



The Fabric of Crime

CSA Midwestern Symposium

October 15-17th, 2021

Opening Reception: Bata Shoe Museum | Friday, October 15 at 5:30pm

Conference Location: Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

“Clothing and how and why it is worn, like concepts of ‘criminal’ or ‘deviant behaviour,’ is fundamentally determined by unwritten social laws that are predominantly driven by the moral climate and notions of acceptability in a given culture at any specific time.”

-Jo Turney, *Fashion Crimes: Dressing for Deviance*, p.1



**Image Citation: Sidney ‘Kicker’ Kelly, 25 June 1924 and Kate Leigh, “Queen of the Underworld” 2 July 1930
Special Photograph numbers 1266 and D94. New South Wales Police Forensic Photography Archive, Sydney Living Museums**

In Jo Turney’s recent edited volume *Fashion Crimes* (Bloomsbury 2019), she opens an investigation into the possible connections between clothing and crime in contemporary society. The contents include everything from the criminalization of hoodies to the Japanese “schoolgirl delinquent” look. Yet research into the history of crime and dress also reveals many longstanding links. The word clue comes from the historical language of textiles—a clue, from the late Middle English “clew,” was “a ball of thread”; hence one used to guide a person out of a labyrinth” (OED, 2015). Looking at dress either historically or today, this conference seeks to “re-dress” perspectives on crime and bring clothing into the dialogue.

The conference will feature an exclusive curator’s tour of a new exhibition at the Bata Shoe Museum opening in September 2020, entitled *Exhibit A*. As Bonnie and Clyde and the sharp suits of Al Capone demonstrate, clothing can glamorize criminality, but we can also learn about other aspects of dress and bodily practice through the lens of crime. For example, mugshots from the New South Wales Police Forensic Photography Archive in Australia can tell us a lot about the everyday fashions of people across the social spectrum suspected of committing crimes in the 1920s and 30s.

Research papers could include explorations of dress as disguise, stolen goods, weapon or protection, true crime and fiction, uniforms and streetwear, clues, fibers and forensic evidence, cross-dressing, surveillance and stereotyping. We welcome proposals sharing the information you have sleuthed out about dress past and present. This might include photographic or other types of images, objects, texts, films, television, music or social media. We would be interested in individual papers, panels, workshop ideas, and/or creative work. Please submit a 200-250 word proposal with references and image(s). There will be possibilities for publication in a special issue of the journal *Fashion Studies* <https://www.fashionstudies.ca/> as well as other possible venues.

Deadline for proposal submissions: Friday, April 9, 2021

Responses will be sent out: Friday, May 7, 2021

Submit here: <https://csoa.memberclicks.net/active-registrations>