DRESS CODES: CLOTHING AS METAPHOR
At the Katonah Museum of Art July 12 – October 4, 2009

Adapted Introduction from the Curator, Barbara J. Bloemink

Today, we design and define ourselves through clothing more than through any other device. Clothing originally evolved to provide protection and warmth. For centuries, it has also reflected gender, age, cultural identity, and class differences—visually distinguishing the ruling, powerful, and wealthy from everyone else. In the contemporary world of customization, mass production, and globalization—with information disseminated at a rate never before experienced— we can choose from myriad styles and types of clothing to alter how we are perceived and identified.

Since the 1990s, a growing number of international artists have been using apparel as a metaphor for shared, as well as personal, concerns. The sculptures created by the thirty-six artists in *Dress Codes: Clothing as Metaphor* draw attention to a variety of these issues ranging from memory, ethnicity, gender, and nationality, to general considerations about community, commerce, immigration, globalization, as well as the effects of environmental destruction, war, and violence. Many of the works explore a number of these subjects concurrently.

The artists come from countries around the world, including Argentina, Australia, China, Colombia, Cuba, England, France, Korea, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, The Netherlands, and the United States. Their works provide an opportunity to reflect on the themes that help shape our contemporary world.

Clothing communicates…

What we wear says something about who we are, where we come from, and what we do. In our exhibition, *DRESS CODES*, artists explore their personal relationships to clothing and use the medium and subject of clothes to draw attention to a variety of issues such as identity, nationality, community, war, and globalization.

Ask your students:

Think of a piece of clothing that is important to you…

Why is it important to you?

What memories does it bring to mind?

What does it say about you and your world?

GLOSSARY OF ART TERMS

Before your visit to the KMA,
review these terms:

After your visit,
think about these ideas:

Color – color is an important element of art that can affect mood, feeling, balance, energy, and memory.

Can you remember an artist who used color to create a special mood? What mood did he/she convey?

Contemporary Art – art that is made in this present point in time.

How is contemporary art different from traditional art?

Fashion – the styles and customs that exist at a given time
    Couture – highly fashionable clothing, usually hand-made

Do you think that fashion can be a work of art?

Globalization – name for the process by which the world's markets, businesses, and media become more and more connected and interdependent.

How might globalization change the way contemporary art is made and judged?

Identity – the set of characteristics by which a thing is known
    Personal identity – the distinct personality of an individual
    Cultural identity – the identity of a group, or culture that sets it apart from other groups

The artists in Dress Codes examine their personal and cultural identities through their art. How do you show your personality?

Installation Art – art that uses sculptural materials and other media to change the way a particular space is experienced.

Look at the definition of sculpture. Can you describe how sculpture and installation art differ?

Line - an identifiable path between points. Line defines space, and may create an outline or contour, define a silhouette, create patterns, or movement, and the illusion of mass or volume

Artists use line to direct your eye around a work of art. Use your finger to follow the lines of something in your classroom. Can you draw what you outlined?

Mass Production – the production of materials in large quantities.

Can you think of an artist who used mass produced materials in their artwork?

Media – methods of communicating that reach and influence a lot of people. Radio, TV, and the internet are popular media.

What other media reach people's lives?

Metaphor – a comparison that is made between two unlike things which actually have something in common.

How can clothing be a metaphor for something in our lives?

Pattern - the repetition of any thing — shapes, lines, or colors

Where do you see patterns in the world around you?

Sculpture – a three-dimensional work of art.

We normally think of sculpture as statues. Did the artworks you saw fit the definition of sculpture? Why?

Shape – an enclosed space defined by line, color, or texture. This two-dimensional character of shape distinguishes it from form, which has depth as well as length and width.

Shapes are the building blocks of large creations. What is your favorite shape?

Texture - the characteristic surface of a material; how it feels to the touch.

Artists often use texture to convey sensory ideas. What ideas come to mind when you think of silk?

Kate Kretz, *Defense Mechanism Coat,* **2001**
Velvet, wood, nails, embroidery thread
45 x 28 x 12 inches

This is the "object label." This provides information about the artist and artwork.

Look carefully at the object label and this artwork.

How would the coat feel on the inside?

How would it feel on the outside?

Maureen Connor, *Thinner than You*, 1990
Steel, nylon, mesh, 60 x 16 x 8 inches

What do you think the title means?

What do you think the artist might be saying?

Nametag Activity Sheet – *Dress Codes: Clothing as Metaphor*

On your visit to the Katonah Museum of Art you will see over 40 works of art, all expressing ideas about clothing. Write your name in the t-shirt shapes below, decorate them, cut them out and wear them on your visit.
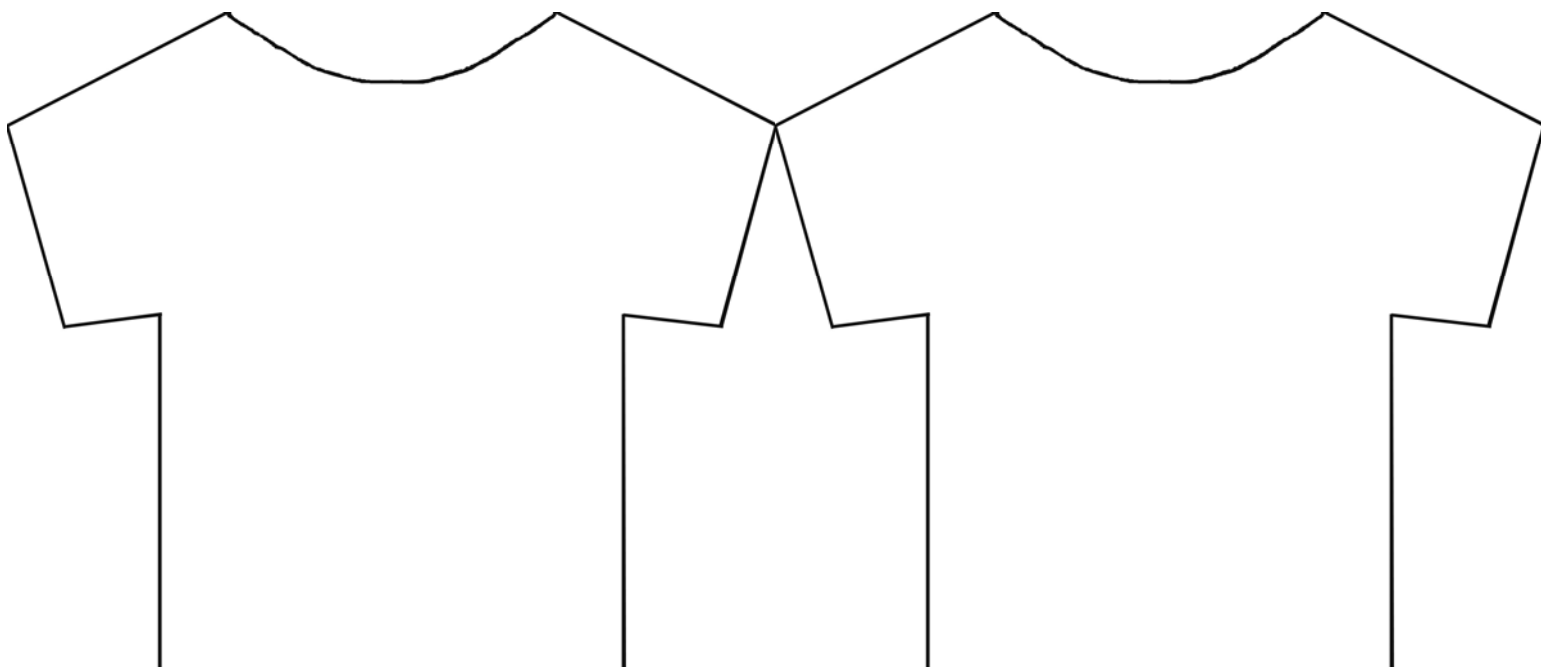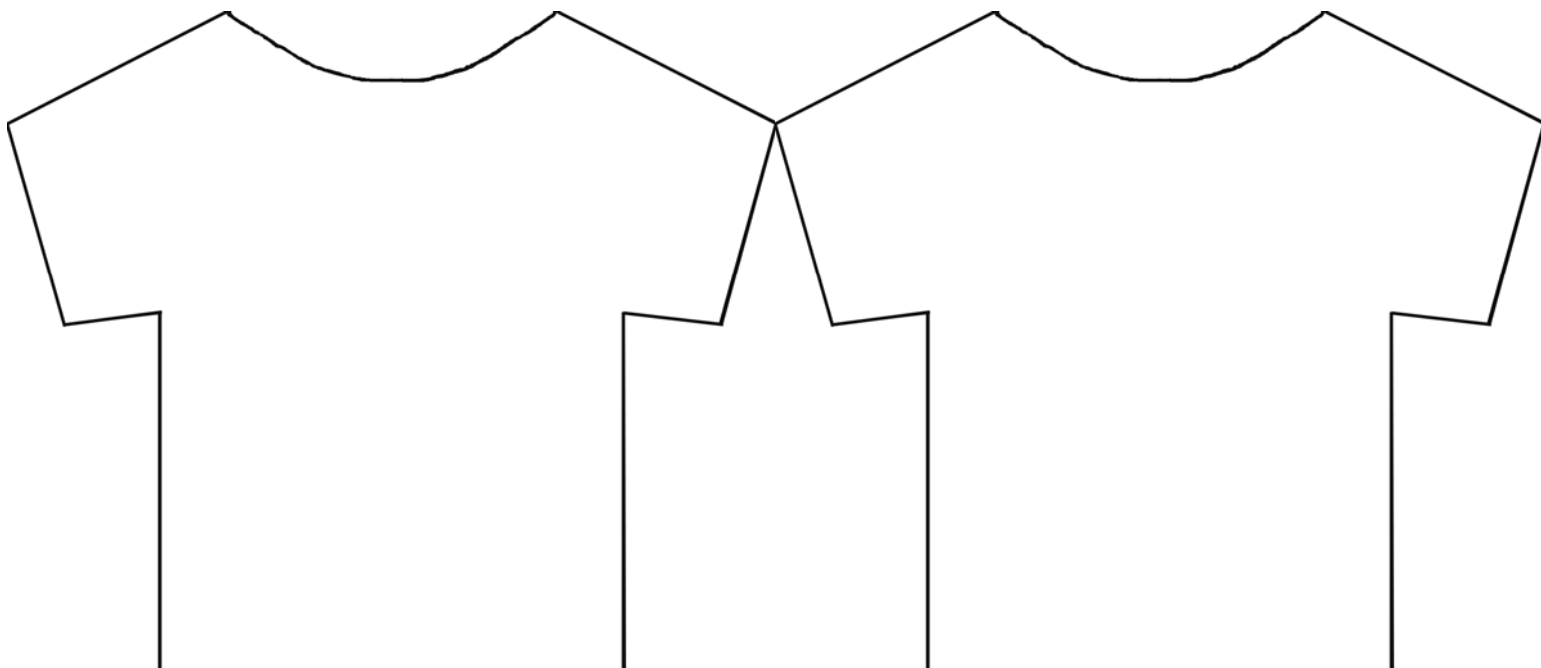
Dress Codes Artist's Websites

Ray Beldner: http://www.raybeldner.com/index.html
- Artist statement   • Artwork   • Biography

Sanford Biggers: http://www.sanfordbiggers.com/index.html
- Artwork   • Biography

Barbara Bloom: http://www.icp.org/site/c.dnJGKJNsFqG/b.3639327/k.8366/Barbara_Bloom.htm
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/08/arts/design/08bloo.html

Louise Bourgeois: http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/bourgeois/
- "artist at work" slideshow   • Two short videos

Maria Fernanda Cardoso: http://www.sicardi.com/Artists/profile.cfm?artistid=131
- Biography

Nick Cave: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwupTQt9zxY
- Video on what he does & how he does it.

Cat Chow: http://www.artslant.com/global/artists/show/20966-cat-chow
- Artwork

Sonya Clark : http://www.sonyaclark.com/
- Artwork   • Biography

Willie Cole: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kimberly-brooks/first-person-artist-willi_b_84255.html
- Interview

Maureen Connor: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1248/is_9_89/ai_78334726/
- Biography

E.V. Day: http://www.evday.net/index.html
- Artwork   • biography

Monica Giron: http://www.rhizome.org/profile.php?1025402
- Artwork   • Biography

Guerra de la Paz: http://www.jackthepelicanpresents.com/guerrapaz.html   • Artwork
http://guerradelapaz.blogspot.com/   • Artwork

Joseph Havel: http://www.artlies.org/article.php?id=1522&issue=55&s=0

Oliver Herring: http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/herring/index.html
- Slideshow   • Videos

Bingyi Huang: http://www.nakedpunch.com/marsilibinyi.html
- Artwork   • Biography

Mella Jaarsma: http://urbanconcerns.org/blog/2008/03/mella-jaarsma.asp

Wang Jin: http://www.chinesecontemporary.com/wang_jin.htm
- Biography

Rashid Johnson: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashid_Johnson
- Biography

Kate Kretz: http://www.katekretz.com/home.html
- Artwork

Charles LeDray: http://www.speronewestwater.com/cgi-bin/iowa/artists/record.html?record=20
- Artwork   • Biography

Susie MacMurray: http://www.susiemacmurray.co.uk/
- Artwork

Derick Melander: http://www.derickmelander.com/
- Artwork   • Biography

Yael Mer: http://www.raw-edges.com/
- Artwork

Farhad Moshiri: http://www.kashyahildebrand.org/newyork/moshiri/index.html
- Artwork   • Biography

Luca Pizzaroni: http://www.lucapizzaroni.com/
- Artwork   • Biography

Elaine Reichek: http://www.jca-online.com/reichek.html   • Interview
http://www.elainereichek.com/?page_id=23 • Artwork

Freddie Robins: http://www.freddierobins.com/
- Artwork   • Statement

Zoe Sheehan Saldana: http://www.zoesheehan.com/
- Artwork   • Biography

Beverly Semmes: http://www.beverlysemmesstudio.com/news.html
- Artwork

Judith Shea: http://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag05/March_05/shea/shea.shtml
- Biography

Jean Shin: http://www.jeanshin.com/
- Artwork

Mimi Smith: http://www.mimismith.com/
- Artwork

Susan Stockwell: http://www.susanstockwell.co.uk/
- Artwork   • Biography

Do Ho Suh: http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/suh/index.html
- Biography   • Video   • Artwork

Cheryl Yun: http://www.cycollection.com/content/index.html
- Artwork

Activity Guide

Live Oak Media

Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing

ABOUT THE STORY
It's a fact that just about any animal you can think of would be better off if it didn't wear clothes. But did you ever stop to imagine what could happen if some of them did? The author, Judi Barrett, and the artist, Ron Barrett, take a very funny look at some of the possibilities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR
Judi Barrett, who also teachers art to children, has written many award-winning books, including *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* and *Pickles to Pittsburgh,* both of which are also available as Live Oak Readalongs. Ron Barrett was formerly an advertising art director and consultant to the Children's Television Workshop before turning to children's book illustration.

INTRODUCING THE STORY
Ask the group to think about how sometimes clothes can be a problem for them. For example, a hat that is too big can fall down over your eyes. Pants that are too long can trip you. Point out that people sometimes put clothes on animals. On cold days, some people dress dogs in sweaters and put blankets on horses. But what if the animals decided to wear clothes – and made all the wrong choices?

READING ACTIVITIES
Comprehension/Thinking Skills
a. "What would a snake do with its clothes?"
b. "What would happen if a mouse wore clothing?"
c. "Where would a camel wear its clothes?"
d. "How would a sheep feel if it wore clothing?"
e. "What would happen to a walrus's clothes?"
f. "Which of the animal's clothes did you find the funniest or most   surprising? (*Make judgments*)

Vocabulary
The words below all contain double consonants or double vowels. Have children copy the words and circle the double consonants or vowels. Then ask volunteers to use each word in a sentence.

terribly	unnecessary	silly	opossums	messy	giraffe
billy	embarrassing	moose	all	sheep	kangaroo

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Science: Animals' Clothes
Point out to children that in a way, animals do wear clothes – their skin covering. Have children name the "clothes" these animals wear: snakes; sheep; ducks; fish; lobsters; clams; porcupines. Lead children to see that the "clothes" these animals wear are a form of protection.

Language Arts: Animals Should Definitely Not….
Have the group work together to create a book of other things animals should definitely not do. Some possibilities include: eat at the table; attend the opera; drive cars; go to the pool. Encourage children to illustrate their ideas and bind the pages together for a class book.

Art: Animal Fashion Magazines
Have children think of animals not in the book who would look especially funny in clothing. They can draw pictures of the animals in clothing, using their imaginations to make the pictures as colorful and silly as possible. Collect the illustrations together in an animal fashion magazine.

Language Arts: Unscrambling Words
Write the following scrambled words on the board as they appear below. Seven of the words are the names of animals that appear in the book. The eighth word is the name of an animal that is not in the book and has a very long name.

roiepcupn	(porcupine)	esmuo	(mouse)
ogkanroa	(kangaroo)	fgrfeia	(giraffe)
ogta yblil	(billy goat)	lecma	(camel)
srwalu	(walrus)	mpoouss	(opossum)

INTERNET ACTIVITY
Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Dogs in Clothes
The artist William Wegman dresses his dogs in clothing and photographs them in human poses. Using the keywords *William Wegman*, have children find examples of his photographs on the Internet. They can print out the photo they like the best and show it to the rest of the group.