[in]visible art: conspicuous making in an age of nano textiles

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Statement of originality

This exegesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

Signed: _________________________________

Meredith Anne Brice Copland
For my sons Luke and Tom

I must let my senses wander as my thoughts—my eyes see without looking.
September 13, 1852
Henry David Thoreau

I would like to express my gratitude to my Supervisors Dr Andre Brodyk and Dr Sean Lowry for their immeasurable support over the period of my candidature.

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Abstract:

This exegesis and studio praxis explores artistic responses to changes taking place in science and society due to the nanotech revolution. More specifically, it explores these revolutionary changes artistically and philosophically through the perspective of nanotech/technical textiles. The author’s research asserts that nanotextiles and wearable apparel are intelligent ‘second skins’ that transform our understanding of how smart technologies merge with nature and environment to produce particular affects.

The catalyst for this research was an interest in creating speculative material approaches to exploring spaces in-between, across and beyond established art science divides with a view to producing art based upon re-tooling nanotech textiles. To this end, this thesis analyses the role of artists as agents of transformation, sustainability and innovation beyond the utilitarian expectations of design practice.

Underpinning this research is the premise that exemplary artistic projects can speculatively reflect upon the world of nanoscience in a manner that is discursive, collaborative, transdisciplinary, imaginative, and serendipitous. Significantly, this imaginative realm is free from valuation based upon scientific measurement. By extension, this project proposes that artists are meaningfully responding to substantial shifts in perspective availed by invisible structures of materiality at molecular, atomic and subatomic scales. Accordingly, the studio-based component of this thesis reflects both materially and speculatively upon new ‘active’ and highly-functional fibres and textiles manifest in a space in-between, across and beyond art and emerging science and new textile technologies.