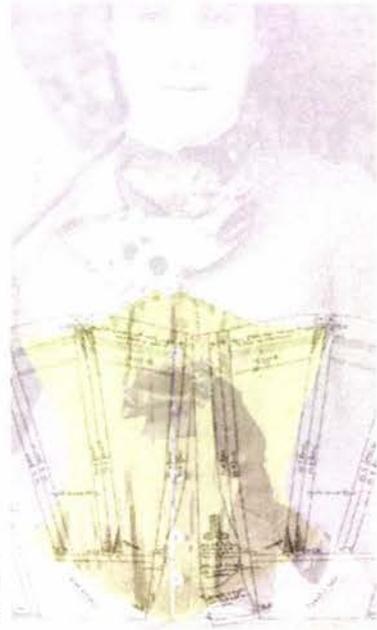


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Disclosure



*The Development of a Classification System Describing the
Historical Design Elements of Women's Corsets (1870-1911)
in the Absence of an Exhibition*

Kylie Merrick

*A Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters of Design (Fashion)
Massey University Wellington
2006*



Figure 1 Mrs Basier at Norris Photography Studio Princess Street, Dunedin, c 1895- 1899



The Victorian and Edwardian corset is a significant historical design object. It is unique for its sophistication of the cut, the design, the combination of materials, complex construction techniques, elaborate and purposeful decoration and the integrated use of typography. This research develops a model for detailing comprehensive design knowledge of corsets that focusing on intensifying the understanding of corset design through written and visual composition by the development of a classification system to describe and record the historical design elements. Six New Zealand museum collections were selected for the material culture-based investigation using corsets made between 1870 - 1911.

The evolving number of corset styles, vast range of materials, construction techniques, array of embellishment details, and specific terminology, have been correlated together to form a highly descriptive historical record. The research data, presented in an illustrative and detailed narrative catalogue model, has been presented to allow public access to the largely unseen historical artefacts in the absence of an exhibition.

This work increases the knowledge of the design elements of historical corsets and supports the conducted into the under documented area of the dress history of Pakeha women in Victorian and Edwardian New Zealand. The research model and system of identifying, classifying and cataloguing is not exclusive to corset research, it could be modified and applied to other design-based research involving historic dress, in and outside of New Zealand.



Enhance the charm of your physique

Madam, and be healthier with the new D & A Directoire Corset, rather than discount it and injure your health with ill-fitting and old-fashioned Corsets.

Madam, you cannot rival the "Chic" and "Svelte" appearance of French and American women unless you wear a corset that shapes gracefully and fits comfortably.

At Paris the fountain head of styles, and wherever good styles reign, our designer has sought most carefully before, after many experiments, we perfected on living models our wonderful new D & A Directoire Corset. The result is a corset giving just that "Chic" and "Svelte" appear-

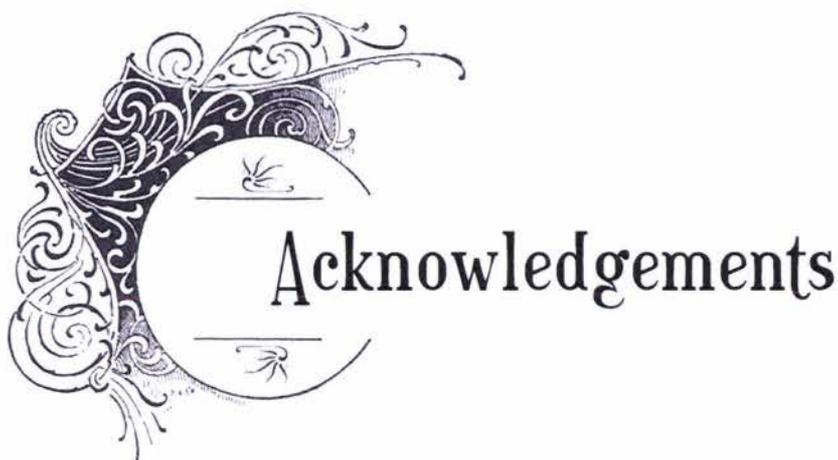
ance which the most fashionable French, American and Canadian women seek. Moreover, by holding the body in shape without compressing unduly at any point, the D & A Directoire is more healthful for you than any other Corset. ● For sale by all leading drapers.

A-1

THE DOMINION CORSET COMPANY, QUEBEC, CANADA.



Figure 2 D&A Directoire Corset advertisement, *The Evening Post*, Wednesday 21 September, 1910, p10



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List of Abbreviations

ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
CT	Christchurch Times
EC	Collection code Canterbury Museum, Christchurch
G	Collection code Otago Museum Dunedin
HBM	Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, Napier
MU	Maker Unknown
NZGLJ	New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal
NPM	Nelson Provincial Museum and Tasman Bays Heritage Trust
NZF	New Zealand Freelance, Newspaper
OSM	Collection code Otago Settler Museum, Dunedin
PC	Collection code Museum of New Zealand Te Papa, Wellington
TEP	The Evening Post, Newspaper, Wellington
TWR	The White Ribbon,
UNBHGS	University of New Brunswick History Graduates Seminar
WRM	Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, Wanganui