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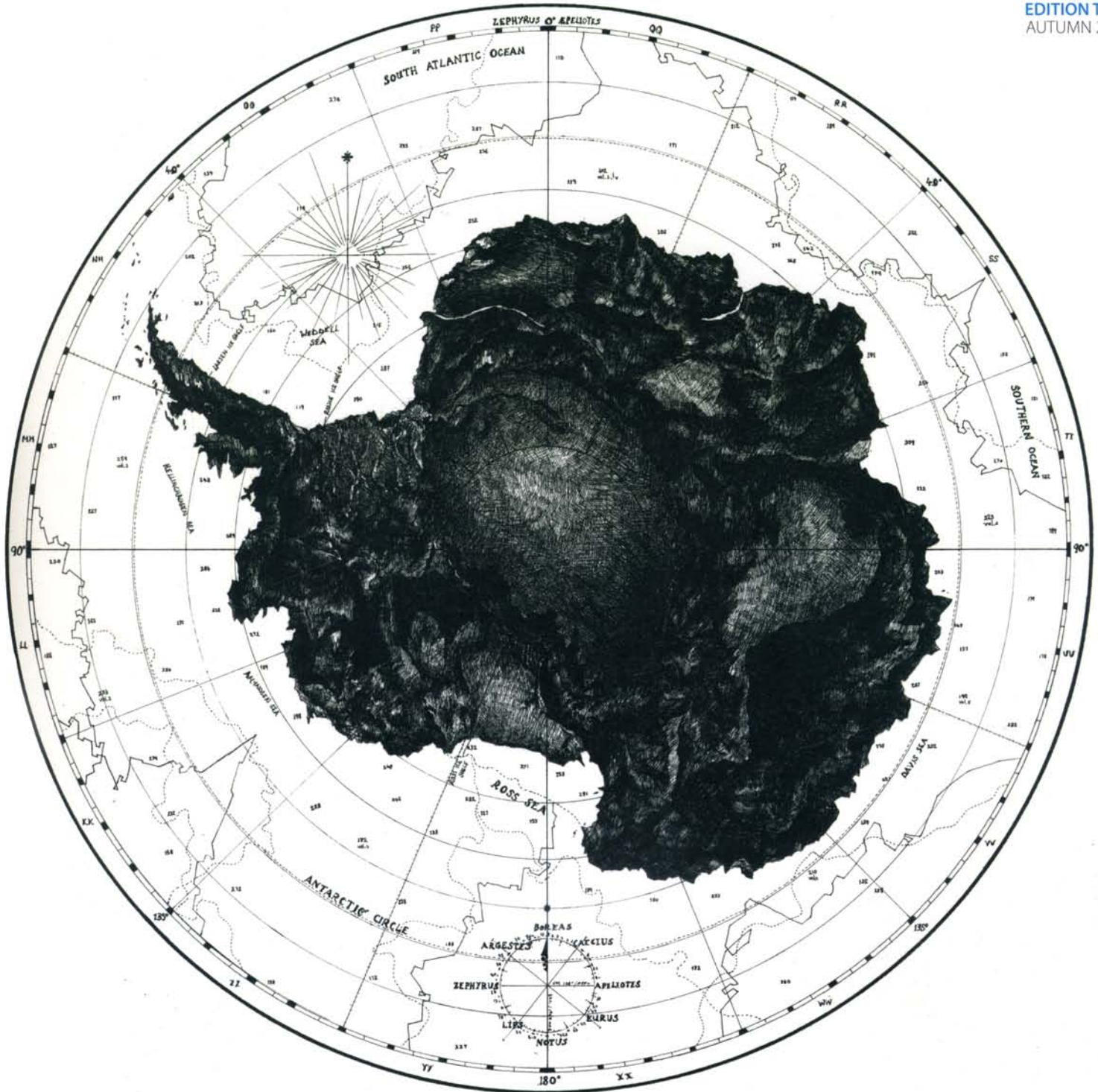


fig 5. Antarctica

THE WORK OF LYNNE DEVEY AND THE FASHION INDUSTRY

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MA 20th CENTURY ART & DESIGN: HISTORIES & THEORIES

As one who wears his socks with his sandals, Lynne Devey's article about 'subverting the fashion industry' in POST #1, struck a chord in me especially as she had highlighted the damage caused by the waste it produces. "Most landfill textiles come from domestic sources. 500,000 tonnes of this is un-wanted clothing" and "If every Briton purchased one item of recycled wool each year, it would save: 371 million gallons of water, 480 tonnes of chemical dyes, and 4571 days of average families electricity needs."

Claude Cahun, Cindy Sherman et al opened up exponentially the possibilities for women's image that only men had been privy to prior to the 1930's but for men and women their awareness of images especially in relation to themselves has been massively enlarged as much for commercial reasons as freedom of choice with the result of built in obsolescence. I wanted to know more so I recently emailed and met up with Lynne to discuss her work.

She is the first to admit that her work is political;

we talked about the anarchist art activist groups, the 'Spacejerkers' and 'The Vacuum Cleaner' and also the group known as 'Ad-busters' which have influenced her work in the form of the recently completed 'Wardrobe Surgery' project which she intends to take to another level with a performance in her persona as 'Dr Eco-stitch' in the 'Clean Conscience Clinic' for her MA show. A cross between performance and craft textiles whereby the audience can engage on several levels with the outcome of receiving wardrobe and lifestyle 'checkups' with Lynne as the consultant. After consultation the 'patients' will have the opportunity to take part in a 'live' wardrobe surgery workshop/ performance and discover how to 'surgically alter' their own clothes/identity thereby becoming empowered to make a difference to the level of waste, exploitation of human and other resources etc produced by them unwittingly when they buy without knowing the consequences of their actions. It will be a testing ground for Lynne and something which may develop into a regular feature of her practice; a humorous skit on the hysteria of high fashion which also has its serious side.

Devey seems to somewhere in-between the bag lady and high fashion. She has elevated the bag lady image along with the 'rubbish' she uses as her base material and desublimated high capitalist fashion by removing the processes it uses to install its unconscious messages in our lives i.e. advertising and glossy magazine culture and by the instant image changes made in the 'surgery'. The magazine will also feature as another part of her work with a political twist in that it seeks to inform, not hypnotise, its readers into making conscious decisions on what they wear.

Her work provides a fertile and much needed basis for what was an area of obsolescence, whereby the signifier was becoming a landfill site. Now, instead of landfill, much cherished but half worn out clothing, or maybe just past its sell by clothing is given surgery capturing its precious essence; a process that can in theory be repeated ad infinitum.

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