

“Who Am I Today?”

Dress to Express

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Who am I?

Where do I come from?

These two leading questions are the beginning of producing your identity as a person.

“Who Am I Today?” This dual-meaning question occurs as individuals begin to choose their clothing for the day (dress to express) and what aspect of identity would like to be expressed after leaving the home. This thesis begins with the exploration of the focus of the body, time, and space as we extract lifeless and bodiless objects from storage, transition, and embody them to represent and affirm our individual concepts of identities. Clothing and architecture define space and protect; internally and externally. These skin subjects are parallel in their daily encapsulation to the human form in creating a historical discourse in their concepts of identities.

Meanwhile, the closet is a fixed intimate ambient space with varying scales, context, collection of objects, and a space of nostalgia in shifting and evolving identities over time. “With the rise of industrialism and home consumer goods, closets became storage spaces for clothing, personal effects, and household equipment - boxes, glasses, pots, bottles, jugs, conserve jars, and so forth. They took on specialized identities, too; the dressing room, the study, the library, the gallery. Yet according to Henry Urbach, the closet as a ‘new spatial type,’ a wall cavity adjacent to a proper room, did not emerge until around 1840 in the United States. This newly subservient closet obscured itself by receding into the wall, and it attempted to ‘disappear’ the family’s stuff” (Mattern). The body, an archive, remains a movable object; meanwhile, these lifeless clothing articles are fixed to the many typologies of closets until embodiment occurs.

Through the methodology of interviews conducted of several individuals to highlight their production of identity in their expression of “Who Am I Today?”, as their closet and other storage areas became unobscured. The primary closet generally does not participate within the larger intimate space, the bedroom, as the interrelationship between the two spaces are for privacy. A visual investigation, *The Ritual of Dressing*, captured the taxonomy in clothing as a temporal dimension, the process of extracting, transition, and embodying clothing articles, and ending before exiting out into the built environment.

The transition from the personal identity to the collective identity occurs in the built environment as the body in space/place transforms by subtracting or adding to the multiple identities of an individual. These specialized roles that occur in aspirational, regulated, structured, or de-identification spaces affect the identity through the procedures or overall setting temporarily or permanently. The personal identity returns when individuals return home and are done expressing their produced identity. This is done by removing clothing and placed in an informal closet as the clothing once again becomes bodiless and lifeless. The thesis concludes by portraying an individual’s life in a day journey via clothing and identity from dress to express to done expressing.