Trade fairs in peripheral places: toward a political economy of Australian fashion events

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**Abstract:** Urban studies often celebrate the role of special events in constructing entrepreneurial cities of consumption. Events are promoted because economic gains accrue to cities by bringing consumers into city precincts. This literature tends to view events as isolated occurrences and to ignore their effects on local industries and economies. In contrast, this paper examines the role of events in wider processes of economic development. It explores Fashion Week events in relation to global flows of fashion knowledge and authority, competitive processes in the retail sector and the viability of the local fashion production sector. This alternative perspective highlights the relationship between events and the conditions in underlying industries and reveals that events like Australian Fashion Week may well undermine rather than enhance local creative industries. The conclusion considers the implications for long term development of the city.

*Sally Weller* is an economic geographer whose work develops a spatialised interpretation of the ongoing restructuring of the Australian economy. Her work on the Australian clothing traces its evolution from an isolated manufacturing sector to a retail-oriented cultural industry pivotal in the marketing of global cities. Sally is currently an Australian Research Council Future Fellow in the Centre of Geography at Monash University working on a project concerning the regional implications of the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy. She has recently been invited to join the Smith School at Oxford University as an Associate in its Stranded Assets Program.

**Thursday 19th June at 4pm**

*Clayton campus, Building 11, E561 Elizabeth Burchill Room.*