

ragtrader

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## No form without function

If there is one thing I really miss from my pre Dog and Scottish-extracted husband in training days (SHIT), it is living in an odour-free home.

Don't get me wrong, it's not that either of my boys are particularly repugnant – nor I particularly anal – it's just sometimes their raw all-male "essence" can become a tad overbearing.

Nowhere is this more obvious than when I awake to a less than delicate morning chorus that has nothing to do with the birds residing outside my window.

Having been awakened from my peaceful slumber to the sound of twin gunfire, I am subjected to what can only be described as an attack on my sensibilities as I am forced to witness Dog as he goes about his morning task of cleansing his nether-regions – all over my Egyptian cotton duvet. Never one to be outdone, SHIT then chimes in with his special morning ritual which involves smell-testing the previous day's clothes to decide whether they are still able to "go another round".

As if this were not enough to want me to bound out of bed eager to face the day ahead, I must then endure my two mere males as they collectively hack, wheeze and snort their way through the rest of their house en route to the bathroom. In

their absence lies a dangerous mix of toxins that need to be smelt to be believed. The stench is so rough it has the ability to wilt a cactus.

Which is precisely why I need to convince the boss that a junket to the US may be just the antidote I need. For it is there, where fashion designers and fibre scientists claim to have taken "functional clothing" to a whole new level.

It seems those clever clogs at Cornell University have designed two anything-but-ordinary garments. The first prevents colds and flu and never needs washing while the second is able to destroy harmful gases while also protecting its wearer from smog and air pollution.

Apparently the secret behind the garments – which appear in the guise of a two-toned gold dress and metallic denim jacket – is the fact they contain cotton fabrics coated with nanoparticles imbued with antibacterial and air-purifying qualities.

According to the university's inhouse newspaper the items, designed by designer of the future Olivia Ong, look deceptively normal at first glance. But closer inspection – together with the news that one square yard of the nano-treated cotton costs about \$US10,000 (\$A12,164) – hints the

garments may have hidden depths.

Apparently the fibre works thanks to an "army of electrostatically charged nanoparticles" which create a protective shield around the cotton fibres in the top part of the dress and the sleeves, hood and pockets of the jacket.

The newspaper says the fabrics were created by dipping them in solutions containing nanoparticles synthesized in a lab with the resulting colours not the product of dyes, but reflections of manipulation, particle size or arrangement.

In under-stated fashion, Ong described her creation as "something really moving toward the future, and really advanced". "I thought this could potentially be what fashion is moving toward," she was quoted as saying.

Now if Ong and her pals could now turn their attention to developing a fabric that repels canine and human flatulence, body odour-proofs all items of apparel and keeps the house smelling fresh, then maybe I'd be prepared to post them a cheque.

Tracey Mac

Tracey McEldowney – Editor

"Sometimes their raw all-male 'essence' can become a tad overbearing."



## BackChat

## A daughter's fond farewell

The fashion industry will no doubt wish to pay tribute to my mother Evelyn Bloom (pictured with husband Morris), who lost her short but courageous battle with breast cancer on May 2 this year following an initial diagnosis in January 2005.

Evelyn was the creative director and visionary impetus behind renowned retailer Bloom Fabrics, whose story began humbly in 1986 when her husband Morris purchased a building for Bloom Textiles (his family's textile waste business) in Cecil Street, Fitzroy.

Evelyn began selling fabric remnants "schmattes" from a shop at the front of the building for pocket

money. But before long, with help from her sister Roslyn, the growth of the store had pushed aside the textile waste business and necessitated a move to larger premises.

Today, Bloom Fabrics is a household name representing the ultimate in bridal, haute couture and designer fabrics; but Evelyn's impact with agents, suppliers and customers around the world was more than just professional. They all reflect on how this wonderful person led a full life, giving so much to her family and to all who knew her. One of Bloom's Asian suppliers said, "Evelyn is not only my business partner but also one of my best friends. Actually, I treat her as my sister".

Bloom Fabrics will continue to evolve in Evelyn's honour under the direction of two of her daughters, myself and my sister Jacqui, while Roslyn still plays an important role across many facets of the business.

On behalf of Evelyn's family we would like to thank everybody in the industry for their support and warm wishes during this very difficult time.

Rachel Bloom  
Bloom Fabrics



## Antagonist

