

## Finding a form: A different shape 1

### Aim of the exercise:

### Become more aware of writing as an act of transformation

If you are in the V&A, choose a costume from the Fashion Gallery. Otherwise here is a selection of costumes for you to choose from.



Imagine what it is like to wear the costume you have chosen. Make notes on the following:

- How does the costume make you stand and walk?
- What accessories do you wear with it (shoes, wigs, hats, jewels, watches, cufflinks, tie-pins, bags etc.)? Do these make you feel splendidly dressed? Or loaded down?
- Would wearing this costume make you feel taller? Or smaller?
- What does the fabric smell like?
- What sounds does the costume make as you move? Does it rustle? Does it swish? Think of words to describe it.
- What does the garment feel like on your body?

Think about how the fabric would feel against your skin. How heavy is it? Does it scratch or itch? Are there any stays or boning that would cut into your flesh? How tightly cut is the garment? Would it feel constraining or would it flap about?

Imagine looking at yourself in the mirror:

- What first impressions do you get?
- Do you feel like yourself or someone else: a film star, perhaps, or someone from another age or social environment?
- Or perhaps you have chosen to be someone of the other sex. If so, how does that change the way you feel?

These questions are very important, so write as much down as you can.

Who are you when you wear this costume? Take a fresh sheet of paper and make notes about the following:

- Come up with a name for yourself that suits your imagined appearance.
- Give yourself an occupation.
- Decide on your age, weight, height, and family background.
- Imagine that you are going somewhere.
- How does it feel to walk down the street in what you are wearing?
- How do people look at you?

Use these notes as a basis for a short piece of fiction.

The story must begin with the line: 'As I walked by, people looked up from what they were doing.'

It must end with the line: 'And, after all, wasn't that what I had come here for?'

During the course of the story, a small event must occur that the character has not expected.

The catch of this exercise is that it can only be five paragraphs long. How long these paragraphs are is up to you.