

## How does freedom dress?



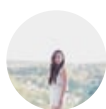
*Cloth* is a video art piece intended to contribute to an inter/intracultural conversation about women, identity, oppression, agency and freedom, as well as common (mis)representations thereof. The directors and performing artists, Samira Mahboub and Ania Catherine, both current postgraduate students at the [LSE Gender Institute](#), envisioned film as a medium through which they could carry academic discourse to a wider audience via performance art – *cloth* is the result. As gender scholars with diverse backgrounds – Samira is a Muslim of German and Moroccan heritage, and Ania is a non-religious Hispanic American – they are interested in channeling their performance experience into projects that not only stimulate critical reflection, but also encompass a meaningful combination of art, academia, and politics.

*Cloth* plays on stereotypes of the veiled Muslim woman as the ‘**oppressed**’ Other in binary opposition to the ‘liberated’ Western women. In doing so, it takes up academic scholarship that challenges the homogeneous (and negative) portrayal of veiled women, and the assumed mutual exclusivity of veiling and empowerment.

Veiling – —to *Western* eyes, the most visible marker of the differentness and inferiority of Islamic societies— – became the symbol now of both the oppression of women (...) and the backwardness of Islam ([Ahmed 1992](#))

*Cloth* playfully translates such critiques into a medium that invites a wider public into the conversation. In exploring how freedom dresses, all too easy assumptions around oppression and empowerment are complicated.

Enjoy!



**cloth**  
from [Jacqui Sze](#)

05:43



Directors: Ania Catherine and Samira Mahboub  
 Director of Photography: Jacqui J Sze  
 Editor: Jacqui J Sze  
 Performance Artists: Ania Catherine and Samira Mahboub



Production & Set Assistant: Eman al-Maadeed

Music: “Easy Muffin” by Amon Tobin

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