

NANCY TILBURY

Looking to a future of 2050 interdisciplinary fashion designer Nancy Tilbury has teamed up with visual artists at 125 Creative to produce the provocative fashion futures film “Digital Skins / Body Atmospheres”. As part of this, “Cloud Dress” is presented and is made of gas and nano-electronic particles using micro-cosmetic technologies instead of the usual static fabrication methods. The tailoring and cosmetics are constructed by 3D liquid formations that include technologies that are imbibed to stimulate the senses, both cerebral and physical. Showing the body in motion in the film further engages with the fluid nature of the textile medium.

Predictions are put forward that in the future the world of couture will be ‘grown’ as a biological entity to metamorphose and develop for ‘couture culture’. Hybrid ‘skins’ (skin being the largest organ on the human body) are designed and technological ‘atmospheres’ invade and surround. Nancy Tilbury imagines that in 2050 “couture will be cultured and farmed as fashion facets of human flesh”.

Ideas of materiality are questioned and challenged in Nancy Tilbury’s work. The actual model for the visionary garment “Cloud Dress” uses prosthetics, smoke and dry ice as a textile. Incorporated software is programmed to animate the release of gas from the dress by way of an integrated piping system. The ‘textile’ spreads out and over the audience and in addition, light and projections are used as fabrics that also engulf the viewer, fashion extends beyond the individual and into the environment.

Nancy Tilbury who is Course Director of the MA in Fashion at Kingston University is trained in fashion but has also worked across many different sectors including the world of textiles, performance sportswear, science, advanced materials and sophisticated technologies. She embodies wearable technology and results in smart, intelligent and responsive works. Such explorations necessitate collaboration, something Nancy Tilbury is open to and actively embraces. She has worked with Philips Design on many conceptual and strategic design projects and the conjunction of where body and fashion meet is of particular interest. Working with the latest technologies enables her to probe still further into many aspects of expression and communication. She is interested in our inter-relationships, our emotions and our representations, all of which are scrutinised and relayed. Central to her practice is the idea of a personal narrative seen against “a coherent background of culture, location and time”.

Intimate and soft technologies have been explored and connections firmly implanted between the body as skin a receptor and fashion as clothing and expressor. “Digital Skins / Body Atmospheres” and “Cloud Dress” in particular typify Nancy Tilbury’s creative work. Acutely aware of emerging societal trends and lifestyles, she has her eye very keenly on the future. This High Density digital film demonstrates a clear narrative of such a future where textiles will not have clear boundaries but venture beyond.