

The Superhero Costume: Identity and Disguise in Fact and Fiction (Dress, Body, Culture)

By Barbara Brownie, Danny Graydon





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Costume defines the superhero, disguising and distinguishing him or her from the civilian alter ego. The often garish garb expresses a hero's otherness and empowers its wearers to seek a primal form of justice.

This book provides the first interdisciplinary analysis of the superhero costume and investigates wide-ranging issues such as identity, otherness, ritual dress and disguise. Analysis focuses on the implications of wearing superhero costume, exploring interpretations of the costumed hero and the extent to which the costume defines his or her role. Using examples across various media (comic books, film, and television) with case studies including The X-Men, Watchmen, real-life superheroes such as Phoenix Jones and Pussy Riot, and audience activities such as cosplay, *The Superhero Costume* presents new perspectives on the increasingly popular genre.

A lively and thorough account of superhero fashions throughout history, *The Superhero Costume* will be essential reading for students of visual culture, popular culture, fashion and cultural studies.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Smart and accessible, Brownie and Graydon's exploration of the superhero costume is a welcome addition to the fields of media, sociology, cultural studies and politics. Meticulous analysis of well-selected case studies is situated within a lively discussion of contemporary identity politics, reminding readers of popular culture's important role in organizing our understanding of the world, and our place within it.” *Helen Warner, University of East Anglia, UK*

“A rigorous and wide-ranging exploration of this important topic.” *Mike Carey, comic book writer*

“Accessible and academic - this research explores the familiar images of superhero appearances, diving into layers of meaning in the logos, tights, and vivid colors. What is revealed is the powerful relationship between the costume, the wearer, and the popular image.” *Monica Sklar, University of Minnesota, USA*

About the Author

Barbara Brownie is a Senior Lecturer in Visual Communication at the University of Hertfordshire, UK, where she leads online postgraduate study in graphic design and illustration, and lectures in fashion theory.

Danny Graydon is a journalist, critic and author specializing in film and comics. He is a Contextual Studies Lecturer at The School of Creative Arts at the University of Hertfordshire, UK, teaching model special effects and interactive media.

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