

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **PLEASE LIKE ME**

**TESS NORQUAY**

**2018**



# PLEASE LIKE ME

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design  
(Fashion Design) at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Tess Norquay  
August 2018



# Abstract

*Please Like Me* is a fashion collection which aims to critique women's objectification in its many forms. The objectification of women has long been seen as a concept which exists only within visual media, such as film, television, and advertising. In actuality, it has crept into the ways we see and talk about women. It is now seen as appropriate to apply terms to women which were previously and traditionally only connected to the discussion of product, and product exchange.

Women's objectification was also previously seen as only occurring within the framework of large corporations, a tool and crutch of our capitalist system. One needs only to glance through any social media outlet to disprove this theory. Social media has allowed the memetic spread of misogynist ideas at an unprecedented pace and scope. People from all walks of life, not merely those who stand to gain financially from the insecurities of women, participate in this new application of language. A notable example of this is the internet meme urging men to "take their girl swimming on the first date", to unveil whether they are "false advertising" through use of cosmetics. While I deny that commodifying language use is limited to the discussion of capitalist practice, I will argue that the prevalence of capitalism has led to this outcome.

I have used fashion as my medium for the discussion of this topic because I see correlations in how both fashion and women are perceived academically, culturally, and socially. Both have been presented as frivolous and without true substance, and are thus too often written off as a pursuit, or a person, that is able to contribute to these circles. Fashion is often, and sometimes fairly, said to be the most misogynistic industry of them all, due to its perceived mission statement of transforming bodies to their most palatable form. As a result of this, I believe that fashion is a challenging, interesting, and subversive medium for this discussion to take place within.

*Please Like Me* is a visual representation of my impatience with the unreasonable and unrealistic standards women are held to, both in mass media and everyday life. It comes from a place of fatigue, irritability, and frustration. It is, and I am, disenchanted with the prospect that anything can or will change. It merely wants to be seen and heard- an opportunity denied to so many women, for so long.



# Acknowledgements

This project's existence and success is due in no small part to the wisdom and patience of those who were kind enough to take the time to become involved.

Thanks to:

My supervisor, Sue Prescott, for her unwavering support and positivity, for being the light at the end of what often seemed like an impossibly long tunnel.

Catherine Bagnall, for her keen editing eye and unbridled enthusiasm.

Massey University, and all its staff, for offering me the opportunity to pursue this study.

My family, Karen, Kevin, Kate, and Jackson, who always appeared to like me, even when I was being objectively unlikeable.



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	11
<b>Part One: Literary Review</b>	13
We Can Do It- As Long As “It’s” Within the Current Hegemonic Framework	13
Acceptable Authenticity- Image Construction and Reinforcement of Power	15
“Stripper Heels” and “Mum Jeans“- Codification of Clothing Items and Their Wearers	17
Colonisation and the Rise of Body Shame	19
Dressed to Oppress: Discussing Fashion’s Partnership With the Patriarchy	21
Media Advertising and the Financial Benefits of Misogyny and Insecurity	23
#NoShame, No Self Hatred, No Societal Impact: ‘Selfies’ and Self-Representation	25
Going Viral: Causes and Effects of Memetics	27
Mind Your Language: Words as Memberships and Characterisations	29
“The Problem With Women Is...” Misogyny in Online Spaces	29
When Online Misogyny Goes Offline	31
<b>Part Two: Design Process</b>	35
The Inception of <i>Please Like Me</i> - Defining “Work Wear”	35
Textile Design and Misperforming Media Tropes	35
Highly Visible- Fluorescent Orange in <i>Please Like Me</i>	37
Silhouette	39
A “Control Freak” or Fighting For Control?	41
Prints and Colours	41
A “Sorry” State of Affairs- Reinterpreting the “Slogan”	41
Runway Music	43
New Zealand Fashion Week- Collaboration or Causation?	43
Conclusion	45
Reference List	48
Bibliography	51
Images List	54



Figure 1. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me.*

Figure 2. *Untitled "Makeup is the Equivalent of False Advertising" meme.*

## Introduction

*Please Like Me* (Figure 1) is a fashion collection that aims to critique the viral spread of misogynist ideologies through visual and social media using parody and misperformance. The objectification of women has long been seen as a concept that exists predominately within film, television, and advertising. (Andersen & Taylor, Catterall, Maclaran & Stevens, *Miss Representation*)

While my collection refers to the above varieties of traditional media, my research lies more in the impact misogynist ideas perpetuated through media has on our collective, often subconscious, understanding of women. It has now, especially on social media, become commonplace to apply concepts to women which were previously and traditionally only connected to product, and product exchange. (Figure 2) Both women and fashion are generally perceived in mainstream media as being frivolous and trivial, and *Please Like Me* was conceived in these overlaps.

Over the course of this thesis, I will discuss the idea of women's bodies as a political site, and the conflicting rules society offers women in how best to 'perform' femininity. I will argue that women's objectification extends further than unclothed bodies, and will explore how codified clothing items contribute to media's presentation of women. While the prevalence of Fashion Studies as a discipline has risen, nevertheless fashion has "long been neglected in academic circles" due to its "ephemeral essence" and implications of frivolity, (Lemire), and I pose that this neglect, dismissal, and "complex past... and dynamic and contentious present" (Lemire) creates an ideal space in which to discuss these concepts. I do not expect memetics to explain every facet of these social and verbal phenomena (Lynch, 9) and, as such, I will discuss the correlation-causation effect between traditional media and social media, and the real world impact the normalization of misogynist language has. Each of the above concepts informs elements of *Please Like Me* as a realized body of work.

"Many aspects of human nature are explained far better by memetics than any rival theory yet available," (Blackmore, 9), and I will argue that the memetic spread of capitalist theories and ideologies such as "distribution, development, accumulation, and reinvestment" (The Free Dictionary, 2018) explains this shift in language. Comments on forums and social media regularly claim concepts such as "women can be damaged goods, sure. But some idiots keep buying used and broken stuff like it's luxury and new, and the market has gone to shit" (always-be-closing, 2016), and urge men to "take their girl swimming on the first date" in order to determine whether they are "false advertising" through their use of cosmetics. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. *Untitled "Take Girls Swimming on the First Date" Screenshot.*

This use of language is not necessarily conscious choice, due to the fact that “memes spread themselves around indiscriminately without regard to whether they are useful, neutral, or positively harmful to us” (Blackmore, 7), but have the same outcome as the conscious choices made by the “cultural gatekeepers” (Andersen & Taylor, 310) who produce advertising material. Commonplace misogyny and objectification is a virus, and “social media and technological changes... enable a message to reach its targeted audience in unprecedented fashion, within seconds” (Mutsvario, 6). A few clicks of a button, and an Internet connection, explain the correlation between the word “virus” and the word “viral”.

## **Part One: Literary Review**

### **We Can Do It- As Long as “It’s” Within The Current Hegemonic Framework**

Key to the understanding of my project is the idea that women’s bodies are an inherently political site, whether women acknowledge, realise, or consent to this. No matter how innocuous an activity or piece of clothing might seem, everything a woman does, or does not do, contributes to the formulation of her designated place in society. Susie Orbach’s “Fat is a Feminist Issue” (1978), and Sarah Banet-Weiser’s “Authentic™: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture” (2012) discuss this concept at length. Orbach’s findings are most specifically in respect to the body shape of a woman. She argues that being fat means more than a number on a scale or inside a garment; it’s a social reflection of the resilience and character of a woman. “Being fat isolates and invalidates a woman. Almost inevitably, the explanations offered for fatness point a finger at the failure of women themselves to control their weight, control their appetites and control their impulses” (Orbach, 13). Similarly, Banet-Weiser suggests that there has been a collapse between brands and individuals. (3) A simplistic explanation of women’s- be that real women, or manufactured characters in a film or on a TV show- concern with their appearances- “superficial pursuits” (Hess) would be that women themselves are naturally superficial. I believe that many women, even on a subconscious level, are aware of society’s tendency to categorise based on appearance, and wish to manipulate which category they fall into. What seems like a “superficial pursuit” is much more than what it seems at face value. “Keeping up appearances... is an ethical [pursuit]. A woman who fails to conform to the ideal is regarded as a failure as a person.” (Hess) Wildly inconsistent sets of feminine ideals are presented to women. The relationship between conformity, non-conformity and the concept of failure is an essential theme to the basis of this project.

Figure 4. *Untitled Wonder Woman/Girl Power Image.*

Figure 5. *DC Super Heroes: My First Book of Girl Power.*

The concept of failure becomes more complicated upon looking at how women's identities are presented to them, particularly within the frameworks of women's representation in film, television, and advertising. Constructing an identity is more than dressing or acting the part. Increasingly, at least in visual media, there is an appearance of offering women the choice to perform or ignore stereotypes of their 'chosen identity'. (Zazlow, 3) This choice appears to exist, but doesn't carry any weight. Where one instance of media claims that an absence of grooming suggests that someone is free spirited and unconcerned with the superficial, another instance will communicate that "failure or refusal to groom communicates resistance, carelessness, or incapacity" (Scott, 12). The rise of feminism's depiction in dominant media has resulted in the phenomenon of "Girl Power" media. "Girl Power" (Figure 4, Figure 5) media is advertisers' response to shifting ideologies in their audiences, in this case, ideologies surrounding women. It is a fun, accessible, brand of feminism, and an advertising strategy to continue to target their audiences. (Gill, Orgad & Koffman, 3) The new wave of "Girl Power" media suggests that women can be feminine or powerful, maternal or professional simultaneously, that these labels are able to be taken on and off at will. (Zazlow, 3) In reality, women have no more choice over how they are categorised in 'Girl Power', but the appearance of choice transfers them more responsibility over how they are perceived. Women are now expected to be both feminine and feminists, (Hess) whereas previously the codifying of women was more simplistic. As such, feminist media often does little to rectify the inconsistent codes, "visible expression[s] of the social order" (Scott, 12) women have always been presented, resulting in "fundamental insecurity" (Miss Representation, 2011) it is simply not possible to 'opt out' of this discourse. It is impossible to "dress in a way that signifies nothing." (Scott, 12)

## **Acceptable Authenticity- Image Construction and Reinforcement of Power**

The appearance of choice presented to women results in inconsistent and distorted relationships with their bodies. Identity and image construction is presented as binary, with the performance of our selves reduced to their most simplistic level. One is either seen as 'true to themselves' or not. (Zazlow, 72) These kinds of categorisations are wholly impractical and inappropriate for encompassing the vast variety of human experiences that come with being a woman, or, indeed, a human, off the screen or the page. It is impossible for a woman, conducting herself in everyday life, to remain within the confines of these preconceived categories in every situation. This comes back to my proposal that the perceived offer to women to define themselves is more about passing on responsibility. "Lack of consistency in image [is] a determining factor in assessing the authenticity of an artist.. and the ability of an artist to control her own image" (Zazlow, 72),

Figure 6. *Untitled Screenshot of Miss Representation Infographic.*

and, as such, every day women are seen as inauthentic for being unable to perform a consistent image in their day to day lives. The visual imagery we are continuously exposed to reconstructs our relationship to our bodies, (Orbach, 13), and, because “bodies today have almost come to define the way our lives can be lived”, (Orbach, 1) it similarly sends the message that we should be reconstructing our lives in accordance to this visual imagery. The rise of female characters in film and television who are able to transcend these standards, and secure high powered jobs, with little real world rise of women in power to match (Miss Representation, 2011) (Figure 6), puts the onus on women to do the same, without the tools or the spaces to do so. This perpetuates the idea that “women’s lack of confidence is holding them back from professional success, not discrimination.” (Hess)

## **“Stripper Heels” and “Mum Jeans”- Codification of Clothing Items and Their Wearers**

Objectification of women is about more than just showing an unclothed body on a screen, or on a page. Codified clothing items are a tool used by advertisers to categorise women, for the purpose of making them easily identifiable to the viewer. It can be difficult to remain unwaveringly aware of the fact that “femininity is defined in the media by cultural gatekeepers, those who make decisions about what images to project”. (Andersen & Taylor, 310) A key example of a codified clothing item is jeans. “Jeans are a sign whose meaning is ‘casual style’ or ‘youthfulness,’” (Bignell, 10) a meaning divorced from jeans’ history as work wear. The coded meaning of jeans has less to do with the factual history of the garment, and more to do with “their relationship with, and difference from, other coded signs in the clothing system today.” (Bignell, 12)

Codifying clothing items is effective as a marketing strategy due to Scott’s (12) proposal that no one is immune from the discourse of dress. Clothing is inescapably prevalent as a visual communicator. Fashion is “the thing that binds us to our society, how we make sense of who we are and who everyone else is too.” (Edwards, 2) When we see an image of a clothed body, there is an implication that the subject chose to put on the items that they are wearing, although in most forms of media this is very rarely true. “Fashion is that most personal of things, our second skin,” (Edwards, 2) which enables the viewer to project their own personal relationship with their clothing and appearance onto the subject of the image, enabling this tool of advertisers to root itself into real world practices of dress.

“In this global marketplace a woman’s body has in itself become a brand, her brand, her membership, and her entitlement to occupy space,” (Orbach, 14), and “dress is a means of communicating membership of a particular group”. (Hancock, Johnson-Woods & Karaminas, 11)

Figure 7. *Judgements.*

Figure 9. *Untitled Image of Māori Woman.*

Figure 8. *Cover of The Spice Girls: Spice World.*

The codifying of clothing items has meant that these concepts of membership apply to clothed bodies as well as unclothed. 'Membership' to various groups (sexy, professional, maternal, feminine) is attained by performing within the parameters of these various codes. A high heel, a pants suit, a comfortable slipper, or a pink ruffle "[assembles] a mass of detail... [about her] natural environment, the historical moment, the social hierarchy, the rituals and metaphors of the culture, as well as her own character, skills, resources, and hopes." (Scott, 6) (Figure 7)

The subtlety of this practice is what makes it harmful, as it is more challenging for the viewer to identify. It is generally accepted that advertisers "use images of female beauty against women's advancement," (Wolf, 10) but clothing is used as a means of self-identification for many every day women. There is the sense that claiming choice in dress is a means for empowerment, and while I do not deny that it can be, "part of the conditioning of the 'patriarchal ideal' is to make women feel empowered by it on their 'own terms.'"(Hess) I mention above Zazlow's (72) theory that consistency in image is linked to our perception of the subject's authenticity. The Spice Girls (Figure 8) are a key example of this, especially as connected to codified clothing items. Each female performer represents a different kind of manufactured identity- Scary, Posh, Baby, Sporty, and Ginger- and dresses accordingly to these identities. (Zazlow, 3) The Spice Girls are a representation of the "Girl Power" movement, and openly celebrate womanhood, but are not immune from the need of the audience for categorization. "Only certain kinds of.. identity are compatible with consumerism," (Arthurs) and each of these dress identities are compatible in slightly varying ways.

## **Colonisation and the Rise of Body Shame**

Codified clothing items are the result of memetics, and we see proof of this when we examine the clothing guidelines (or lack thereof) that exist in other cultures. For example, in Māori culture, women were not expected to cover their chests, and, in fact, "some readily uncovered their chests". (Kulcher and Were, 75) (Figure 9) Europeans often "assume.. [this] indicate[s] immodesty or sexual licentiousness". (Kulcher & Were, 75) This standard never existed in Māori culture, and its prevalence in modern day New Zealand is a European invention, a result of colonisation. "Christian anxieties would be played out in the Pacific in Missionary attempts to control those whom they considered to be unsuitably (un)dressed," (Kulcher & Were, 75) and, as a result, there was an expectation for Māori people to assimilate to European dress practices. This is not to say that there is no meaning associated with dress in Māori culture- clothing's relationship with the body means it takes on the tapu and the mana of the wearer. (Kulcher & Were, 75) I would argue that mana and tapu, concepts relating to the quality of one's character, are an overall more reasonable standard for which to define a person by, if a code related to clothing must exist.

Figure 10. *Untitled Image of the New Zealand National Council of Women.*

Figure 11. *Untitled Image of Woman at Anti-Bra Protest.*

Figure 12. *Untitled Screen Shot of Nicki Minaj's 'Anaconda' Music Video.*

The difference between these standards is that in European culture, one may dress to project a character, and in Māori culture, one dresses as a result of their character.

Because non-indigenous culture is seen as dominant, the standards associated with European dress are seen as predominant. “A picture [has emerged] of body insecurity, even body hatred [being] a major export of the western world,” (Orbach, 13) the key words here being “western world”. The differences between Māori and European codes of dress are solid proof of the fact that clothing should not be seen to have an inherent meaning, especially in superficial mediums such as advertising or television.

## **Dressed to Oppress: Discussing Fashion’s Partnership With the Patriarchy**

The political nature of women’s bodies, clothing, and their relationship to one another is why fashion is a relevant medium with which to communicate this project. Fashion has, for too long, been a tool of the patriarchy, and visual media producers, to further objectification. Fashion transforms bodies to their most palatable form, and does have a heavy emphasis on aesthetic. At a surface level, applying this concept to a fashion collection may seem unusual, because “sociologists, like the population as a whole, tend not to take fashion that seriously. Worse, fashion is often the object of ridicule and seen as frippery by so-called serious intellectuals.” (Edwards, 1) However, this ridicule and dismissal creates somewhat of an unmediated space- a space that exists outside of expectation of what can constitute academic, political, and activist work. It also creates a subversive space in that it can slip under the patriarchal radar undetected, and unchallenged. This suggests that there is no rigid existing standard for feminist discourse within the medium of fashion design. Even feminists do not have a grouped understanding of what fashion means to the movement. For example, first wave feminists (Figure 10) called for simplistic dress, “echoing years of conservative tradition in their own community.” (Scott, 15) Second wave feminists (Figure 11) often considered bras a symbol of oppression, while third wave feminists (Figure 12) often “wear [their] sexuality as a badge of power.” (Zazlow, 75) “From the time of the industrial revolution.. women have struggled under the patriarchal power of the fashion business,” (Scott, 2) and, as such, over the years many different conflicting understandings have risen surrounding the act of dress and self-presentation. A consideration to keep in mind is the fact that “the right to alter one’s appearance is often an earned privilege“ (Scott, 12) and as a result renders fashion as somewhat inaccessible to the ‘lower classes’. I hope to combat this and open the dialogue to every woman by making sure that this project is entirely divorced from commerce- it would be against the spirit of the project to add elements of financial gain, and make money a key element of taking part.

Figure 13. *Louboutin AW '14 Lookbook.*

Figure 14. *Untitled Advertisement for Leggs.*

Fashion's symbiotic relationship with the patriarchy becomes even more note worthy when we consider that fashion is traditionally a female dominated industry. I would argue that this fact correlates directly with fashion's dismissal from academic circles. When women are faced with a "battery of philosophical, scientific, and legal arguments aimed at proving... [their] 'inherent inferiority' to men" (Holland, 4), it seems only natural that pursuits connected to them would too be considered inferior. Academic discussions of history often focus on 'his story'- tales of how men have impacted every aspect of the world. (Holland, 4) Fashion's supposed frivolity creates a pocket in which to insert 'her story'- in this case, how the patriarchy's monopoly on what is considered "impact" has impacted women in turn.

## **Media Advertising and the Financial Benefits of Misogyny and Insecurity**

Media advertising is considered the most prevalent, and most overtly misogynistic, of the visual media practices that informed this project. As previously discussed, the media uses codified clothing items to communicate their target audience, but this is not the only problematic technique in common use. Women are often presented as bodies, rather than fully formed people with agency. The disembodied limb trope (Figure 13) is exactly how it sounds- the image is cropped and composed in such a way that parts of women's bodies- usually parts which have sexual connotations- appear as independent from the woman as a whole. If a woman does appear as a whole body, she is usually on the ground, in the background, or looking dreamily into space, which "makes them appear subordinate and available to men." (Andersen & Taylor, 310) (Figure 14) While most are somewhat aware of the place of advertising in our culture, and don't expect advertising to communicate realistic narratives, "the media [accompanies] people's everyday lives unheeded... which mediates human thoughts and interactions basically unnoticed." (Glapka, 1) "The media is the message and the messenger," (Miss Representation, 2011) which means that while people can identify some of these tropes as exaggerated, prejudice can emerge from the continued use of these tropes. Subconscious prejudice such as this is harder for many to identify and accept when they consider their attitudes towards real world women.

Misogyny in media has a wide variety of points of inception. Andersen & Taylor (310) refer to those who make mainstream advertising and other visual media as "Cultural Gatekeepers". They argue that cultural gatekeepers' decisions (in this case, in regards to perpetuating misogynist viewpoints) come from a variety of places, including but not limited to market forces, the values of producers, and the values of the public. The values of both the producers and the public are formed, in part, by mainstream media that has existed previously, resulting in an enduring cycle of sexism.

Figure 15. *Untitled Image of Man Wearing "Go Fuck Your Selfie" T-shirt.*

Figure 16. *Untitled 'Went To The Moon.. Went To The Bathroom' Meme.*

Much of advertising is centred around women feeling anxious and insecure, (Miss Representation, 2011) so it is within everyone involved's best interest to keep this cycle intact. That isn't to say that there are no women that work in advertising- there are- but in order to originally join the workforce women had to learn to "compartmentalize their feminism from their work," (Catterall, Maclaran, & Stevens, 33) a practice which subtly remains in place today.

## **#NoShame, No Self Hatred, No Societal Impact: 'Selfies' and Self-Representation**

An example of the immovability of this cycle is discussed by Andersen & Taylor. (310) When editors of an unnamed magazine were approached by teenage girls complaining of misogyny in their content, they either "said there was not much they could do about it," or outright "dismissed the girls' complaints as misguided". Dismissal of young women's concerns, especially with such vague reasoning, is a practice which continues to be upheld by portrayals of women as unintelligent, subordinate, whiny, and vague. The interest of young people, but particularly young women, in social media, has provoked interesting responses in the generation responsible for these portrayals. Increasingly, women have found 'selfies' to be an appealing way of representing themselves online. 'Selfies' exist in direct opposition to traditional advertising, due to the fact that often they are made by women, for other women, and without the underlying aim of financial gain. It seems like an ideal practice for young women to take part in, to see and be seen, especially if they do not fit the criteria preferred by advertisers. However, "cultural commentators quite often treat girls' and young women's' media practices and self representations not only with panic, but also with disdain and contempt." (Dobson, 1) (Figure 15, 16) I would argue that this is a subconscious response to advertising's cycle, which has existed unchallenged for so many years, having its processes questioned. Of course, because the creation of social media accounts is gate kept by no one, it does not exist as a utopian space independent of misogyny entirely.

The key difference between traditional and social media, as previously mentioned, is their aims in terms of financial gain. Advertisers are, fundamentally, trying to sell a product, and sell themselves to executives who will show their ads in conjunction with films and television programs. (Miss Representation, 2011) While advertisers have and still use sexism to sell product, consumers are becoming increasingly aware of this process, as discourse around this subject has become more mainstream. Advertisers have now had to tone down misogynist undertones, make them subtler, or (at least, appear to) eliminate them entirely, if they do not wish to alienate large portions of their audiences. Without audiences willing to buy their products, the entire practice of advertising becomes obsolete. However, the centuries long held custom of normalized misogyny cannot become entirely erased from the public's minds.

Figure 17. *Fake Deep*.

It is much harder to remove an intangible idea from a population, than it is to alter the composition and casting of a photograph. The long lasting impact advertising has had on the way women are seen, and talked about, today, is the primary starting point for this project. Those who use social media are unconcerned with whether their viewpoints, particularly controversial ones, will affect them financially. Social media's accessibility means that anyone with an internet connection can become a media producer, for better or for worse, which means that statements considered unacceptable in the mainstream can flourish entirely unmediated.

## **Going Viral: Causes and Effects of Memetics**

A major way ideologies are communicated in the social media era is through memes. The term 'meme' is derived from the concept of memetics, the way that beliefs spread through societies, referring to "...ideas that catch on and propagate themselves around the world by jumping from brain to brain." (Blackmore, 6) Lynch (175) argues that awareness, and especially self-awareness, of the process of memetics is crucial to our population becoming more conscious. Without this awareness, he says, "intense ideologies around the world will keep spiralling out of control with reckless abandon."

Memetics position ideas as a kind of virus, due to the fact that ideas that spread and survive are not necessarily truthful, logical, or benefit of the population as a whole. Memetics exist solely to influence, and are not often begun or perpetuated by those who hold authority on the subject of the memetic. (The Los Angeles Times) When the concept of memetics was first proposed, the Internet wasn't as prevalent as a source of information as it has become today. The spread of these 'viruses' of ideas is now at an unprecedented pace and scope, and, because of the nature of the Internet, there is no way to contain the more harmful of these ideas. People in isolation, be that geographical or social, are now able to "[bypass] hegemonic mass media gatekeepers by navigating through the online sphere." (Mutsvario, 3)

A theme I myself have noticed in the online sphere, are memes and forum posts that apply capitalist and advertising terms to women's bodies and lives. (Figure 17) Though by no means exhaustive, the list of terms used I have seen includes "false advertising", (in regards to cosmetic use), "upgrade", (in regards to measuring the attributes of two women against one another), and "damaged goods" (usually used in regards to survivors of abusive relationships). I agree with Mohanty's theory that "...Social movements are crucial sites for the construction of knowledge, communities, and identities," (528) making the casual use of these terms the social movement which set this project into motion. Because a lot of the Internet is community driven, I would argue that the exponential growth of the use of these terms is a result of imitation as much as misogyny.

Figure 18. *Somewhere In America.*

When an idea, or a term, is passed on again and again, as is the nature of information transfers on the Internet, they can take on a life of their own. (Blackmore, 4) Many of these memes would be considered inappropriate to appear in advertising material, but have become just as recognizable as if they were an international advertising campaign.

## **Mind Your Language: Words as Memberships and Characterisations**

Language use exists alongside media and memetics as a concept that mediates human thought and ideologies. (Glapka, 1) Linguistic variations between social groups carry a variety of connotations, and exist within the same codifying framework that fashion trends do. If a group of people starts using certain terms, or using the same language patterns, the social values of said group are transferred to the term or pattern. (Chambers & Schilling, 18) Individuals can “shape and reshape personal identities, interpersonal interactions, group memberships, social orders, and ways of thinking,” (Chambers & Schilling, 15) using linguistic variation as a marker of belonging, or dismissal. Sometimes this process is subtle and unconscious, and the starting point is hard to define. Other times, it is overt, aggressive, and has a clear conception point- “[it takes no training] in philosophy to decipher the misogyny behind the use of the word ‘cunt’.” (Holland, 4)

It is not uncommon for a white American teen to use features of AAVE, (African American Vernacular English), not necessarily to identify with African Americans, but to affiliate themselves with the character traits they associate with African Americans- being street-wise and tough. (Chambers & Schilling, 17) (Figure 18) Every person on the planet makes some form of use of language. The global scope of language means that language tropes of certain groups are easily adopted and spread. Language use is not restricted to spoken format, as evidenced by the commodifying language on social media discussed previously. Owing to the fact that these terms have become part of our day-to-day vocabulary as a result of the pervasive nature of Capitalism, and by extension, advertising, they have been easy to reappropriate for a different purpose, as context is not required. The viral spread of this use of language is akin to Capitalism’s aim of “distribution, development, accumulation, and reinvestment.” (The Free Dictionary, 2018) Commodifying language is given a “leg up” by our pre-existing acceptance of Capitalism, and now they can distribute and develop alongside one another.

## **“The Problem With Women Is...” Misogyny in Online Spaces**

Misogyny online does not stop at language use and sexist memes. With ever more frequency, patterns are emerging of “harassing, abusive, and threatening behaviours that are specifically targeted to women.” (Mantilla, 10)

Figure 19. *Untitled Screen Shots from 'Incels' Forum Titles.*

Because those who may be pre-disposed to these behaviours are able to obscure their identities, bodies, and socioeconomic status, (Ging, 6) “legal and moral culpability” is greatly reduced. Alongside this reduction, there is the increase in the speed and flow with which ideas can be communicated, across “groups, platforms, and geographical boundaries.” (Ging, 8) Both language use and sexist memes are explained by this, but recently, even as recent as April 2018, there is evidence that allowing antifeminist and antiwoman speech to flourish has real world, and sometimes deadly, consequences for women.

The subgroup of ‘Incels’ (Involuntarily Celibate) (Figure 19) that exists online is an extreme example of the consequences of Internet based misogyny, but a compelling one. One cannot scroll for long before encountering a meme or a comment that uses the commodifying language I have taken issue with. One such comment read “women want to call it rape if a guy takes off a condom because she ‘didn’t consent to it’, so if a woman is hideous and used makeup to hide it, he didn’t consent to fucking Freddy Kruger and was thus the victim of rape”. (Bilbo\_T\_Baggins\_OMG, March 2018) The Internet creates a space where men can perform “hostile and often illegal performances of masculinity”, which is “effectively impossible to regulate online”. (Ging, 6) As such, not only is it common to read objectifying memes and outbursts, pro-rape and pro-murder comments are also common, with no objection. Those who create mainstream media have a set of moral standards they must uphold if their material is to be allowed to be broadcast, but these online spaces have no such equivalent regulation. These extreme instances of misogyny are not a result of the Internet, but, instead, are merely an adaptation of offline misogyny to the Internet, where they can talk without repercussion. (Mantilla, 16)

The host website, Reddit, closed the ‘Incels’ forum in early 2018, but this did not resolve the issue. The members dispersed and created new communities. Some shifted to the more radical websites 4Chan and incels.me and some presented somewhat censored versions of the same ideas back on Reddit. No matter how obviously dangerous the members of this community seem, it is impossible to stamp out an online group, and even more impossible to stamp out the ideas a group has spread. The rapid pace of the Internet has resulted in the increased homogenization of ‘incel’ ideologies.

## **When Online Misogyny Goes Offline**

Reddit was correct to be concerned about this sub group. In 2014, Elliot Rodger “vowed to [make] those beautiful girls suffer, just as they have made me suffer,” (Gaines & Miller, 23) and, as a result, killed six people and injured 14 in an attack in Isla Vista, California.

Figure 20. *Untitled Reddit Post Mourning Elliot Rodger.*

Rodger was a prominent member of the group, and, before the attack, uploaded a video to YouTube explaining his motivations for the shooting. In the video, titled “Retribution”, he cites content from common discussions that take place on this forum. It is common on the forum to propose being “denied” sex by women is worse than being raped and murdered. In “Retribution”, Rodger calmly vocalises his feelings towards women, stating, “you girls have never been attracted to me. I don’t know why you aren’t attracted to me, but I will punish you all for it,” (2014) and “you denied me a happy life, and, in turn, I will deny all of you life.” (2014) Rodger made it explicitly clear that his actions were a result of his resentment towards women, and his supposed entitlement to sexual relationships. He outlined his plans to go to a Sorority House, occupied exclusively by women, and “slaughter every single spoiled, stuck up, blonde slut I see there.” (2014) This is not an outlying event. On April 25<sup>th</sup> of this year, a self-professed ‘incel’ in Toronto drove a van into a crowd of people, killing ten people.

Rather than being repelled by these events, the incel community has openly celebrated both of these men, including posting birthday messages to Elliot Rodger every year. (Figure 20) These events are proof that misogyny, no matter how casual, on the Internet has real life consequences for real life women. This is a community where a woman’s death is a cause for celebration. These men were spurred on by the support of their community, where such hateful language and behaviour is normalised. Even if it is not necessarily exclusively women who die in these attacks, the killer’s motivations, and what they aim to achieve, is what spreads, and incites fear, and (for some) admiration.

Again, a large factor that has allowed misogynist language to take the hold that it has is the prevalence of Capitalism. No context or explanation is needed for a comment like “Fake up. That is fraud and should be illegal.” (JStheHammer, March 2018) “In an increasingly visual culture, we are all spokesmodels for our own brands,” (Hess) and the use of such language is a mere extension of this concept. However, Capitalism is not the sole cause of misogyny, it is merely the current state of affairs contributing to it. (Catterall, Maclaran, & Stevens, 35)

Figure 21. *Untitled Image of Dickies Redhawk Bib and Brace Overalls.*

Figure 22. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me.*

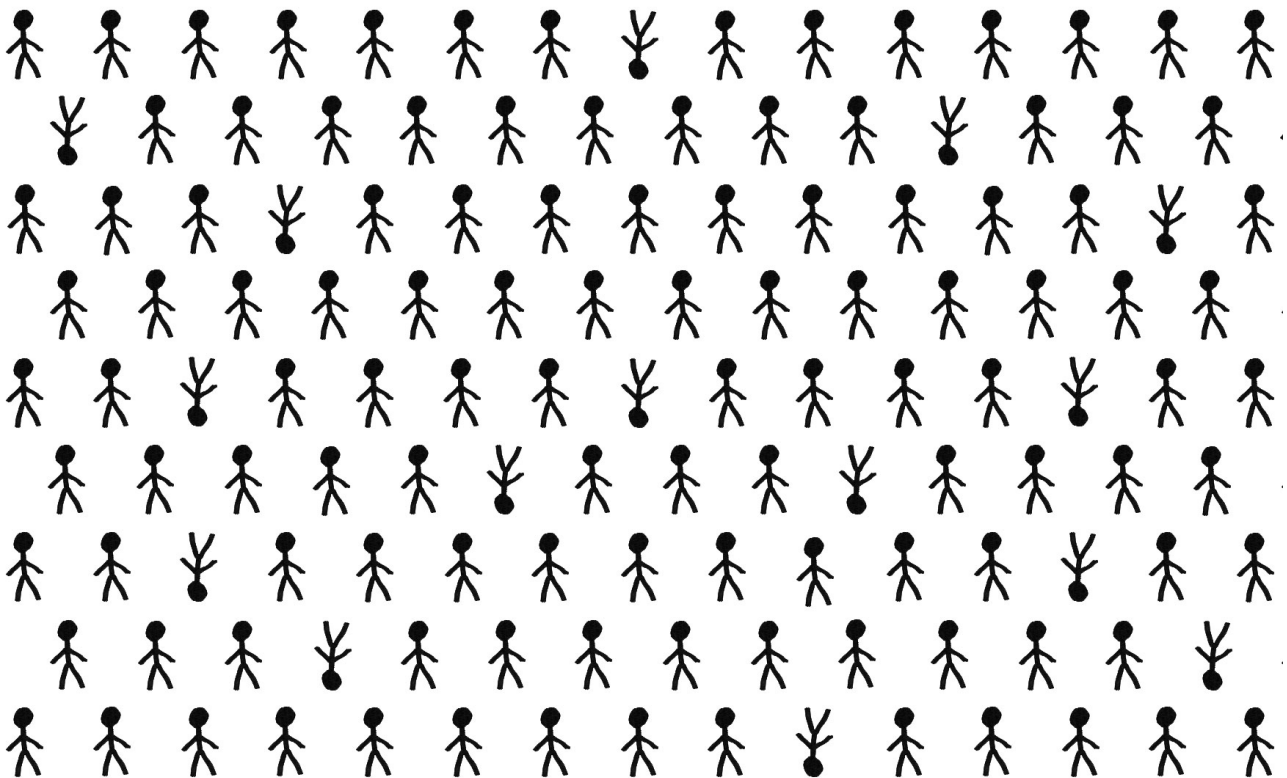


Figure 23. *Untitled Image of Stick Figure Repeat Pattern.*

## Part Two: Design Process

### The Inception of Please Like Me- Defining “Work Wear”

My collection uses visual elements in the same way. I have taken familiar tropes of traditional “work wear”, (such as hard wearing fabrics, oversized military style pockets, and Fluorescent orange) and made them less so by reappropriating codified clothing items traditionally associated with men and male pursuits, and for specific purposes. (Figure 21, 22) However, they are still somewhat recognisable due to their familiarity. During my research of codified clothing, I noticed that often coded clothing items refer to women’s characters and men’s professions. Even the term “work wear” is evidence of this. “Work wear” almost always refers to the clothing worn by tradesmen, farmers, or others who perform manual labour. While women are employed in these careers, men are overrepresented in them, and such work is seen as a pinnacle of traditional masculinity. Generally, we “[associate] men with the spiritual and intellectual world, and women with the material,” (Lemire, 2) resulting in a term that implies that women do not require “work clothes”. This is unsurprising, considering the widespread attitude that “men act and women appear,” (Berger, 3) and I felt that an interesting way of challenging this idea would be to subvert expectations of what constitutes “work wear.”

### Textile Design and Misperforming Media Tropes

In *Please Like Me*, I have also used print to communicate the above concepts. I have designed a print that is a repeating tile of the traditional stick figure, in black and white. (Figure 23) When designing this print, I was thinking about commodifying language, and people’s desire to purchase items in “as new” condition. I thought that, if one were to purchase a person “as new”, the person would be in this form. The stick figure is the simplest possible representation of a person. Its simplicity suggests its uncomplicated existence, untouched by the hardships and traumas of day to day life. The simplicity of the print, and the monochromatic colour scheme, was chosen to reflect the patriarchy’s desire to project their ideologies onto women’s bodies and lives, with no competing elements. In a sense, the print also references the concept of a voodoo doll- a doll one can use to harm another person from a distance. From far away, the print is indistinct, with the people coming into focus as the wearer approaches, adding an unexpected and slightly sinister element. The idea of wearing a sheet of people over one’s skin also interested me- it diminishes the idea that the wearer is the only person involved in the clothing, and the choice to wear the clothing. On the flip side, it also presents the model as many people, a group, a sisterhood, rather than a lone person, implying a kind of untouchability.



Figure 24. Untitled Image of Underwear Repeat Pattern.



Figure 25. Untitled Image of Please Like Me (2).



Figure 26. Untitled Image of Please Like Me (3).

The other print I designed for this collection consisted of cartoon underwear in pastel colours on a murky background. (Figure 24) I wanted this print to subvert the concept of codified clothing items, and the categorization of women that comes with them. Underwear is a clothing item that is typically codified as “sexy”, and women in their underwear codified as promiscuous. I have drawn underwear that are childish and unflattering, and coloured them in an ‘innocent and sweet’ palette. I wanted this print to play on the idea that an image is automatically sexy if underwear is present. I have placed this print on oversized items that obscure the body, such as a pair of paper bag pants and turtlenecks. I aimed for this print to misperform sexuality, and ‘play dumb’ about sexuality as a concept. The wearer is parodying the idea that she is assured of the sexiness of her clothing, because she’s put all the parts together- women and underwear. (Figure 25) She knows it’s sexy, because, technically speaking, it follows the rules. However, in context, it completely misses this mark. This print highlights the unreasonable standards and codes presented to women through advertising.

I referenced the often used trope of the “disembodied limb” in a fluorescent orange backpack with a misshapen foot embroidered onto it. (Figure 26) Again, this is about misperforming sexuality. The wearer recognizes that advertisers see limbs and body parts out of context appealing, and has taken it upon herself to do the same. Again, the bag misses the mark, due to the childish nature of backpacks, the extreme colour scheme, and the image of the foot itself. The foot is hairy, contorted, and has oversized, unevenly spaced, toes. Again, technically, the bag meets the criteria of the trope of the disembodied limb, but projects an entirely different aesthetic.

## **Highly Visible- Fluorescent Orange in Please Like Me**

I chose fluorescent orange as a dominant colour in my collection, due to its role in codifying clothing as “work wear” and the connotative meanings that have arisen around it as a result. Fluorescent orange is colloquially known as “High Vis”, and is used in prison jumpsuits to enable escaped convicts to be easily spotted, and to deindividualise and plant connotations of guilt on the wearer. (“Why Do Prisoners Wear Lurid Jumpsuits?” 2005) “High Vis” is also used by hunters (which is legally required) so they are not mistaken for game. (International Hunter Education Association) In short, fluorescent orange is used to heighten visibility, and is generally associated with pursuits, such as tradesmen and hunters, that encapsulate traditional masculinity. This is, again, where the concept of misperformance becomes relevant. “A genuine misperformance.. foils the comfort of both normativity and liminality,” (Reynolds, 4) and, here, I aim to disrupt the normative concept of what is considered ‘visibility’. I have capitalised on the existing, expected meaning of visibility to “shape [it] subtly... and turn [it] on [its] head.” (Chambers & Schilling, 18) Women, in all their forms, complex, imperfect, indefinable women, need to be seen in all forms of



Figure 27. *Untitled Image of BeeSwift B-Seen Hi Vis Rail Spec Overalls.*

Figure 28. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (2).*

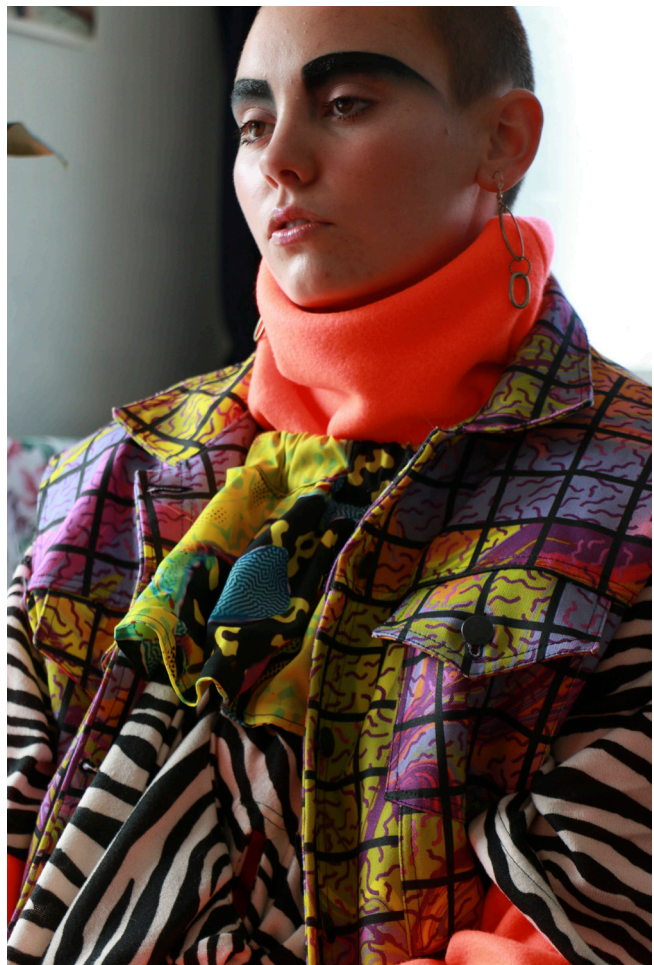


Figure 29. *Untitled Image of Mustang MIV-10 Manual Inflatable PFD Fisherman's Vest.*

Figure 30. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me.*

media if we are to unlearn normalised misogyny. 'High Vis'(ibility) is essential, because "you can't be what you can't see." (Miss Representation, 2011)

In traditional use, the visibility of fluorescent orange (Figure 27, 28) exists for the purpose of safety for the wearer. Again, I wanted to shift the meaning and connotations surrounding "safety" conceptually. A woman's concept of safety in this current political climate is very different than the idea of safety on the worksite. When, on social media, violent men can publicly say that "[they'll] destroy all of you if they can't have you" and "[they'll] take great pleasure in slaughtering all of you," (Rodger, 2014) nowhere feels like a truly safe space. It is impossible for the average woman to know how many people surrounding them hold the same viewpoints as those who commit violence in the name of misogyny. The concept of "safety" is much further reaching and complex than the fear of falling debris, or an accident on a hunting ground. There is no truly safe space from the fear of violent misogyny, and I wanted to reflect this through my colour use in *Please Like Me*.

## **Silhouette**

The concept of misperformance again becomes relevant in this collection through my use of silhouette and design details. I have vaguely referenced "work wear" beyond just fluorescent orange throughout my collection. Many of the garments are distorted versions of items of clothing commonly seen on those who perform manual labour- Overalls and jumpsuits, denim jackets and vests, and cargo pants. However, I have disfigured and exaggerated the design elements of these traditional pieces, resulting in extremely inappropriate silhouettes for the kind of work associated with the term "work wear". The wearer has misread which elements of these clothes make them "work wear". And, as with my other uses of misperformance, it is not technically correct because most, if not all, of the design features are still there. (Figure 29, 30) The clothes are still constructed in hardwearing fabrics, bright colours are still present, the pockets, drawstrings, and covered skin is all accounted for. The models are styled in combat boots and thick socks. I wanted to subvert the idea behind the term "work wear" and the idea of coded clothing in general. The wearer has appropriated a lifestyle and way of dressing that is not seen as belonging to them, under the gender binary. I have used the concept of misperformance so heavily in my collection because "misperformance encompasses failure". (Reynolds, 54) I wanted the very concept of failure to be seen as a positive, because success in performing to the patriarchy's framework should not be seen as a positive achievement. Misperformance also plays on the idea that women are incapable of understanding difficult concepts. The wearer is 'playing dumb' in respect to her misperformance, for the purpose of being subversive. The practice of subversion requires understanding of the original concepts- one must know the rules in order to break them.



Figure 31. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (4)*



Figure 32. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me.*

## **A “Control Freak” or Fighting For Control?**

“Fashion is the most profoundly social yet individual phenomenon, an act of will and yet totally controlled,” (Edwards, 2) and in *Please Like Me* I also wanted to explore the idea of control of image through control within garments. These garments are exceedingly heavy and stiff, and move in a way that sits in contrast with how a human body naturally moves. There is a juxtaposition to this, in that the only elements of the garments that move independently are the cords and drawstrings, in movements akin to a cow using its tail to flick off flies. The exaggerated length and movement of these cords makes the garment take up an unnatural amount of space, independent of the body, which comes back to the concept and desire for visibility. The use of clothing to control women’s images has resulted in a climate where “[Girls’] bodies cause them trouble and worry,” (Orbach, 1) and I have created garments that do not offer any knowledge to the viewer about the body wearing them- its size, its shape, the way it moves. (Figure 31)

## **Prints and Colours**

The clashing prints and colours within this collection work in conjunction with my use of silhouette. I wanted to create a discordant appearance within each look, to create the process of ‘looking over’ a woman’s body (as is common every time a woman steps into public) uncomfortable and stilted. The patriarchy would have us categorise each of these prints and garments in a different way. The fluorescent orange, and the block colours of the black, white, and yellow geometric prints sit in contrast to feminine pastel ombre print, organic shapes, and ruffles. (Figure 32) This inconsistency exists in order to make the woman wearing them troubling to define and categorise. The overdressed, excessively layered styling of this collection works with these factors to create an unnatural appearance. I agree with the statement that “we cannot assume that ‘natural’ is an easy thing to define or that a natural state is good and rational,” (Scott, 21) as I have used a heavily curated, controlled, artificial state for the purpose of creating an overall ‘irrational’ experience in the eyes of the patriarchy.

## **A “Sorry” State of Affairs- Reinterpreting The “Slogan”**

I have also reinterpreted the concept of a ‘slogan’ in this collection. I have created a backpack with a long trail of letters, spelling out the word ‘sorry’. Slogans on clothing exist as something of a billboard. As we know, billboards usually show advertising material, and aim to entice us towards a product, not apologise for their existence. I chose the word ‘sorry’ due to the fact that “most of us, if not all, have built significant parts of our lives around shame.” (Brown, 2) Advertising, and misogyny, has, for too long, built itself around making women feel ashamed of themselves.



Figure 33. *Untitled Image of 'Sorry' Backpack.*



Figure 35. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (2).*

Figure 34. *Cover of Dizzee Rascal's "Bonkers" Single Cover.*

Shame is “a barrier to learning and change,” (Brown, 2) and I wanted to acknowledge shame using irony, parody, and misperformance. The backpack the word appears on is bright yellow, and is trimmed by ruffles. The joyful aesthetic of the backpack sits in contrast to the message it is attached to. This heightens the irony and sarcasm behind the statement ‘sorry’. I also wanted to use a feeble, pitiful word to reference the “dispiriting climate of confusion, division, cynicism, and above all, exhaustion” (Wolf, 10) that exists amongst modern day women and especially feminists in this day and age. I chose to style the ‘sorry’ backpack (Figure 33) in the New Zealand Fashion Week show in the second to last look- a way of apologising for the entire performance. I’m sorry you had to see this. I’m sorry, but this is the way things are. I’m sorry for our collective losses. Are you sorry? Even the title of the collection came from this concept of apology- *Please Like Me*.

## **Runway Music**

Misperformance again became relevant in the pseudo accessibility I created in the overall performance I created in the runway show for this collection. I used “Bonkers” by Dizzee Rascal (real name Dylan Mills) as the runway music. (Figure 34) I chose this song due to its status as an instantly recognizable hit, and the way this connects to the recognizable nature of the design elements I have used. The name of the album that this track appears on is “Tongue ‘n Cheek”, which conceptually fits with the use of parody and irony in this collection. Within the song, Mills spouts somewhat inflammatory statements such as “all I care about is sex and violence, a heavy bassline is my kind of silence”, (2009) over an upbeat backing track. Again, as with my collection, there are discordant notes within this song, which contributes to the overall feeling of confusion surrounding the work on the runway.

## **New Zealand Fashion Week- Collaboration or Causation?**

For me, the performance and the pseudo accessibility becomes important within the context of New Zealand Fashion Week. I had conflicting feelings about presenting this collection in this context. (Figure 35)The commercialization of the fashion industry has meant that it is a stakeholder in creating a lot of the advertising material that resulted in the conceptual inception of this collection. I initially felt that my participation would project the idea that I approved of all facets of the fashion industry, and thus would position myself as part of the problem. I was unsure whether this concept could hold up in such a context. In some respects, it didn’t. Fashion reporters discussed *Please Like Me* with statements such as “brightly coloured and layered designs by Tess Norquay”. (Matheson) I do not blame these reporters for not seeing the concept. It is the nature of the fashion industry, and particularly runway shows, that garments are generally seen at face value.

Figure 36. *Untitled Runway Image of Please Like Me.*

However, I also thought that “it is sometimes necessary to act under imperfect circumstances”. (Catterall, Maclaran, & Stevens, 35) The scope of Fashion Week (Figure 36) enabled me to claim some of the visibility that this collection’s concept so desires. I was able to speak to some magazines, and outline the concept more thoroughly, so that *Please Like Me* had an impact beyond bright colours and layers. I also think that it is imperative that “[we] take girls and young women seriously as media and cultural producers,” (Dobson, 1) and I would have never had the opportunity to be taken seriously had I not grasped this opportunity for exposure, not only of my work, but the concept behind it. Furthermore, increasingly feminist theorists have had to allow the possibility of progress within a capitalist framework, (Catterall, Maclaran, & Stevens, 35) as ignoring the present state of affairs can prevent movement, voices, and ideas from being spread.

## Conclusion

I want to challenge the claim that fashion has no place as an academic medium. For too long, fashion has been seen as “a slightly silly and certainly superficial interest or practice that people tend to associate with youth and dizzy individuals.” (Edwards, 11) These concepts, especially youth and superficiality, should not be dismissed from academic discussion. This entire collection stemmed from our culture’s obsession with superficiality, and the impact it has had on how women, especially young women, live. There are many discussions to be had surrounding superficiality, because it is a key component of visual communication. As for youth, “in every generation, the women with more education, more leisure, and more connections to institutions of power... have been the ones who tried to tell other women what they must wear in order to be liberated.” (Scott, 2) Education, leisure, and connection to power are all factors that increase alongside a person’s age. It is not prudent to dismiss youth from any conversation- in fact, youth often brings new, and sometimes more objective, perspectives.

In a nutshell, *Please Like Me* exists for the purpose of empowering women to reclaim their image, even if this is within less than ideal circumstances. Girls and young women are active media producers, especially on social media, “but they are often judged as being active in the wrong ways”. (Dobson, 1) If anything has become apparent over the course of researching this project, it is this: there is no ‘correct’ way for women to ‘be’. This is both because of the wildly inconsistent categories and frameworks offered to women as tools with which to be defined, and because women are real people with complicated lives, too complicated to be ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’. While *Please Like Me* seeks empowerment for women through covered, armour-like dress, this is not the only way in which women can be empowered. Above all, I want women to dress in whatever way brings them comfort within themselves.



Figure 37. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (5).*

For example, Christina Aguilera “[controls her image by] wearing her sexuality as a badge of power”, (Zazlow, 78) as a response to surviving an abusive relationship. Control of image is the key, and there is not one clearly defined route to this control. I myself can relate to Christina’s perspective. The first time I noticed the use of the term “damaged goods” was when it was applied to me after I left an abusive relationship at 16 years old, anticipating a brighter future but instead being presented with the idea, again, that I was no good to anyone. I was the one who had short-changed someone, and I was the one who deserved to be returned. While some think that “self-representation [is] driven by vanity”, (Dobson, 2) for those who engage in self-representation, it is an essential tool to survival, and “make[s] explicit and implicit claims to truth and authenticity on multiple levels.” (Dobson, 5)

*Please Like Me* (Figure 37) is a response to not only my own abuse, but also the abuse I see of women around me. The abuse takes many forms, and does not necessarily have to apply exclusively to abusive relationships. The way women have been moulded, shaped, and stuffed by advertisers, and, by extension, the people around us, is a form of abuse all on its own. *Please Like Me* uses misperformance, parody, and irony to subvert and highlight the unreasonable nature of the choices for representation women have been offered for all of time. *Please Like Me* is a visual representation of the growing need for the safety and visibility of women. This is for the woman who says ‘no’. No, that’s not funny. No, that’s not acceptable. No, don’t speak to me like that. No, I belong to no one; I am a person, not property. Please, Please, Please. Don’t like me.

## Reference List

- Always-be-Closing. "Women Can Be Damaged Goods" [Online Forum Comment] *Reddit*. 2016. Retrieved from [reddit.com/r/TheRedPill/comments/4deyqp/damaged\\_goods/](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheRedPill/comments/4deyqp/damaged_goods/)
- Andersen, Margaret & Taylor, Howard. *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. United States of America. Thomson Learning, inc. 2008. Print.
- Arthurs, Jane. *Television and Sexuality: Regulation and the Politics of Taste*. United Kingdom, Open University Press. 2004. E-Book.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. United Kingdom. Penguin. 1972. Print.
- Bignell, Jonathan. *Media Semiotics: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. United Kingdom. Manchester University Press. 2002. Print.
- Bilbo\_T\_Baggins\_OMG. "Women Want to Call it Rape" [Online Forum Comment] *Reddit*. March 2018. Retrieved from [reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the\\_power\\_of\\_makeup/](https://www.reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the_power_of_makeup/)
- Blackmore, Susan. *The Meme Machine*. United States of America. Oxford University Press. 1999. Print.
- Brown, Brené. *Women and Shame: Reaching Out, Speaking Truths, And Building Connections*. United States of America. 3C Press. 2004. Print.
- Catterall, Miriam, Maclaran, Pauline, & Stevens, Lorna. *Marketing and Feminism: Current Issues and Research*. United States of America and Canada. Routledge. 2000. Print.
- Chambers, J.K. & Schilling, Natalie. *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. United Kingdom. John Wiley & Sons, inc. 2013. Print.
- Dobson, Amy S. *Postfeminist Digital Cultures: Femininity, Social Media, and Self-Representation*. United States of America. Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. Print.
- Edwards, Tim. *Fashion in Focus: Concepts, Practices, and Politics*. United States of America and Canada. Routledge. 2011. Print.
- Elliot Rodgers Retribution- The Last Video*. News Now (Reupload From Elliot Rodger's Channel) Youtube. 2014. Retrieved from [youtube.com/watch?v=0TgeR\\_SFNB8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TgeR_SFNB8) Accessed 6 May 2018.
- Gill, Rosalind, Orgard, Shani and Koffman, Ofra. *Girl Power and 'Selfie Humanitarianism'*. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*. 2015. 157-168. LSE Research Online. Web. Accessed 1 June 2018.

- Ging, Debbie. *Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere*. Men and Masculinities. 2017. 1-20. Sage Journals. Web. Accessed 1 May 2018.
- Gaines, Larry K & Miller, Roger L. *Criminal Justice 4*. United States of America. Cengage Learning. 2017. Print.
- Glapka, Ewa. *Reading Bridal Magazines From a Critical Discursive Perspective*. United Kingdom. Palgrave MacMillan. 2014. Print.
- Hancock, Joseph. Johnson-Woods, Toni. & Karaminas, Vicki. *Fashion in Popular Culture: Literature, Media and Contemporary Studies*. United Kingdom. Intellect. 2013. Print.
- Hess, Amanda. *"I Feel Pretty" and the Rise of Beauty-Standard Denialism* The New York Times. April 23, 2018. Web. 13 May 2018.
- Holland, Jack. *A Brief History of Misogyny: The World's Oldest Prejudice*. London, United Kingdom. Constable & Robinson. 2006. Print.
- International Hunter Education Association. "Hunter Orange Requirements" *International Hunter Education Association*. N.D. Web. Accessed 7 May 2018.
- JStheHammer. "Fakeup" [Online Forum Comment] *Reddit*. March 2018. Retrieved From [reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the\\_power\\_of\\_makeup/](https://www.reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the_power_of_makeup/)
- Kulcher, Susan & Were, Graeme. *The Art of Clothing: A Pacific Experience*. United States of America. UCL Press. 2005. Print.
- Lemire, Beverly. *The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society*. Alberta, Canada, Ashgate Publishing. 2010. Print.
- Lynch, Aaron. *Thought Contagion: How Belief Spreads Through Society*. The New Science of Memes. United States of America. Basic Books. 1996. Print.
- Mantilla, Karla. *Gendertrolling: How Misogyny Went Viral*. United States of America. Praeger. 2015. Print.
- Matheson, Leigh. New Zealand Fashion Week Day 3: Kathryn Wilson, Tanya Carlson and Stolen Girlfriends Club. *Now to Love*. August 31, 2017. Web. 13 May 2018.
- Mills, Dylan Kwabena. [Dizzee Rascal] "Bonkers" *Bonkers*. Dirtee Stank. 2009.
- Miss Representation*. Directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. Girls' Club Entertainment. 2011. Film.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity Through Anticapitalist Struggles*. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society. 2003. Vol. 28 No. 2. University of Chicago Press Journals. Web. 8 May 2018.

Mutsvario, Bruce. *Digital Activism in the Social Media Era: Critical Reflections on Emerging Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa*. United Kingdom. Palgrave Macmillan. 2016. Print.

“A New Key to Behaviour”. *The Los Angeles Times*. March 20, 1999. Web. Accessed 14 May 2018.

Orbach, Susie. *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. United Kingdom. Arrow Books. 1978. Print.

Reynolds, Bryan. *Performance Studies: Key Words, Concepts, and Theories*. United Kingdom. Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. Print.

Scott, Linda M. *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism*. United States of America. St. Martin's Press. 2006. Print.

“Definition of ‘Capitalism’”. *The Free Dictionary*. 2018. Retrieved From [thefreedictionary.com/capitalism](http://thefreedictionary.com/capitalism)

“Why Do Prisoners Wear Lurid Jumpsuits?” *BBC News*. 17 November 2005. Web. Accessed 7 May 2018.

Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. Great Britain. Vintage. 1991. Print.

Zazlow, Emilie. *Feminism, Inc. Coming of Age in Girl Power Media Culture*. United States of America. Palgrave MacMillan. 2009. Print.

## Bibliography

- Always-be-Closing. "Women Can Be Damaged Goods" [Online Forum Comment] *Reddit*. 2016. Retrieved from [reddit.com/r/TheRedPill/comments/4deyqp/damaged\\_goods/](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheRedPill/comments/4deyqp/damaged_goods/)
- Andersen, Margaret & Taylor, Howard. *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. United States of America. Thomson Learning, inc. 2008. Print.
- Arthurs, Jane. *Television and Sexuality: Regulation and the Politics of Taste*. United Kingdom, Open University Press. 2004. E-Book.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. United Kingdom. Penguin. 1972. Print.
- Bignell, Jonathan. *Media Semiotics: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. United Kingdom. Manchester University Press. 2002. Print.
- Bilbo\_T\_Baggins\_OMG. "Women Want to Call it Rape" [Online Forum Comment] *Reddit*. March 2018. Retrieved from [reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the\\_power\\_of\\_makeup/](https://www.reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the_power_of_makeup/)
- Blackmore, Susan. *The Meme Machine*. United States of America. Oxford University Press. 1999. Print.
- Brown, Brené. *Women and Shame: Reaching Out, Speaking Truths, And Building Connections*. United States of America. 3C Press. 2004. Print.
- Catterall, Miriam, Maclaran, Pauline, & Stevens, Lorna. *Marketing and Feminism: Current Issues and Research*. United States of America and Canada. Routledge. 2000. Print.
- Chambers, J.K. & Schilling, Natalie. *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. United Kingdom. John Wiley & Sons, inc. 2013. Print.
- Dobson, Amy S. *Postfeminist Digital Cultures: Femininity, Social Media, and Self-Representation*. United States of America. Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. Print.
- Edwards, Tim. *Fashion in Focus: Concepts, Practices, and Politics*. United States of America and Canada. Routledge. 2011. Print.
- Elliot Rodgers Retribution- The Last Video*. News Now (Reupload From Elliot Rodger's Channel) Youtube. 2014. Retrieved from [youtube.com/watch?v=0TgeR\\_SFNB8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TgeR_SFNB8) Accessed 6 May 2018.
- Gill, Rosalind. "Empowerment/Sexism: Figuring Female Sexual Agency in Contemporary Advertising" *Feminism and Psychology*. Sage Journals. Vol. 8 No. 1. 2008. Pp. 35-60

- Gill, Rosalind, Orgard, Shani and Koffman, Ofra. *Girl Power and 'Selfie Humanitarianism'*. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*. 2015. 157-168. LSE Research Online. Web. Accessed 1 June 2018.
- Ging, Debbie. *Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere*. *Men and Masculinities*. 2017. 1-20. Sage Journals. Web. Accessed 1 May 2018.
- Gaines, Larry K & Miller, Roger L. *Criminal Justice 4*. United States of America. Cengage Learning. 2017. Print.
- Glapka, Ewa. *Reading Bridal Magazines From a Critical Discursive Perspective*. United Kingdom. Palgrave MacMillan. 2014. Print.
- Hancock, Joseph. Johnson-Woods, Toni. & Karaminas, Vicki. *Fashion in Popular Culture: Literature, Media and Contemporary Studies*. United Kingdom. Intellect. 2013. Print.
- Hess, Amanda. *"I Feel Pretty" and the Rise of Beauty-Standard Denialism* The New York Times. April 23, 2018. Web. 13 May 2018.
- Holland, Jack. *A Brief History of Misogyny: The World's Oldest Prejudice*. London, United Kingdom. Constable & Robinson. 2006. Print.
- International Hunter Education Association. "Hunter Orange Requirements" *International Hunter Education Association*. N.D. Web. Accessed 7 May 2018.
- JStheHammer. "Fakeup" [Online Forum Comment] *Reddit*. March 2018. Retrieved From [reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the\\_power\\_of\\_makeup/](https://www.reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/7z5tpx/the_power_of_makeup/)
- Kulcher, Susan & Were, Graeme. *The Art of Clothing: A Pacific Experience*. United States of America. UCL Press. 2005. Print.
- Lemire, Beverly. *The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society*. Alberta, Canada, Ashgate Publishing. 2010. Print.
- Lynch, Aaron. *Thought Contagion: How Belief Spreads Through Society*. The New Science of Memes. United States of America. Basic Books. 1996. Print.
- Mantilla, Karla. *Gender trolling: How Misogyny Went Viral*. United States of America. Praeger. 2015. Print.
- Matheson, Leigh. New Zealand Fashion Week Day 3: Kathryn Wilson, Tanya Carlson and Stolen Girlfriends Club. *Now to Love*. August 31, 2017. Web. 13 May 2018.

Mills, Dylan Kwabena. [Dizzee Rascal] "Bonkers" *Bonkers*. Dirtee Stank. 2009.

*Miss Representation*. Directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. Girls' Club Entertainment. 2011. Film.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity Through Anticapitalist Struggles*. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 2003. Vol. 28 No. 2. University of Chicago Press Journals. Web. 8 May 2018.

Mutsvario, Bruce. *Digital Activism in the Social Media Era: Critical Reflections on Emerging Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa*. United Kingdom. Palgrave Macmillan. 2016. Print.

"A New Key to Behaviour". *The Los Angeles Times*. March 20, 1999. Web. Accessed 14 May 2018.

Orbach, Susie. *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. United Kingdom. Arrow Books. 1978. Print.

Reynolds, Bryan. *Performance Studies: Key Words, Concepts, and Theories*. United Kingdom. Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. Print.

Scott, Linda M. *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism*. United States of America. St. Martin's Press. 2006. Print.

"Definition of 'Capitalism'". *The Free Dictionary*. 2018. Retrieved From [thefreedictionary.com/capitalism](http://thefreedictionary.com/capitalism)

"Why Do Prisoners Wear Lurid Jumpsuits?" *BBC News*. 17 November 2005. Web. Accessed 7 May 2018.

Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. Great Britain. Vintage. 1991. Print.

Zazlow, Emilie. *Feminism, Inc. Coming of Age in Girl Power Media Culture*. United States of America. Palgrave MacMillan. 2009. Print.

## Images List

Figure 1. Davis, Evangeline. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me*. Photograph. 2017. Wellington.

Figure 2. Creator Unknown. *Untitled "Makeup is the Equivalent of False Advertising" meme*. Online Image. 2018. Make a Meme. Retrieved from [www.makeameme.org/meme/makeup-is-the](http://www.makeameme.org/meme/makeup-is-the)

Figure 3. Creator Unknown. *Untitled "Take Girls Swimming on the First Date" Screenshot*. Online Image. August 20, 2016. AutGram. Retrieved from [autgram.com/tag/takeherswimmingonthefirstdate](http://autgram.com/tag/takeherswimmingonthefirstdate)

Figure 4. Trinidad, Vincent. *Untitled Wonder Woman/Girl Power Image*. 2017. NeatoShop. Retrieved from [www.neatoshop.com/product/Girl-Power-3](http://www.neatoshop.com/product/Girl-Power-3)

Figure 5. Merberg, Julie. Illustration. *DC Super Heroes: My First Book of Girl Power*. United States of America. Downtown Books. 2014. Cover image. Print.

Figure 6. Miss Representation. Directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. *Untitled Screenshot of Miss Representation Infographic*. 2011. Girls' Club Entertainment.

Figure 7. Lake, Rosea. *Judgements*. Photograph. 2012. Tumblr. Retrieved from [roseaposey.tumblr.com/post/39795409283/judgments](http://roseaposey.tumblr.com/post/39795409283/judgments)

Figure 8. The Spice Girls. *Cover of The Spice Girls: Spice World*. Album Cover. 1997. United Kingdom. Virgin Records.

Figure 9. Carnell, Samuel. *Untitled Image of Māori Woman*. Photograph. c. 1880-1890. Flashbak. Retrieved From [flashbak.com/44-captivating-native-maori-portraits-fom-19th-century-new-zealand-32789/](http://flashbak.com/44-captivating-native-maori-portraits-fom-19th-century-new-zealand-32789/)

Figure 10. National Council of Women. *Untitled Image of the New Zealand National Council of Women*. Photograph. 1896. New Zealand History. Retrieved from [nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/womens-suffrage/national-council-of-women](http://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/womens-suffrage/national-council-of-women)

Figure 11. Creator Unknown. *Untitled Image of Woman at Anti-Bra Protest*. Photograph. 1969. Kenga Rex. Retrieved from [kengarex.com/bra-burning-protests-in-the-60s/](http://kengarex.com/bra-burning-protests-in-the-60s/)

Figure 12. Tilley, Colin. *Untitled Screen Shot of Nicki Minaj's 'Anaconda' Music Video*. Video. Nicki Minaj. Young Money Entertainment, Cash Money Records, and Republic Records. 2014. Music Video.

Figure 13. Advertisement for Christian Louboutin. *Louboutin AW '14 Lookbook*. Advertisement. 2014. Retrieved from [bustle.com/articles/25283-christian-louboutin-put-severed-legs-wearing-stilettos-in-his-new-ads-good-luck-sleeping-tonight](http://bustle.com/articles/25283-christian-louboutin-put-severed-legs-wearing-stilettos-in-his-new-ads-good-luck-sleeping-tonight)

Figure 14. Leggs. *Untitled Advertisement for Leggs*. Advertisement. c.1970. Retrieved from [businessinsider.com.au/vintage-sexist-and-racist-ads-2011-6?r=US&IR=T#leggs-1970s-19](http://businessinsider.com.au/vintage-sexist-and-racist-ads-2011-6?r=US&IR=T#leggs-1970s-19)

Figure 15. Creator Unknown. *Untitled Image of Man Wearing "Go Fuck Your Selfie" T-shirt*. Photograph. 2014. The Carceral Net. Retrieved from [thecarceralnet.wordpress.com/2014/05/23/selfies-and-hatred/](http://thecarceralnet.wordpress.com/2014/05/23/selfies-and-hatred/)

Figure 16. Creator Unknown. *Untitled 'Went To The Moon.. Went To The Bathroom' Meme*. Online Image. February 15, 2015. Real Funny. Retrieved From [realfunny.net/picture-1654-number-of-photos-taken-neil-armstrong-on-the-moon-vs-a-selfie-addict-in-the-bathroom-.html](http://realfunny.net/picture-1654-number-of-photos-taken-neil-armstrong-on-the-moon-vs-a-selfie-addict-in-the-bathroom-.html)

Figure 17. Emeke, Cecile. *Fake Deep*. Screenshots from Youtube Slam Poem Video. October 23, 2014. Youtube. Retrieved From [youtube.com/watch?v=JtVSputUs4Y](http://youtube.com/watch?v=JtVSputUs4Y)

Figure 18. Allen, Zariya, Escobedo, Belissa, and McGavin, Rhiannon. *Somewhere In America*. Screenshots From Youtube Slam Poem Video. July 25, 2014. Youtube. Retrieved From [youtube.com/watch?v=OadZpUJv8Eg&t=137s](http://youtube.com/watch?v=OadZpUJv8Eg&t=137s)

Figure 19. Multiple Anonymous Creators. *Untitled Screen Shots from 'Incels' Forum Titles*. Forum Posts. 2016-2018. Incels.Me. Retrieved from [incels.me/forums/inceldom-discussion.2/](http://incels.me/forums/inceldom-discussion.2/)

Figure 20. Creator Unknown. *Untitled Reddit Post Mourning Elliot Rodger*. Forum Post. 2017. Reddit. Retrieved From [reddit.com/r/IncelTears/comments/6p989x/incels\\_front\\_page\\_celibrating\\_elliot\\_rodger/](http://reddit.com/r/IncelTears/comments/6p989x/incels_front_page_celibrating_elliot_rodger/)

Figure 21. Dickies. *Untitled Image of Dickies Redhawk Bib and Brace Overalls*. Product Photograph. 2018. Dickies Store. Retrieved From [dickiesstore.co.uk/](http://dickiesstore.co.uk/)

Figure 22. Gee, Kelsey. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me*. Photograph. 2017. Auckland.

Figure 23. Norquay, Tess. *Untitled Image of Stick Figure Repeat Pattern*. Textile Design. 2016. Wellington.

Figure 24. Norquay, Tess. *Untitled Image of Underwear Repeat Pattern*. Textile Design. 2016. Wellington.

Figure 25. Davis, Evangeline. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (2)*. Photograph. 2017. Wellington.

Figure 26. Davis, Evangeline. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (3)*. Photograph. 2017. Wellington.

Figure 27. Mammoth Workwear. *Untitled Image of BeeSwift B-Seen Hi Vis Rail Spec Overalls*. Product Photograph. 2018. Mammoth Workwear Store. Retrieved From [mammothworkwear.com/beeswift-b-seen-hi-vis-rail-spec-overalls-p1433.htm](http://mammothworkwear.com/beeswift-b-seen-hi-vis-rail-spec-overalls-p1433.htm)

Figure 28. Gee, Kelsey. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (2)*. Photograph. 2017. Auckland.

Figure 29. Ahoy Captain. *Untitled Image of Mustang MIV-10 Manual Inflatable PFD Fisherman's Vest*. Product Photograph. 2018. Ahoy Captain Store. Retrieved From [ahoycaptain.com/mustang\\_MIV-10.html](http://ahoycaptain.com/mustang_MIV-10.html)

Figure 30. Ellah, Xavier. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me*. Photograph. 2016. Wellington.

Figure 31. Davis, Evangeline. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (4)*. Photograph. 2017. Wellington.

Figure 32. Brown, Nikita. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me*. Photograph. 2017. Auckland.

Figure 33. Norquay, Tess. *Untitled Image of 'Sorry' Backpack*. Photograph. 2017. Wellington.

Figure 34. Mills, Dylan. (Dizzee Rascal) *Cover of Dizzee Rascal's "Bonkers" Single Cover*. Album Cover. 2009. United Kingdom. Dirtee Stank.

Figure 35. Brown, Nikita. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (2)*. Photograph. 2017. Auckland.

Figure 36. Fashion Quarterly. *Untitled Runway Image of Please Like Me*. Photograph. 31 August 2017. Retrieved From [fq.co.nz/nzfw/runway-highlights-nzfw-2017-Wednesday](http://fq.co.nz/nzfw/runway-highlights-nzfw-2017-Wednesday)

Figure 37. Davis, Evangeline. *Untitled Image of Please Like Me (5)*. Photograph. 2017. Wellington.



