



## **Critical Costume 2026: Costume interfaces and interdisciplinary entanglements**

An international conference and exhibition

Co-convened by Donatella Barbieri, Jessica Bugg, Nadia Malik

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London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London

**9 - 11 September 2026**

More info: <https://www.arts.ac.uk/colleges/london-college-of-fashion/critical-costume-2026/>

Contact: [criticalcostume2026@gmail.com](mailto:criticalcostume2026@gmail.com)

**Deadline for applications: 1 December 2025**

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### **Call for participation**

This conference explores the existing reach and future potentialities of costume in the contemporary context, uncovering the intersections with other disciplines and with the critical issues of our times in new and emerging contexts.

Given the multiple current global crises and conflicts, including climate change, social marginalisations, and epistemicides, how do entanglements presented by costume address the world as it is, considering pasts and proposing future possibilities through performance?

Centring a dialogue around costume innovation and global futures, we consider social and environmental sustainability alongside analogue and digital technologies, which are approached as embodied and enworlded. Equally, we see costume innovation as a means of artistic expression directed towards communal wellbeing, access and inclusion through performance. Discourses around costume can be fluid and porous, as well as addressing social, environmental and political concerns that focus on costume's potential interfaces, entanglements and interdisciplinarity. These can be framed as problematising, future-facing and meaningfully active.

We call upon researchers, educators, and practitioners in costume and related fields to engage with an ethical, political, environmental and socially engaged questioning of practices and discourses.

Possible questions and orientations include, but are not restricted to, the following:

Questions:

- How do we re-assess and re-evaluate long held assumptions about costume in a fast-moving world?
- What contexts might generate new perspectives for shared human non-human thriving through costume?
- What framings enable a democratising of performance through costume?
- What marginalised and historically oppressed cultural practices might be relevant as impactful and future-facing?
- What technologies, new and old, analogue and digital, are providing opportunities for a reconsidering of costume as social, environmental, and political action?
- How are digital technologies creating change that is oriented towards socially and environmentally sustainable futures?
- How are we facing up to the ethics presented by new digital practices?

Orientations:

- Re-considering histories and cultures (neglected by dominant narratives of costume)
- Communities and culture building through costume practices
- Environmentally conscious and sustainable costume practices
- Costume-centric technologies, the relationship between analogue and digital practices
- Socially engaged ethics and politics of costume
- Pedagogies for costume futures

## Formats

We invite submissions for consideration in the following formats:

- Academic paper (15 minutes)
- Flash talk (7 minutes)
- Podcast conversation proposal (each episode is a 15-minute audio-visual recording of a conversation between you and our podcast host titled 'Costume and \_\_\_\_\_': please complete the episode title with your proposed word)
- Proposal for small scale experimental performances (physical or digital)
- Workshop proposal
- Artistic work for the exhibition (physical or digital)

You are welcome to submit applications for both the exhibition and the conference. All submissions to the conference will be double blind peer reviewed. Submissions to the exhibition will be peer reviewed and the final exhibition will be curated. Accepted conference contributions will be considered for publication following the model established at previous Critical Costume events. For examples see:

<https://www.criticalcostume.com/publications.html>

## Submissions

Please use only Microsoft Word files for text and JPEG files for images, and include:

- An indication of your preferred format (academic paper, flash talk, podcast, performance, workshop, exhibition contribution)
- Your presentation / exhibition / contribution title
- A 300-word abstract / exhibition / contribution blurb including how your submission relates to the conference theme
- A 50-word biography
- A maximum of two JPEG images (only for flash talks, performances, exhibition)

Send to: [criticalcostume2026@gmail.com](mailto:criticalcostume2026@gmail.com)

**Deadline: 1 December 2025**

## **Key Dates**

- Submission Deadline: 1 December 2025
- Notification of acceptance/feedback: 31 January 2026
- Confirmation of participation (from speakers/presenters): 15 February 2026
- Announcement (of speakers/presenters): 1 June 2026
- Early bird registration deadline: 1 June 2026
- Preliminary programme released: 1 July 2026
- Regular registration deadline: 1 July 2026
- Exhibition installation: 7-8 September 2026
- Conference dates: 9-11 September 2026

## **Event Information**

- The conference is in person, not online
- The conference language is English
- The conference co-convenors reserve the right to suggest a different format depending on submission content and program requirements
- The exact length of every presentation will be decided after the confirmation of participation (based on the final program)
- All presenters and exhibitors must register for the event
- Questions about the event should be directed to [criticalcostume2026@gmail.com](mailto:criticalcostume2026@gmail.com)