

to build and sustain an order based on sexual segregation and heterosexual male-oriented desire. While sexual identity is fluid and ambiguous, self-presentation enables dissident identities to broaden their possibilities of existence within a patriarchal society, by making themselves noticeable and thus taking up space. Hence, adopting a look which was visibly different to that of heterosexual women played a central part in the forming of a lesbian identity. That is because garments put the body in conversation, opening a dialogue between its apparent nature and the cultural context it is confined in. Clothes work as an element of transformation, changing the unprocessed »woman« and »man« into the processed femininity and masculinity.

Accordingly, gendered self-presentation functions to incite and support heterosexual desire, which is understood as the attraction of opposites. In this binary self-presentation, clothes for women are seen as unnatural or unpractical and as sexual, in contrast to the understood naturalness and functionality of clothes for men. This difference makes a clear distinction between how each binary gender is supposed to navigate society. Still nowadays the male fashion ideal is mainly connected to power, physical power conveyed through leisure attire and economic power showed through the use of the three-piece suit. Physical and economical power are perceived as attractive, thus constituting a man's sexual desirability. On the contrary, a woman's sexual attraction still exists in her ability to make herself into a



1 Lou Gattlen, »I am the cow climbing the mountain slopes that hides from human eyes«, BA Thesis Mode-Design 2023