



To honour Breast Cancer Awareness month the Lingerie Society UAL is pleased to host the mini-symposium:

# BREASTS & BRAS: HISTORY, HEALTH AND FASHION

Please see below the bios and abstracts of the experts in the lingerie research field who will present aspects of their work and discuss the complex but ever-growing arena.

**LORRAINE H SMITH**, *Independent Researcher*  
@MasterOfBras

Lorraine H Smith is an independent researcher with a focus on twentieth-century underwear and textiles. She has presented at academic conferences and as part of public programmes at the M&S Company Archive and the Victoria and Albert Museum. She is also a founding member of The Underpinnings Museum team.

## **‘Technology and the Bra: A Very Brief History’**

No other garment has the same requirements for support, fit, comfort and style, making the bra a constant source of both fascination and frustration for designers and wearers alike. From the 'bust improvers' of the early 1900s to the silicone-filled moulded bras of the early twenty-first century, many entrepreneurs, textile technologists, and pattern cutters have contributed to innovations that would lift, separate, enhance, and improve comfort. This presentation will highlight some of the important technological developments which have influenced the design and construction of the bra over the last 120 years.

**ATEFEH OMRANI**, *PhD Candidate, St Mary's University*

**@AtefehOmrani**

Atefeh is a final year PhD student at St Mary's University, Twickenham and a member of the Research Group in Breast Health at the University of Portsmouth. Her research interests are in the areas of breast health, breast education, females' health and well-being and survey development, particularly for adolescents. She has more than 5 years research experience in a multidisciplinary area including midwifery, breast education, survey development with both quantitative and qualitative methods (e.g. surveys, interviews and focus groups). She also contributes to teaching in BSc Nutrition and Health and Exercise Science degree programmes at St Mary's University.

### **'Support for sport: Short and long-term impact of a breast education intervention on adolescent girls' breast knowledge and attitudes to breasts'**

Research with 2089 adolescent girls shows that the breast has a negative impact on girls' sport participation, with 73% reported  $\geq$  one breast-specific concern in sports.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, 26% of girls reported negative feelings about their breasts and 87% want to learn more about their breasts.<sup>2</sup>

This study aims to evaluate the short- and long-term impact of a multiple topic 50-minute breast education intervention on girls' breast knowledge, attitudes towards breasts and engagement with positive breast habits. The impact of the intervention has been evaluated in a mixed-methods, controlled, longitudinal cohort study over a period of six-months, utilising a valid and reliable breast survey in conjunction with six focus groups. Two-control schools (receiving no intervention) and two-intervention schools (receiving the intervention) participated in the study.

Survey results showed that the intervention was effective; girls in the intervention schools (n= 375) significantly improved their breast knowledge, their attitudes towards their breasts and the engagement with positive breast habits post-intervention, compared to the control schools (n= 412). These improvements were sustained over time. Focus groups findings supported these results; participants described the session as "informative", "insightful" and it made them "feel less embarrassed and more confident" about their breasts. They also reported wanting to do more exercise. These findings demonstrate the positive impact of the intervention.

#### References:

1. Scurr J, Brown N, Smith J, Brasher A, Risius D, Marczyk A. The influence of the breast on sport and exercise participation in school girls in the United Kingdom. *J Adolesc Heal.* 2016;58(2):167-173. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2015.10.005

2. Brown N, Smith J, Brasher A, Risius D, Marczyk A, Wakefield-Scurr J. Breast education for schoolgirls; why, what, when, and how? *Breast J.* 2018;24(3):377-382. doi:10.1111/tbj.12945

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**SILKE HOFMANN**, *PhD Candidate, Royal College of Art*  
**@Silkhfmnn**

Silke Hofmann is a trained womenswear designer who worked in the prêt-à-porter fashion industry for over a decade before starting her PhD at the Royal College of Art's School of Design. In her research, Silke investigates how fashion design impacts the wearer-garment relationship in the spectrum of breast cancer. Together with breast cancer previvors, thrivers and survivors, she explores product aesthetics and the functionality of post-mastectomy lingerie in participatory design sessions in Europe, Japan and the US.

Silke's PhD research is co-supervised by the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

### **'The wearer's voice in contemporary post-mastectomy lingerie design'**

Breast cancer can be described as a modern epidemic. According to the World Health Organisation, every eighth woman will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in her lifetime with an 80% chance of survival. For most diagnosed women, breast cancer treatment includes some form of surgery that encompasses the full or partial removal of a breast, nipple and areola. Nearly half of all women undergoing such procedures, will not or cannot immediately reconstruct their breasts and survive the disease with a new, one-breasted or none-breasted body.

In order to understand how breast cancer survivors experience current assortments of post-mastectomy lingerie, this research foregrounds the garment wearer's perspective and considers the roles product aesthetics and functionality play in the physical and emotional recovery process and beyond.

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**KADIAN A GOSLER**, *PhD Candidate, University of the Arts London*  
**@KadianGosler**

Kadian A Gosler has over 18 years of experience studying and working in the intimate apparel industry as a designer and merchandiser. She has designed foundations, sleepwear and shapewear for the American mass market with many of her designs becoming top sellers. Kadian's interests in technology and the consumer's lingerie experience was shaped during her Masters in Fashion Merchandising and Marketing; ultimately leading her to pursue her current position as a PhD Candidate at the University of Arts London. Her research explores wearable technology in the bra product called Bra Wearables, aiming to develop a design process that integrates the experiences of both the designer and the wearer.

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## **'Is the future Bra Wearables? A Designer and Researchers' Perspective'**

Bra Wearables is defined as a technologically advanced bra with 'smart' capabilities able to sense and react to stimuli from the body or environment through mechanical and electrical components. It is an innovative idea - on the fringes - often being inspired by inventors, health researchers and engineers. Recently, the commercial market has seen a rise and fall in this area under the name 'Smart Bras'. This presentation introduces the field, its history, clarifies and defines the discrepancies, and identifies barriers to designing Bra Wearables. Furthermore, the design researchers' tacit experiential knowledge is examined during the design process of Bra Wearables samples.

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*Special thanks to the society's President Kadian A Gosler and independent researcher Lorraine H Smith for organising this event.*

### **Contact Information:**

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