The New Mitchell System of Men's Designing*. By Frank C. Doblin. New York: American-Mitchell Fashion Publishers, 1951. 291.

Once I had determined that the fit for the individual could not be prescribed by a mathematical formula, I moved onto the experience of fit. Sara Ahmed's (2006) *Queer Phenomenology* offered me a new platform to investigate these ideas. Rather than working towards making garments that let people fit in, I have explored making garments that don't fit in. *Jacket # 21* (Figure 13) is a finished jacket, a further exploration, based on the results of my *Study in Vertical Balance*. It is the opposite alteration to *Passing up the Back*, with a longer front as opposed to a longer back. This attempt at not fitting in is explored in the creative works that follow.

**THE MESURITE**

## CLOTHES VALUE—PLUS FIT

A tailor's business is to give his trade not only **style** and **quality**, but also **well-fitting clothes**. Such service adds to his **success** and **benefits**.

The majority of **men** and **women** have a right or left lower shoulder or a round back, with no two alike. They cannot be fitted with a regular drafted pattern, regardless of how good it is, or how well it looks.

The naked **eye** cannot measure physical abnormalities, and when one of them is overlooked, it is the cause of some major alterations in the finished garment and the **loss** of **good trade** by dragging them back and forth.

It is a **problem** to **fit** properly any abnormally-built customer with the mere tape measure or by **guessing** at his **posture**. You **must** have the proper **tool** to obtain the **vital** measurements of the abnormally-built **body** . . . that is **essential** to cut garments for the individual that will **fit** him **right** and **save unnecessary alterations**.

Why not **MESURITE** and **save**? — It will **do a world of good for you**; it will **solve fitting problems**, and **save** many and many dollars of alteration **costs**.

The **MESURITE** will be a **treat** to your **trade** that will **enhance** our **business** by giving customers **well-fitting clothes**.

The **MESURITE** gauge detects any abnormal features of the body, resulting in correctly-fitting clothes for each individual. There is **no guess-work!** With this information, and with our instructions, you can make the necessary alterations in the pattern, and when the garment is cut and made, it will **fit** perfectly snug around the collar and shoulders. You have suited our customers, and you **benefit** by making them **happy** with **well-fitting clothes**.

The **MESURITE** with complete instructions  
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Mail P. O. money order or check to

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TRADE MARK

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BUFFALO 3, N. Y.



**FIGURE 13** Jacket #21, a finished piece, is an exaggeration of an exaggeration in vertical balance.

Philip Sparks. *A Study in Vertical Balance- Jacket #21*. In *The Globe and Mail*. September 27, 2018. Accessed February 18, 2019. Photo: Shalan and Paul <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/style/article-think-suits-are-stuffy-these-eight-looks-for-fall-prove-otherwise/>.

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## WEAVING

As a designer and a maker, the small details and finishes as well as the cloth are carefully considered as part of the overall result or meaning of a finished ensemble of clothing. As I outlined earlier in this article in the section *A Fit, Fit*, Barthes' theories on how all the small details on a piece of clothing add up to its meaning, and that the interpretation of dress has an effect on our experience of it. To explore Barthes' theory further, and push the boundaries surrounding the experience of dress, I wove the fabric for *A Suit Made Not to Fit*. I did this so that I could have a non-uniform cloth. I created a cloth with a coloured stripe that did not repeat or complete a geometric pattern. I changed the direction of the ribs or twills to run off in opposing directions rather than diagonally across the full piece. In addition to creating a piece that challenged mechanical fit, I created a piece of cloth that also challenged the type of material that's appropriate for making a suit.

Weaving was new to me. While dressing my loom, I was reminded of Ahemd's theory, as taking up weaving was a queering of my experience of making. I was dressing a loom and not a person. Planning weaving requires one to read a pattern backward and upside down, not a pattern as described for cutting the cloth but a pattern used for *making* cloth, which determines which threads are lifted and which ones are not. Dressing a loom according to a weaving pattern ultimately determines what the final structure of the cloth will be and what geometric patterns will be produced. The loom is dressed, or threaded, from right to left instead of left to right, or how I am

used to reading text. While weaving, I had to consider the cloth as it advanced towards me, upside down from how I intended on using it. This queering of reading and interpreting the loom was an unsettling, unexpected experience. In addition to reading backwards and upside down, I found my attempts at creating a non-uniform cloth to unexpectedly challenge my experience. The threading of the long warp threads that run the length of a fabric is a repetitive procedure. With a simple repeating pattern this process of threading allows the weaver to become very well oriented with the loom. The non-uniformity desired in my cloth prevented me from becoming comfortably oriented with the loom. My process was constantly disrupted and rethought.

I had yet to begin the weaving, but with the loom dressed, it felt quite out of balance, with all the weight of the yarn on the back-warp beam. I found myself having to be very gentle with my movements as to not let the loom fall away from me. The organization of the yarns as they get threaded through the eyes of the heddles and the reed (the bars that hold the yarns in place) made me think of the arrangement and organization of the theories and methodologies I had immersed myself in. The tension (tightness) of the yarns reflected the tension that I felt as I prepared to start something new, the nervousness and excitement of a new process.

Weaving the fabric for *A Suit Made Not to Fit*, a finished set of garments presented in the exhibition, allowed me to incorporate unexpected details into my work before cutting, an exploration of Barthes' theories on how all of the small components of a garments can add up to

the meaning of the piece, and ultimately change our experience of it. My meticulously planned non-uniformity for the cloth unfortunately fades into the background of *A Suit Made Not to Fit*. It is my genuine mistakes throughout the weaving process that show as flaws in the cloth, and it is these flaws that are most noticeable in the finished piece. A great deal of planning went into calculating the yardage, or length of the cloth, that I needed to produce a suit of garments. The cutting of this cloth proved a challenge as my calculations went wrong. The cloth shrunk considerably in both length and width. Ironically, the pattern pieces for *A Suit Made Not to Fit* did not fit on the cloth itself (Figure 14). The retrofitting and compromises needed to accommodate *A Suit Made Not to Fit* and the genuine mistakes or flaws in the cloth made me question my abilities as a maker. As I sat in the gallery during my exhibition and looked at these pieces, I struggled with the fact that I wanted them to not fit in a specific way, and instead they don't fit in another. This experience of weaving cloth and cutting a suit not to fit also advances Derrida's theory that symbols have many different meanings. My planned intentions or messages incorporated into the cloth made for a suit not to fit are easily lost or interpreted differently than what I had intended.



**FIGURE 14** Weaving offers the opportunity to explore material and the role it plays creating meaning in clothing. Shown here are the beginning and the end of the 12-metres of cloth hand-woven for *A Suit Made Not to Fit*, a finished ensemble of garments presented as part of this exhibition, with all of the tension cut out of the middle. Small mistakes or flaws in the weave add to the "messed fit" of the piece. Philip Sparks. *Messed Fit* (Installation Shot- 2104 Dundas Street West) *Casting On, Casting Off and Leclerc Four Harness Jack Loom*. 2019. Toronto. Photo: Kristy Boyce.

## PART 2: HOW DO YOU FIT IN?

While studying in Florence, the works of Renaissance artist and architect Filippo Brunelleschi and his thinking behind Basilica di San Lorenzo and its Sacristy informed the work that I produced while in the city, specifically my Dome Shirt. I was drawn to this piece of architecture because of its anthropocentric nature. Brunelleschi's incorporation of Vitruvian proportions from *On Symmetry: In Temples and in the Human Body in The Ten Books on Architecture* (Vitruvius 1960, 72-75) are clearly marked out on of the floors and columns in Basilica di San Lorenzo. My past studio works and writings had looked

to these Vitruvian writings in an attempt to get a better picture of what was once considered ideal and to challenge those ideals. Of course, the actual measures applied in this style of architecture are based on what Vitruvius describes as "A well formed man" (Vitruvius 1960, 72), or what was considered one in 30 to 50 BC.

My creative work in Florence questioned ideal bodies through fit. Brunelleschi's dome offered me an opportunity to explore the geometry based on an ideal human form used in architecture and apply that geometry to a paper pattern that was then used to cut a shirt that no longer fits the body as we expect today (Figure 15).



**FIGURE 15** Inspired by Brunelleschi's interpretation of Vitruvian writings in the dome of the sacristy in Basilica San Lorenzo, a pattern for a shirt uses the same Vitruvian proportions. Brunelleschi designed the sacristy and its dome referencing a section in *De Architectura (The Ten Books on Architecture)* called "On Symmetry: In Temples and in the Human Body," the same writings that inspired da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*. Philip Sparks. *Missed Fit* (Installation Shot- 2104 Dundas Street West) *Pattern for a Dome Shirt*. 2019. Toronto. Photo: Kristy Boyce.



I reflect on this earlier studio work here because my experience presenting the creative product was the starting point for the *Missed Fit* exhibition.

## Showing this work on my own body placed me in an unexpectedly vulnerable position.

There was no mirror in the studio, so I could not see the design myself. As well, I am accustomed to presenting my clothing on a model. Presenting experimental work that I had made not to fit, with no clear sense of what my classmates were seeing, was very challenging. In my presentation of *Dome Shirt*, it was not just my work being criticized, it was me — I was a part of the work (Figure 16). I felt somewhat naked under the piece I had made, with no cloth left between my arms and my torso. This presentation momentarily challenged my sense of ontology, of who I was at the moment. It was evidence of Elizabeth Wilson's (2003) statement in *Adorned in Dreams*: “dress is the frontier between self and the not-self” (3). Are we what our bodies say about us or how we present our bodies?



**FIGURE 16** Philip Sparks.  
*Dome Shirt*. 2019. Toronto.  
Photo: Carlyle Routh.

Vitruvius' writing and this ideal of a well-formed man has been used for over two thousand years and for many still represents the idealized surface anatomy of a man, so I couldn't resist trying to compare myself to it. I produced the piece *A Reflection on the Vitruvian Man* in collaboration with artist Kal Mansur. *A Reflection on the Vitruvian Man* is an abstraction of Leonardo da Vinci's (1490) drawing of the *Vitruvian Man*. This was da Vinci's interpretation of Vitruvius' (1960) section in *The Ten Books on Architec-*

*ture (De Architectura)* called *On Symmetry: In Temples and in the Human Body* (72-75). This abstracted drawing has been milled into clear acrylic, filled in with black acrylic paint, and hung from the ceiling in front of a four-panel mirror. One can stand in front of *A Reflection on the Vitruvian Man* and view one's own reflection through it. This piece allows viewers to compare themselves to the *Vitruvian Man*. I used this idealized figure because it represents an unobtainable standard (Figure 17).



**FIGURE 17** Da Vinci's (1490) illustration the *Vitruvian Man* is still used today as a symbol for the idealized surface anatomy of a man. Etched into clear acrylic, the figure presented here is scaled to a height of six feet. In *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Vitruvius (1960) writes, "...as the foot is one sixth of a man's height, the height of the body as expressed in the number of feet being limited to six, they held that this was the perfect number" (74). Philip Sparks. *Missed Fit* (Installation Shot- 2104 Dundas Street West). *A Reflection on the Vitruvian Man*. 2019. Toronto. Photo: Kristy Boyce.

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### PART 3: HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T FIT IN ENTERS THE ROOM?

Taking and exploring further some of the initial results found in my earlier studio works, *A Study of Vertical Balance*, I produced *A Suit Made Not to Fit*. *A Study of Vertical Balance* was comprised of twenty experimental jackets in muslin that tested theories and principles around technical fit for tailored jackets. Figures 8 and 9 are examples of these twenty experiments. I aimed to recreate the experience I had with *Dome Shirt*, and put myself on both sides of my sheers acting as both tailor and client. I took areas of my body that would usually require some accommodation in cutting and exaggerated them.

For the jacket, where I required extra cloth for a broad back, I instead took cloth away. For the front, where I needed to take cloth away to accommodate a hollowed-out chest, I added cloth and exaggerated the effect even further by extending the length and stiffening the hem. For the trousers, surplus cloth was added to the front in both width and length, resulting in a trouser front that folds fully over itself and a waist line that approaches my chest. The shirt sleeves are lengthened, changing the overall proportions of the piece. It is all presented on a mannequin made from a mould of my body to emphasize my personal experience of fit (Figure 18).



**FIGURE 18** *A Suit Made Not to Fit* features many subtle details that create the experience of not fitting in. The stand that the suit is displayed on is made from a mould of the designer's body to exhibit the garments in a way that emphasizes a personal experience of fit. Philip Sparks. *Missed Fit* (Installation Shot: 2104 Dundas Street West). *A Suit Made Not to Fit*. 2019. Toronto. Photo: Kristy Boyce.

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In Photographs of *A Suit Made Not to Fit*, I come back to questions brought up earlier in Elizabeth Wilson's text (2003). I felt that I could not fully cover the meaning I was hoping to achieve by simply displaying *A Suit Made Not to Fit* on a mannequin. I needed to be in the piece because I added to its meaning. As it would have been impossible for me to wear the suit and interact with my audience for the duration of my exhibition, I collaborated with fashion photographer Carlyle Routh and makeup and hair artist Robert Weir to have myself photographed in *A Suit Made Not to Fit*. The images are presented as *Photographs of A Suit Made Not to Fit*, each of which illustrates a different view of myself in the garments: left side, front, right side, and back profiles.

While being photographed, I again found myself in a vulnerable position similar to when I wore the *Dome Shirt* in front of my classmates in Florence. I have directed many fashion photoshoots from behind the camera, but this time I was in front. Every time there was a pause in the photography, personal questions arose in my mind about my abilities as a model, about the legitimacy of my experimental work, and whether or not this approach made any sense.

**These feeling confirmed my theories that clothing truly can offer — or deny — an individual's sense of identity and ability to fit in.**

During the shoot, I had to consistently remind myself that the pauses in photography were not a criticism of me or my work, that Carlyle was most likely checking lighting conditions and the quality of the images themselves. The images capture the movement of my body twisting and attempting to conform my body to *A Suit Made Not to Fit* (Figure 19).



**FIGURE 19** The wearer imparts meaning to clothing. These images, created in collaboration with photographer Carlyle Routh and makeup artist/hair stylist Robert Weir, highlight the struggle of trying to move the body to fit in to a full ensemble that was made not to fit. Philip Sparks, Carlyle Routh, and Robert Weir. *Photographs of A Suit Made Not to Fit*. 2019. Toronto.

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**FIGURE 20** Philip Sparks.  
*200%*. 2019. Toronto. Photo:  
Carlyle Routh.

#### PART 4: HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE FIT?

The final element of the exhibition, *A Fitting Room*, invited the audience to participate in the experience of a missed fit by trying on a variety of shirts made not to fit. This was done to highlight how everyone's experience with dress is different. The pieces were made with some intention of not fitting in a particular way. *200%* is a shirt with its pattern enlarged to two hundred per cent of my own shirt size to create more of a long gown than a shirt. Despite its outsized form, I did not want *200%* to become too comfortable for the wearer, so I made it from a very fragile cloth with very little cohesiveness. This meant that one had to be very careful trying on and wearing the piece as a finger could easily puncture the cloth. Many visitors told me that this piece reminded them of trying on their parents clothing as a child (Figure 20).

As a counterpoint to *200%*, I made *75%*. This was a shirt made twenty-five per cent smaller, which produced a significant difference in the size of the finished piece. *75%* was made from a four-way stretch fabric so that those who tried it on could have the experience of trying something on that was too small. Of course, I also had two guests that fit the shirt quite well, and received a hug and words of gratitude for producing something that fit someone who normally has issues with clothing being too large and usually has to wear children's clothing.

Some of the pieces looked at restricting movement as an issue with fit. *Abduction*, meaning "moving away" (Marieb 2011, 214), is a shirt made with the arms attached too low. *Abduction* is designed to prevent the wearer from lifting their arm away from the body. As guests tried on this piece, new ways of wearing it were proposed, as a cape, for example, instead of buttoned closed as a shirt. This reinforcing that everyone's experience of fit is different, and my intended meanings are not always interpreted as I had planned (Figure 21).



**FIGURE 21** Philip Sparks.  
*Abduction*. 2019. Toronto.  
Photo: Carlyle Routh.

*Upside Down* was a shirt with the sleeves set upside down, again with the intention of restricting movement of the arms, but this time leaving the participant unable to comfortably put their arms down by their sides.

*Abdomen* and *Neck* are both shirts where one part of the shirt was enlarged. In *Abdomen*, a front section of the shirt was enlarged by two hundred per cent and gathered back into an otherwise regular white shirt. This was a play on enlarging a part of the body that I am usually conscious of minimizing. *Abdomen* presented several ways of being worn. Many people suggested that it could be worn when carrying a child. *Neck* was made with a neck opening too big, exposing most of the chest abdomen and navel. It was meant to question the concept of appropriateness in clothing, but most guests simply thought of the shirt as a new type of jacket instead (Figure 22).

Watching the audience try on these pieces over seven days illustrated how body proportions and personal identity overlap in the experience of fit.

**As a tailor, it's important to set aside my own expectations of how someone else will respond to the fit of a piece of clothing. An individual's reaction to trying on a garment is rarely what you expect.**



**FIGURE 22** Philip Sparks. *Neck*. 2019. Toronto. Photo: Carlyle Routh.



## CONCLUSION

It is my conclusion that clothing designers should spend less time and effort trying to apply an approach to patternmaking that is based on outdated quantitative data in favour of a more experimental approach. Quantitative data is static information and the human body is in a constant state of movement and change. It is more productive to focus on addressing each unique body presented, using observations and experimentation to find fit. My research has shown that there are alternate ways of addressing mechanical fit in the design of tailored clothing.

**While it is important to keep anthropometric data up to date, we must recognize that people are left out of the fashion system because it is systemized.**

It is my hope to continue this research and publish a text that can be used by teachers and students who rely on applying anthropometric data in order to help them open up their methodology. In fashion education, the traditional way of teaching patternmaking is to have students start with an existing developed pattern in what is called a sample size, usually suited to a tall, thin model. But I believe

that the experience of fitting a variety of bodies is essential to making them better designers, cutters, patternmakers, and fashion professionals.

My text will continue to explore exaggerated principles in fit in patternmaking for clothing design, highlighting new ways of looking at mechanical fit. It is my hope that these exaggerated results will make the observations of subtle issues with fit more apparent, and make the text a useful guide for tailors facing fit issues in their day-to-day practice.

The accommodations required for a more individualized approach to patternmaking are complicated, but the time invested in analyzing standards would be better used to train practitioners to adapt to the body in front of them. As a result of this research, I have changed my approach to fitting clients. I now focus on how an individual feels in a garment, rather than imposing my personal opinions of fit. In my teaching practice, I have changed my approach to focus on adapting patterns to individuals rather than focusing solely on construction techniques that result in all students making the same tailored jacket.

My research also emphasizes the influence that makers can have on an academic study of fashion. Much of the work published in the field is by historians, philosophers, theorists, and anthropologists. More research is needed from practitioners who directly infuse dress with meaning, from the perspective of those engaged in the design and crafting of clothing.

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**Philip has been working as a tailor and designer for almost two decades, incorporating an art practice focused on textiles, photography, and installations into the production and exhibition of his collections.**

During his career, he has worked in-house in the wardrobe and design departments at the National Ballet of Canada, The Canadian Opera Company, the Stratford Festival, and Soulepper Theatre. His clothing and accessories have been carried at retailers including Holt Renfrew, Hudson's Bay, and La Maison Simons. Currently, Sparks continues to further his research into the anthropology and anthropometry of tailoring while producing custom garments and serving as a professor in the School of Fashion at Seneca College. *Missed Fit* was an exhibition of his thesis work in pursuit of a Masters in Design from OCAD University.

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