

Tools of the Trade: Reflections on Modesty Garments & Barriers

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About the Author:

Yarit Dor is an established fight director, movement director, intimacy coordinator and credited as the first intimacy director in the West End, London, UK. She is chair of BECTU Union's Intimacy Coordinators Branch (UK) and has contributed writings to several intimacy guidelines. As a facilitator and educator, she teaches intimacy practices at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Arts Ed, Rose Bruford and on the short courses at RADA. Yarit is an Ensemble Associate of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, a BASSC Certified Stage Combat Teacher and is part of the steering group for the Movement Directors Association. Her company Moving Body Arts provides choreography and training for the entertainment industry in the UK.

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Introduction

Modesty garments and barriers are some of the tools used by intimacy professionals in scenes of physical intimacy. This equipment is, in my opinion, still the unspoken hero that helps me do my job, that gives performers a better sense of protection and a tool that supports and enhances consent based practices.

In the following paper, I will look at modesty garments and barriers I currently use in my practice. I will chart my own journey, discuss the development of INTIMASK, give examples of current vocabulary I use, and share a checklist. Get ready, this paper is long and I take full responsibility for that.

Writings about modesty garments and barriers are extremely scarce in books, academic research and many articles discuss them on a superficial level. And so it was difficult for me to edit sections and cut corners from the information I felt was needed. I probably still missed things out or made assumptions that you, the reader, will understand certain aspects without further explanation. This paper is written with some progression that makes sense to me and yet, I do think each section can also stand on its own. So please journey through it at your own pace and choosing.

The following represents my views, practices and knowledge at present. Thus, I might even change my mind and practice differently tomorrow. So, I invite you to take my words not as written in stone but instead view them as a reflection at this point in time, and as an invitation for further exploration.

Creativity is just the beginning,

Innovation is the courageous middle,

And reflection is the key to further development.

Basic Terms and Notices

Language Notice

This article will use language that may include the following:

- Anatomical references: to areas in the body, predominantly within the chest, front and back of the pelvis.
- Inclusive language: I will try to make my language as inclusive as I can with the knowledge I possess at present; however, I might get things wrong or miss important considerations. I apologize for any inconvenience in advance.
- Use of the word 'modesty' in this article: please see the section titled [Addressing the term 'Modesty' in Modesty Garments](#) on page 47.
- Common language and past terminology: there will be moments where I will reference language that is more commonly used in my industry (United Kingdom) or has been used in the past. These terms can be uncomfortable or triggering since some are sexualized or binary language. I strongly feel that it is important to know how things were called or are still referred to in case you meet those in your industry. When possible, I will try to give an alternative that I am currently exploring in my practice.
- Invitation for flexibility: language is very subjective so the language I use currently might not sit well with you and that is normal, we do not all react to language in the same way. Feel free to change the vocabulary to suit your own practices and needs.
- Language is a dialogue: I apologize ahead of time for any inconvenience, please do get in touch to offer suggestions around language, to share your own vocabulary and the reasons behind it so I can learn as well. My website is in the [About The Author](#) section on the title page of this article; you can contact me there.

Terms

- **Performer:** I will try as much as possible to use 'Performer' rather than 'actor' or 'artist'. I find 'actor' sometimes limiting and 'artist' is very broad and can be industry or country-specific.
- **Intimacy Professional:** for me is a generic term for intimacy creatives working in either live performance or recorded media.
- **Intimacy Director/Intimacy Choreographer:** for me are creatives that focus on intimacy within live performance such as but not restricted to: theatre, dance, performance art, fashion show etc.

- **Intimacy Coordinator:** for me are creatives that focus on intimacy in the screen sector such as but not restricted to: television and films (scripted and unscripted), music videos, motion capture etc. I also consider photography shoots as the realm of intimacy coordinators due to the material needing to fit the camera.
- **Intimacy Garments or Modesty Garments:** are both referring to the same thing and can be used interchangeably. Please see the section Addressing the term 'Modesty' in Modesty Garments on page 47.
- I will explain more intimacy kit terms (mainly garments and barriers) further down in this paper.

History Notice

Modesty garments, various coverings and barriers are not the invention of intimacy professionals. Many have been made or used by performers, directors, and costume departments for years before the appearance of intimacy professionals in the entertainment industry. There is a lot of unrecorded history and uncredited inventions. And so, I will not be charting the history of modesty garment and barrier development in this article, nor will I talk about more recent intimacy equipment companies since I do not know their history, team, products, or philosophies. I will also avoid speaking about other people's work or equipment as much as I can since I don't want to make assumptions or reference their practice incorrectly.

I will, however, share some information I have been exposed to during my journey as an intimacy professional as well as a co-founder and product developer for INTIMASK company that creates contemporary modesty garments and intimacy products.

Crediting Notice

- The information offered in this paper is offered for the sake of sharing perspectives, promoting discussions and explorations. However, if you wish to quote, adopt or base future writings and practices on information from this then I kindly request that you credit the writer, date and the issue of this journal.
- Photos: the photographs or sketches of barriers and products that have a "© Yarit Dor" beside/underneath them are owned by me and provided here for this paper. If you wish to use those in your research, teachings, writings etc please contact me to get my consent first.

Addressing the term ‘Modesty’ in Modesty Garments

Before we fully dive into the subject, it would be wrong of me not to share my thoughts on the term “modesty” and why I have decided to use it in this paper.

There are many opinions about this term and whether it supports what intimacy practice stands for or not. The word ‘modesty’ does have a history of power, gender bias and body politics attached to it. For example, the Cambridge Dictionary highlights one of these when defining it (also) as: “the quality, in women, of dressing or behaving in a way that is intended to avoid attracting sexual interest.”

I believe intimacy practice advocates for agency and also celebrates the body and its intimate expression. Therefore, it is hard for me to use a term that resonates for me as a judgement by making certain areas of the performer’s body less celebratory than others. In my practice, intimacy garments are used in order to respect the performer’s consent levels which are detailed in their nudity rider/waiver/intimacy notes. The garments also provide additional safeties during movement choreography. Thus, I think they have nothing to do with creating “modesty” and I feel uneasy about fully supporting the use of ‘modesty’ in ‘modesty garments’.

Many industries still use the term “modesty garments” since it was ingrained into their working vocabulary a long time ago before intimacy professionals existed. Worldwide union-accepted intimacy guidelines have also included the words ‘modesty garments’ in their documentation. And so, that is the current term expected when referring to this equipment. I can only hope that it will be reassessed in new editions of guidelines or at least addressed so there is an opportunity to promote new vocabulary for a new era of safer and inclusive working environments.

I, and some of my colleagues in the UK, prefer using ‘intimacy garments’ instead of ‘modesty garments.’ In my practice, I start by interchanging these terms in order for the crew and cast to slowly understand that I mean the same for both. Then I slowly step away from ‘modesty’ in my ongoing working language on a show.

For this paper, I have chosen to keep the “modesty garment” term because it is the most widely used and I didn’t want to confuse the process for you, the reader. However, I

offer you the exercise of pausing and reflecting on what you'd prefer to call these garments and the reasons behind your choices. If you wish to share these with your professional community then it would help enrich and develop the conversation further.

Personal journey

Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.

-Oprah Winfrey

So, I want to start with a quick background about me and my connection to modesty garments and barrier development.

I am Israeli and British. I first trained and worked as a contemporary dancer. Later, I did an MA in directing, worked as an assistant director, graduated from Jacques Lecoq physical theatre training, became a stage combat teacher with the British Academy of Stage & Screen Combat, started working as a movement director and fight director, trained and certified with Intimacy Directors International (now Intimacy Directors & Coordinators, USA) and attended further workshops with Theatrical Intimacy Ed (USA) and The National Society of Intimacy Professionals (Canada).

Aside from all of that I am a Classical Pilates Instructor and Garuda Instructor (both mat & full studio equipment) and I am a co-director of Moving Body Arts that offers choreography and training for the entertainment industry in the United Kingdom.

My experience with intimacy direction started in 2017 when I worked on *The Rise And Fall Of Little Voice* at the Park Theatre in London. I slowly continued working in Fringe and Off-West End shows until I was hired as the first intimacy director on the West End in 2019. It was an amazing experience working with directors Marianne Elliot and Miranda Cromwell on *Death Of A Salesman* starring Wendel Pierce and Sharon D. Clarke. During that Young Vic/West End production I was offered to transfer my practice to screen. So in early 2019 I got my first intimacy coordination job working with director Dawn Shadforth on *Adult Material* for Channel 4 for which actress Hayley Squire won an Emmy.

In late 2019 I co-founded INTIMASK with Shoni Wilkinson, the first modesty garment company designing products specifically for intimacy professionals. And in 2020 I became the current chair of BECTU Union's Intimacy Coordinators Branch in the UK.

Currently, I keep an ongoing portfolio career of intimacy direction/coordination, fight direction, movement direction and teaching. I love jumping between screen and stage work since it makes me reshape my practice to the industry, people and environment I'm in.

What are Modesty Garments and Barriers?

So, before we continue, if you are asking yourself, "wait, what does she mean by modesty garments and barriers" then you've reached the right section. I'm going to offer you a shorter intro so you can then keep reading. Later, I will fully expand on these terms more in the section called [Types of Modesty Garments and Barriers](#) on page 62. Just to highlight again, these are my definitions at present. Other practitioners may have other names and explanations.

- **Underwear:** I refer to underwear as a regular everyday first layer worn by the performer ('performer underwear') or character ('character underwear'). These can be common fashion items such as bras, briefs, thongs, shorts etc. Their aim is to be the first layer of everyday dress or costume.
- **Modesty Garments:** I use this as a generic umbrella term that includes all items used to specifically cover areas of the performer's body in intimate scenes that have levels of nudity and/or simulated sex or portrayal of contact with chest or genitals. Some will look similar to everyday underwear but be tight to the body, in skin tone and ideally will have space to insert a Garment Barrier when needed. I group modesty garments into three categories: Strapless Garments, Strap Garments and Body Coverings. See the section called [Types Of Modesty Garments & Barriers](#) for expanded details, located on page 62.
- **Barriers:** There are several different barriers used today in intimacy choreography and each professional has their own versions and preferences. I group mine into two categories: Garment Barriers which go inside a modesty garment (when needed) and External Barriers which are placed between performers depending on the intimacy choreography, camera movement and shot size or depending on theatre auditorium structure etc. See [Types Of Modesty Garments & Barriers](#) on page 62 for expanded details.

Now, let's jump into a bit about intimacy professionals and equipment.

Before Intimacy Professionals: Standing on the shoulders of giants

It is obvious that anything a scientist discovers or invents is based on previous discoveries and inventions. The same applies to the Arts.

-Lucas Foss

As noted in the introduction, equipment used in scenes with intimacy has been around for a while before the creation of an intimacy coordinator, intimacy director or intimacy choreographer. This includes items such as: various padded underwear solutions, modesty pouches or patches, mats and pillows from a variety of materials, shapes and sizes. Interviews with actors and writers or directors prior to 2017 give us small hints on previous practice which is the backbone of our more contemporary equipment. For example: Jake Gyllenhaal said that Jennifer Aniston placed a pillow between them in *The Good Girl* (2002) and that she called it the "pillow technique". Olivia Wilde wore pasties and drew smiley faces on them as an ice-breaker according to Ryan Reynolds when shooting for *The Change Up* (2011).

And so, as much as I would love to think that intimacy professionals created what is now used on set or stage, the reality is that we are very much standing on the shoulders of giants. Those giants before us are costume designers, costume supervisors, costume standbys and makers, directors that slotted barriers between performers, acting teachers that shared their own experiences as actors with their students and I've even met cinematographers that told me stories of their mentors coming up with fast solutions to help protect performers on set. We didn't invent modesty garments or barriers. We inherited them. And since we are now the ones overseeing and facilitating intimacy choreography, we have to come up with varied solutions to protect the performer's body and maintain agreed consent levels.

“Keep Calm And Tape On”

Many times when I meet costume departments and do my first chats with performers they start sharing their past ‘modesty garment horror stories’. Tales include pouches and patches that kept falling off, frantic moments of re-tapping strapless garments until the tape ran out, garments that weren’t covering the area fully or didn’t hold it appropriately in place, unintentional exposure when the pouch fell in front of fellow performers and crew, tape that left a skin irritation in the area, pouches that were the incorrect sizing and shape, water/shower scenes that made taping strapless garments impossible, and experiences of being given a modesty garment in the wrong skin-tone and the feelings of shame that arose from it. Interviews of brave actors sharing such horror stories openly include *Outlander* actor Sam Heughan, who spoke in 2014 of how his sock fell by mistake. Sandra Bullock shared that on *The Proposal* (2009) Ryan Reynolds’ modesty garment was not covering his entire genitalia so the director, Anne Fletcher, had to bring it to his attention during the shoot.

Of course, not every intimate scene before intimacy professionals existed was a ‘modesty garment horror story’. Many inventions of costume departments have saved performers in intimate moments. After chatting to several costume department crew that have been around the block way longer than I have, I suddenly realised that they didn’t learn how to make modesty garments in their official costume training. Making those is a skill learnt on the job and a tradition passed down the ranks of the department. A sort of right of passage, you could say. Here are a couple of examples of “modesty pouches” or “sock” shapes made by costume crew (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2):



Figure 1, Left: PC @dazzleships, 2015. Figure 2, Right: PC @Officialtomellis, 2018

Creative Explorations

You cannot use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.

-Maya Angelou

In every creative industry, people explore how to do their job and what tools they can incorporate to quickly solve problems. So it was only natural that when intimacy professionals stepped into the industry, the equipment used on set and stage started changing. Products and designs used up until then were suddenly being redesigned, reshaped and new items emerged in order to reduce previous bad experiences.

The first time I was exposed to items used by other intimacy professionals was in Canada with Alicia Rodis and IDI (nowadays IDC). Alicia showed some of her kit during the IDI Intimacy Choreographers Intensive. By then, I was already using some items easily found online or items created by costume departments. It was amazing to see a pioneering intimacy coordinator share some examples of her kit and what each thing meant for her practice. The specificity of function and purpose of each item was so clear. She took the time to create what she needed for the job.

Later, when I joined various Facebook groups of intimacy professionals I was able to connect with more practitioners worldwide that gave examples of products and materials that they were trying out and to share my own inventions and explorations. Back in 2019, it felt to me like a “booming industry of explorers”. I loved how everyone was grabbing whatever they could off the shelves of drugstores, travel stores, sports shops, fabric shops and dancewear stores in order to find the best products they could cut, paste, sew and adapt.

Whatever the invention was, the general sense was clear; there was no one-stop shop specifically for intimacy professionals. We didn't have products that we could just immediately buy, that were fully ready for use and specific for the movements and protection we needed. Everyone had to adjust and redesign items bought or completely create them from scratch. I remember one evening sitting and sewing Garment Barriers to 40 fashion strapless thongs for a scene with background artists and therefore getting two

hours of sleep. Using products from fashion or dancewear and tweaking them just wasn't a long-term and sustainable solution for me.

“Just INTIMASK it”

Our need will be the real creator.

-Plato, philosopher

In the summer of 2019, I couldn't take it anymore. I was fed up with tweaking dance or fashion underwear into something I hoped would remain on a performer's body throughout a full filming shoot. I was tired of modesty garments looking unflattering, thinly layered, and cheap. I was shocked by the amount of single-use garments ending up in the bin. And I was exhausted getting garments from the costume department that didn't function the way I needed them to on set. The necessity for change created an opportunity for innovation.

In July 2019 I brought my intimacy kit to Shoni Wilkinson, costume designer extraordinaire, and asked her to design garments for me that would fit the functions I needed, have more inclusive skin tones and sizes. The passion of innovation gripped her, too, and immediately we started brainstorming designs and solutions. Shortly after, Enric Ortuno joined us and provided his knowledge and experience of using various products. Once we had some prototypes, I tested them on some shows I was working on at the time and brought back feedback also from costume standbys and from performers using them. On one occasion a performer called it “Star Trek”. When I enquired why she said “well this product is like the Next Generation of modesty garments” which, of course, was followed by a wave of laughter in her trailer. I was astonished how easy it felt to suddenly have the right garment for the job. Fitting garments took less time, performers were more comfortable and less anxious, and costume standbys breathed a sigh of relief knowing they don't have to spend hours making jewelry style pouches to hold a slightly different thing. It all changed when one day the costume department of a Sky TV production that I was working on wanted to order items that they loved from my intimacy kit. Rob Leonard came

up with the company name and shortly after that INTIMASK was born at the end of 2019. We first sold garments via special orders through emails with a catalogue, and in July 2020 INTIMASK's online shop was ready to sell worldwide and cater for contemporary modesty garments specifically made for intimacy professionals.

Becoming a co-founder and lead product developer for INTIMASK was never on my to-do list. You can imagine my parents' reaction when I showed them our products—a sense of pride and laughter. Probably they thought, “it was hard enough to explain to our friends what our daughter does for a living, now, it just got weirder!”

INTIMASK's range of current products include some designs that are unique: The [Shield Pouch](#), [The Strapless Brief](#) and the Silicone Barrier (see photos below). But many of the other garments were based on products that are in use within the fashion, dance or sports industries. We made alterations and re-designed items to suit movement, sizing, and skin tone, in order to make products suitable for the performance of intimacy. We wanted performers to have an athlete-style garment that is functional yet stylish in its own way. It was important for us that it is reusable in order to help reduce single-use products. We have now gone through two line updates and are in the process of adding new products to help solve further issues intimacy professionals have found on the job. In addition, we are constantly on the look-out for more sustainable materials that can still maintain INTIMASK's standard of design and function.

Now, as an intimacy professional I can simply purchase what I need, arrive on set and focus more readily on the other aspects of my job: advocacy, liaison, collaboration, facilitation/choreography, closure etc. It is a game changer for me and I was very happy to hear another intimacy coordinator call it “the current gold standard of modesty products”. What really made my day a couple of weeks ago was when I heard someone in the costume team say “we'll just INTIMASK it”. I never imagined it would become a verb.

I'm super grateful for this moment in time and for the team behind INTIMASK so far: Shoni Wilkinson, Enric Ortuno, Tigger Blaize, Andy Fordham, Li-Lee Choo, Rob Leonard and Charlie Mitchell.

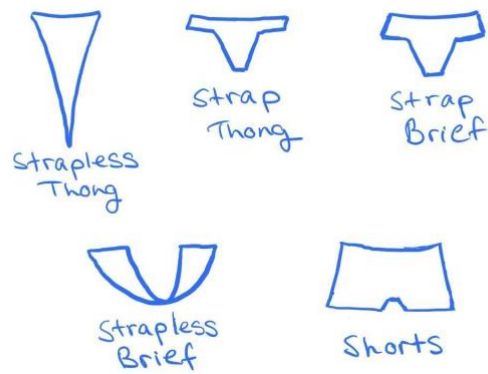
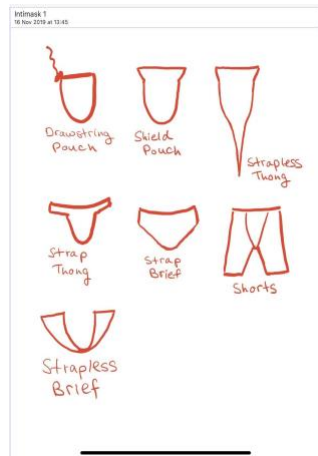


Figure 3 (Left) and Figure 4 (Right): Sketches by Yarit, made for an INTIMASK meeting, 16 November 2019. © Yarit Dor.



Figure 5: products sold by INTIMASK online shop. PC: @intimask.garments.

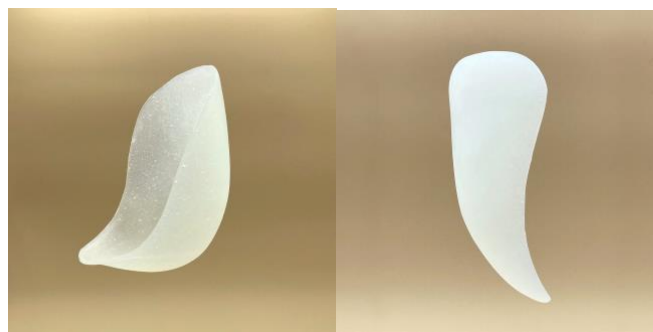


Figure 6 (Left): INTIMASK Silicone Barrier (Vega). PC: <https://www.intimask.com>

Figure 7 (Right): INTIMASK Silicone Barrier (Vega) PC: <https://www.intimask.com>



Figure 8: INTIMASK Lead Designer Shoni Wilkinson (left) and Lead Product Developer Yarit Dor (right). PC: Olivia Brabbs Photography

Consent In Practice - Why Do We Need Modesty Garments & Barriers?

One day, a performer on set shared with me that he performed many simulated sex scenes in the past but it was his first time with a modesty garment. He said that he was always expected to just do the scene with everything “out”. So let’s look at why we need modesty garments. Can we do without?

The answers lies in consent-based practices.

As intimacy professionals, consent is the foundation. We oversee it, advocate for it, and choreograph with it as our guide. Modesty garments and barriers are tools that we use to secure levels of consent and to simulate sex action on set or stage. The guiding question is therefore *what has the performer agreed (consented) to perform, show or portray?*

Answering that will clarify when these are necessary or not.

A few examples:

- **Nudity:** If a performer agreed to perform “full nudity including genitalia” (or “full frontal”, in other words) then *for that specific moment or action*, no modesty garment is required.

If, however, they agreed to “rear nudity only” then the performer’s genitals need to be covered. Whatever hasn’t been agreed to be seen on camera or by the audience shouldn’t be on display for it to be recorded or viewed by mistake. We need to maintain consent levels and mitigate risks in the working environment as much as possible.

- **Simulated sex:** When a performer consents to perform simulated sex, they are saying yes to the act of pretence. They will not perform real sex, they will perform a simulated action. If the action agreed is simulated, there must be ways to prove it was simulated and not real if later crew or cast are questioned. At least in the United Kingdom, there is a precedent that may require such proof:

In 1982 there was a court case where Michael Bogdanov, director of *The Romans* at the National Theatre was accused of procuring an act of gross indecency. In the show two actors were performing a simulated sexual assault scene whilst being fully nude without modesty garments. His defense attorney had to prove that the action in the show was simulated and that the aggrieved couldn't actually see penetration from where they sat in the auditorium. So, the defense attorney demonstrated what the trick in the staging was in order to explain how it was faked for the viewer. The case was dropped, but it opened a precedent for shows to be trialed under the Sexual Offences Act (See [Additional Reading](#) on page 75 for more information).

Any techniques used to simulate are important for the safety of the performers and production. Intimacy movement techniques, modesty garments and barriers are some of the tools we can use in intimacy practice to simulate sex, reduce the potential of contact and reduce stimulation (to desensitize). If performers agree to perform simulated sex but do not use modesty garments and/or barriers, it raises risk factors that genitals may touch by mistake. Before you allow performers to work without modesty garments, it's best to check the legislation and previous cases in your country or state.

Modesty Garments Can Be Gentle Activism

The People are the only ones capable of transforming society

-Rigoberta Menchu

I believe that through raising awareness and instruction around modesty garments and barriers we can affect change in our work environment. Here are some thoughts and suggestions:

- **Help Get Rid of Secrecy:** Knowledge is power. Knowledge allows agency and freedom of choice. Teach your students, performers, costume departments, directors, filmmakers etc what your equipment is so the process can be safer, informed and detailed. Throw the secrecy and mystery out the window so information can develop, deepen and be researched.

- **Raising Awareness of Consent & Safety Through Our Kit:** Creating safer sex scenes goes beyond just advocating for consent and doing boundary checks as many of us know. It is an art form and the tools for consensual creativity also include our barriers and modesty garments.
- **Intimacy Garments for Everyone:** We must make them in all sizes, skin tones and for all genders. Garments help show equality, inclusion and respect. Your advocacy and attention to details matter!
- **Owning Our Language & Creating New Terms:** Yes, we inherited a lot of the garments we use, however, some language is gendered and can be triggering for some performers like the “Cock Sock” or “Modesty” or “Daisies”. Explore new terminology and help change the industry to fit with the raised awareness of society. See the next section for some suggestions on how to name terms.
- **Help The Environment:** Until such time that we can make garments and barriers from 100% compostable materials then we must help the environment. We cater for love scenes so let’s show some love to our world by:
 - a. Reducing single-use products as much as possible
 - b. Returning unused items
 - c. Considering the laundry cleaning products you use
 - d. Working to minimise micro plastics
 - e. Recycling in appropriate recycling centers
 - f. Having more stock of garments at your disposal so you can do less laundry by waiting till you have a full load of dirty garments.



Figure 9: INTIMASK was the first modesty garment company to offer all of their products in 6 skin tone shades. PC: <https://www.intimask.com/size-colour-guide>

Types of Modesty Garments and Barriers

Now, let's get down to the fine technical details, shall we? In this section I will expand on the various types of intimacy garments and barriers I use in my current practice. I'm sure you may have other ways to call such items and products. I invite you to share those with the wider community so further research and understanding is made available. Let's get rid of the secrecy and grow together.

Communication, as many of us know, is super important in our practice. So here are a couple of suggestions I found useful when naming my modesty garments & barriers:

- **Stick to technical language;** avoid something that can create sexual connotations, sexual jokes or remarks (as much as possible to predict). So perhaps using shape or direction in the name could work such as "Front Barrier". Using action based language can be tricky, for example, calling a barrier the "thrusting barrier" might create reactions that could be unhelpful. Do explore with language.
- **Make it as gender neutral as possible.**
- **Prioritize un-gendered terms** as much as possible such as "Genitalia" (or, when needed, "External Genitalia"/ "Internal Genitalia") rather than full anatomical descriptive language. This is something I learned from Amanda Cutting a while back in a conversation. I find these useful at the moment rather than using anatomical terminology like penis, testicles, vulva etc. Plus, it is rarely necessary in our role to mention the sections of someone's private parts when discussing modesty garments. So having a generic term to refer to such as: "genitalia goes into this section of the garment" can be helpful. We shouldn't assume what genital parts someone has.
- **Offer the performers the opportunity to determine terms** they want to use in reference to their modesty garments and barriers. This is useful if they don't connect with what you or the costume department call them. If done so mindfully, this can give them a sense of ownership over the terms and process thus promoting choice and agency which are the root of consent and trauma informed practice.

Types Of Modesty Garments

I divide these into 3 categories: Strapless Garments, Strap Garments and Body Coverings. Items may include but not restricted to the following:

- **Strapless Garments:**
 - [Drawstring Pouch](#): a skin-tone pouch for external genitalia that closes with a drawstring or with other tying-style options. Some may still call it a "Cock

Sock” or “Sock”. I try to stay away from that language in my practice. Some practitioners call it '[modesty pouch](#)' or 'pouch'. INTIMASK has created a modified version that has a pocket to insert a Garment Barrier inside it.

One important thing to consider with this garment is that it does not cover pubic hair or the top $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ of the penis (unless secured in additional ways or fabric is added). So if the performer's nudity rider doesn't allow the camera or audience to film pubic hair and top section of the penis then this garment is not respecting what they agreed to. Whatever cannot be shot or seen on stage or on set should be covered for the performer's protection.

- [Shield Pouch](#): a unique skin-tone pouch with a drawstring and extended fabric created by INTIMASK to cover full external genitalia and the pubic hair line whilst having a pocket and a Silicone Barrier.
- [Strapless Thong](#): a skin-tone thong without the side straps. Covers the genital area and pubic hair. Some call it a 'modesty patch 'or '[Shibue](#)/'[Hibue](#) '(which is a fashion brand selling such items). INTIMASK created one that has a pocket and a Silicone Barrier.
- [Side Thong](#): A thong that pulls the external genitalia sideways. I recommend adding a pocket to insert a Garment Barrier if needed.
- [Strapless Brief](#): a unique skin-tone garment created by INTIMASK, a brief-like garment without the side straps. Covers the genital area as well as the intergluteal cleft. It has pockets on both ends for a Front Silicone Barrier and a Back Silicone Barrier.

- **Strap Garments**

- **Thongs**: a skin-tone thong garment. Depending on the design some practitioners use the fashion/sports terms 'Dance Belts 'or 'G-Strings 'or 'T-String'. I just call it a thong when possible since some of those names don't sit well with performers. For certain actions you will need to add a Garment Barrier.
- **Briefs**: a skin-tone full brief garment. There are many types of brief designs from Classic to Slip to Bikini. I prefer using the generic term 'Brief 'when possible. For certain actions you will need to add a Garment Barrier.
- **Shorts**: a skin-tone tight shorts garment for covering back and front of pelvis as well as some of the top thighs. Some call them "boxer shorts" or "boyshorts". I prefer using the generic term 'Shorts 'when possible. For certain actions you will need to add a Garment Barrier.

- **Body Coverings.** I divide these into two types:
 - **Chest Covering:** A generic term for skin-tone garments used to cover areas of the chest such as but not limited to:
 - [Nipple Covers](#): also known as 'Nipple Pasties', '[Nipple Daisies](#) 'or 'Pasties'. Some performers might not like hearing the word 'nipples ' or 'daisies 'so using 'Covers 'or 'Coverings ''can be useful.
 - Stick-On Bra: covers the front of the breast and some of the side breast keeping the back body nude.
 - Strapless Bra: no over-the-shoulder straps.
 - Bandeau Bra: still commonly known as 'Boob Tube'. I prefer not to use the term 'Boob'.
 - Bandeau Top: also known as 'Tube Top'.
 - Strapless Binder: a chest binder without over-the-shoulder straps.
 - Note that using silicone straps can reflect light, leave marks and make the skin close to it move differently. So they may not be helpful for live performance and screen practice. Do discuss this with other creatives and departments before use.
 - **Additional Coverings:** These can be any skin-tone items of clothing or fabric pieces that cover areas of the performer's body that are not the areas mentioned above. Some performers might want to cover stretch marks or scar tissue with pieces of fabric or tape. Other items used might be Bodysuits or a Strapless Slip that covers the chest, stomach, pelvis and top thighs.



Figure 10: A Range of Strap Garments and Chest Coverings in a beige/light beige skin tone. © Yarit Dor.



Figure 11: Strapless Garment, Strap Garment, Nipple Covers and a skin-tone tape all in medium brown skin tone. These were the items chosen by the performers in a pre-production intimacy chat on 16 January 2020. © Yarit Dor.



Figure 12 (Left): INTIMASK's Shield Pouch. Figure 13 (Center): INTIMASK's Strapless Brief. Figure 14 (Right): INTIMASK's Strapless Thong. PC: @intimask.garments

Types Of Adhesives

These are used predominantly with Strapless Garments but can be used in other ways as well when adhesive is required:

- [Skin-Tone Tape](#): any tape that is in the skin tone of the performer.
- [Double-Sided Tape](#): is transparent and has adhesive on both sides. Some also call it '[flash tape](#)' or '[top stick](#)' etc.
- [Water Resistant Adhesive](#) - any adhesive that resists or repels water. Can be various medical tapes or prosthetic glues etc.
- [Colour Kinesiology Tape](#): some performers may want to put tape that is not in their skin-tone onto a modesty garment. That sometimes is due to fear that areas will be

seen by the camera and so if they are covered with a flashy color then hopefully the camera operator will notice what not to shoot. Do discuss this option with your producer or other departments (such as VFX or Postproduction) before use since there might be reasons why they need it to stay in the skin-tone of the performer.

Types Of Barriers

- **Garment Barrier:** This is inserted into modesty garments to help create a localized barrier. Its aim is to offer physical padding that separates performers' private areas from making contact, to lower sensation (desensitize) and prevent a level of stimulation as much as possible. Using just a layer of cloth as a barrier is not sufficient and might not be acceptable by your union's regulations (depending on country). Materials currently used as barriers vary from synthetic mats and foams, cushion type filling or padding, neoprene, plastic hard cups, etc., all depending on the movement and function needed. INTIMASK created a Silicone Barrier that fits their garments, is durable and easy to clean. Some performers want a thin barrier but from my explorations, I'd advise that a Garment Barrier be a *minimum* of 5 mm thickness in the areas covering the genitalia. I would not go thinner than that, if anything, I always prefer thicker. Make sure it can be properly cleaned since porous materials are a great area for developing bacteria. These should also be regularly thrown away and changed. They should not be shared between performers.
- **External Barrier:** a barrier placed between performers, usually during the performance of simulated sex or portrayal of contact with chest or genitals (depending on staging / camera positioning & movement). These can be made from various materials as outlined above in the Garment Barrier section. There are various shapes of External Barriers, and each intimacy professional eventually creates their own. I've chosen to categorize mine by shape and/or positioning.

Examples of **some** types of external barriers I've used so far in my practice:

- **Round Barrier:** I first explored it when shooting *Adult Material* in March 2019 and later shared it with Alicia Rodis and with a Facebook group back in July 2019. I used to call it the "Bouncing Rocker Barrier." However, I decided to adapt the name to a more neutral name of 'Round Barrier'. It is a ball shaped barrier that allows anterior and posterior pelvic tilts and up/down actions. It allows the performers to perform varying intensities, speed, rhythm, and dynamics when it is anchored in a way that separates performers' pelvises. I have now used it in endless simulated sex positions from sitting, kneeling, lying, standing positions etc. It is my absolute go-to if camera movement and angles allow and if the performers find it useful for their process. One performer fell so much in love with the Round Barrier

that they asked to keep it on the last day of the show. See Figures 15 and 16 for examples.

- Folding Barrier: a barrier that reaches to the back and front of the pelvis. Also known to some as the 'Vajoga'. I prefer to avoid using 'Vajoga' due to it sounding like 'vagina'. My colleagues that graduated from our Moving Body Arts intimacy coordinators mentoring offered to call it "Folding Barrier" so that is what we currently use.
- Rear Barrier: used as a barrier when placed to cover areas of the back pelvis. These can be in a range of shapes depending on the movement being explored, such as, circular, semi-circular, long square, triangular shape; some look similar to a menstrual pad.
- Front Barrier: used as a barrier when placed to cover areas of the front pelvis. These can be in a range of shapes depending on the movement being explored, such as, triangular shape or some look similar to a menstrual pad.



Figure 15: The Round Barrier with an added seat on top of it. © Yarit Dor.



Figure 16: The Round Barrier attached to a table in order to assist the performer to anchor their body to it. Used in a simulated sex action that required a fast, dynamic and accelerating repetitive movement quality. 4 August 2020. © Yarit Dor.

Simulated Sex - Consider Three Barriers:

When performing simulated sex, I aim to use three barriers: each performer wears a modesty garment with a Garment Barrier inside it and they then use an External Barrier between them. This definitely helps to reduce stimulation and provides extra protection. However, sometimes the practice available to you may not allow you to use an External Barrier due to a performer's preference, audience proximity or auditorium structure in theatre or due to camera shots and camera movement in filmmaking. Thus it is essential that at least Garment Barriers are used by each performer and that 'displacement of contact' ('anchoring') and/or 'out of distance' techniques are used in the movement instruction, facilitation and choreography stages to add layers of safety. We want to avoid putting performers in situations where they may be sexually rubbing against each other (also commonly known as a 'dry hump').

Choosing the right tools for the job

Details matter, it's worth waiting to get it right.

-Steve Jobs

When to consider using modesty garments and barriers:

- Nudity Levels (unless full nudity is agreed without restrictions): Modesty garments to cover private areas. A garment barrier can smooth the outline of the garment and allow the performer to feel less exposed.
- Simulated sex actions/positions Modesty garments to cover private areas. For more info about barriers, see [*the Simulated Sex - Consider Three Barriers*](#) section above. Note, some union guidelines state that a barrier is an absolute requirement for simulated sex scenes. Please check your country's guidance and local regulations.
- Portrayal of contact with chest or genitals: If the hand placement and touch needs to look more naturalistic then a barrier is advised. If touch is displaced, some performers may still feel more at ease with a barrier as a safety precaution.
- Making out, groping or snogging action: a barrier is advised if performers are on top of each other and pelvises may move against each other.
- Kissing scenes: A barrier is advised if pelvises are likely to make contact and move against each other.

Kits for Stage Versus Screen:

I have facilitated intimacy for film, theatre, and dance. I haven't found much difference in the types of modesty garments and barriers that fit each industry. The questions are more project-specific; for instance, you may want to ask yourself some of the following:

- What actions are they going to perform? What are the physical needs of the movement?
- What do the performers need, want and what have they legally agreed to do and perform in their nudity riders?
- What are the stylistic constraints I might have? Camera, lighting, costume, set, staging, backstage area and safeties?
- What sizing and skin tones do we need to cater for? Is there any special attire we need to create or buy specifically for the action or performer?

- Where is the action taking place? In bed? against a wall? In a shower?
- Where are the performers? What are their levels, positioning etc.
- Where is the audience / camera?
- How long does the garment need to stay on (roughly)?
- How many garments may we need?
- How long is the stage run of the show?
- Will they have fittings of intimacy garments?
- When is the deadline for having these items available for?

On some shows, I've taken it on myself to manage all intimacy garments instead of the costume department in order to ease their workload, and make sure I have what is needed since those shows had a lot of simulated sex and nudity. So, I became an 'Intimacy Department' on set.

If you are sourcing, making, or bringing equipment for performers yourself, it is important not to assume gender or genitalia. Performers have various needs and so it is helpful to liaise with them ahead of time. Some suggestions:

- Are there any previous garments they used that they want to use again?
- Do they have any underwear requirements or products they need?
- You can show them various garments and ask them which one should be purchased for them. Very often when I meet performers for individual chats I ask if I can show them some garments from my bag so they can see those and then let me know what they want or need.

Through similar questions, they can choose garments that work for their body and private areas. Arranging fittings for modesty garments is a great help when possible.

Quality Check: The 5-minute rule

I've created a rule that helps me assess whether the garment works or not. My rule is: if it takes longer than 5 min to get it on correctly, to be secure and ready for action, then it isn't the right garment design for the job.

No performer wants to constantly tape and adjust fabric over their lower abdomen and genitals in the workplace. So, if the garment offered by the costume department or by me takes longer than 5 min to apply, secure and cover then we need to go back to the drawing board and do our job better.

Example Of a Modesty Garments and Barriers Checklist:

- **Read the script / play**
 - What is the action described in the stage directions or in the characters' lines?
 - What does the audience/camera see?
 - Are there any notes specifying costume or undressing of layers?
 - How many performers are described? Focus also on background and supporting artists that might be involved as well as lead characters. That will affect the number of equipment needed.
- **Discussion & Liaison**
 - Get access to the performer's nudity rider to determine what the performer has consented to, and what not. Some nudity riders nowadays specify certain things. I saw a rider that clearly stated that a "silicone barrier" be used, which meant we legally needed to provide that for the performer.
 - Chat with the director to know what they ideally would like to see and how it might be shot (if they know already). Talk about alternatives when appropriate.
 - Chat with the performers separately. Listen to their feelings, thoughts and requests surrounding the action. Confirm what their levels of consent and agreement are at present.
Modesty Garment Range: some performers may know modesty garments well and could have special requests around what they would like to have and how it should adhere. Some performers are totally new to modesty garments and barriers in which case they may want to see some options. Always have a kit with you to show (in their skin tone) so they can see it before the day. Note, some performers might be menstruating at certain times which can change the range of garments they will need.
Ask the performer what language they prefer calling the garments.

Empowering agency around modesty garments is important so they feel comfortable talking about them and what they prefer to use. Check for any allergies to silicone or adhesives.

Ask them to shave, wax or shorten pubic hair if adhesive needs to be applied around the lower abdomen. Request that no body lotion is applied since that may affect the adhesive.

- Pass any relevant information from the chats to the appropriate creatives and/or departments.
- Check if it is possible to incorporate modesty garments into the fitting sessions with the performers if that hasn't been considered/done already.
- Modesty Garments in Skin-Tone – ensure that appropriate shades are provided for all performers. Advocacy and forward thinking is key.
- Budgeting and Purchasing - who buys them is crucial to liaise.

In theatre, costume/wardrobe/prop department will most likely source, purchase or make them. In filmmaking, it depends on the show and how you want to work with the costume department. I experienced several options till now on set: from costume department making or buying garments, to them only providing some of it and I the rest of it. I even had several shows where I was considered a head of department and got a full cash flow from production to source, buy, create and organise all modesty garments and barriers in intimacy kits per performer. So do negotiate that beforehand depending on how you want to work, your skills and your availability.

- Create a 'How To Guide' - If performers will be applying the garment and adhesive by themselves then a handout with pictures is very useful (be mindful of content and images you give). INTIMASK has one on their website that can be an example to use if you wish.
- **“On the floor”**
 - Pre-Shoot Day Rehearsals for screen- the choreography created in rehearsals may change the modesty garments and barriers that you will need. Bring external barriers as well so they can familiarize themselves with that option.
 - Rehearsals for stage - in theatre the rehearsal period is longer. Bring your kit at first and once choreography is created, update the costume and prop departments on what kit they need to create or purchase. If performers are performing nudity, they may want to “work up to it” by first rehearsing in skin tone garments in order to train their mind and body before testing the

nudity in a specially scheduled rehearsal (depending on process and performer's consent).

- Applying and wearing strapless garments - who helps apply strapless garments and adhesive to performers if they need assistance? In my experience, usually costume standbys help the performers with their costumes. However, the standby might not be comfortable helping a performer with a modesty garment or vice versa. And so, if you are asked to assist, you need to know your own boundaries. If they asked you for assistance and you have agreed, then make sure you get consent from the Performer and explain every stage before contact. Try to have a third party present with you and be the third party for the costume standby.
- Day Of Shoot - have multiple types of garments. When working on set, one modesty garment may not work for all camera angles and camera movement. If blood or water is used you may need several of the same garment.
- Consent Levels Can Change - if the performer withdraws consent or adds consent then you may need to use a different modesty garment. Always have some options in the correct skin tone and size.
- Cover External Barriers - use fabric coverings over external barriers so they match skin tones or bed sheets etc. Clean your external barriers after each use and renew them in a timely manner. Old barriers: try to throw in suitable recycling facilities.
- Removing Strapless Garments - removing strapless garments that have been taped is a painful experience. Offer the performers a couple of options regarding how to remove it such as: water & soap, various body oils etc.
- Cleaning - do not use the same modesty garment and garment barriers on other performers. For hygiene reasons, each performer should have a kit of their own. Instruct costume departments that garment barriers must also be cleaned properly and changed on a regular basis.
- Storage - ask the costume department to store each performer's modesty garments and garment barriers separately, rather than storing all modesty garments in one container/box (I have seen that happen multiple times now).
- Recycling - give productions information on where they can recycle the garments and barriers.

Words of Closure

I hope that this piece of writing sheds a bit of light on a subject that has scarcely been covered so far in freely accessible resources.

I'm sure that more professionals and companies will join the quest to create intimacy garments and barriers for our profession based on their experiences on set or stage. I look forward to seeing more solutions that make the performer's experiences in intimacy scenes easier and less exposing.

Finally, to adapt a quote from a source of inspiration and fun, the great Buzz Lightyear: Here's "*To Intimacy Garments And Beyond!*"

Additional Reading

Examples of performers sharing stories that include modesty garment or barrier experience mostly before the emergence of intimacy professionals for performance:

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/10/06/jake-gyllenhaals-crush-on-jennifer-aniston-made-sex-scenes-torture-15372365/>

<https://www.cinemablend.com/television/1563469/that-time-evan-peters-showed-jessica-lange-his-junk-on-american-horror-story>

<https://www.elle.com/life-love/sex-relationships/q-and-a/a34625/cherchez-la-femme-sam-heughan/>

<https://amp.dailytelegraph.com.au/entertainment/olivia-wildes-nipples-digitally-added-in-sex-scene-with-ryan-reynolds-in-the-change-up/news-story/608335f1c8ffea67c4204a64587ec783>

<https://www.thethings.com/why-this-scene-in-the-change-up-was-so-uncomfortable-for-ryan-reynolds-and-olivia-wilde/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/sandra-bullock-ryan-reynolds-nude-scene-b1970390.html>

<https://www.vulture.com/2015/05/outlander-tobias-menzies-on-going-full-frontal.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcKFbtv1n1k>

<https://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/films/907229/Fifty-Shades-Freed-Jamie-Dornan-Dakota-Johnson-naked-sex-scenes>

Writers and Directors sharing stories that include modesty garments mostly before the emergence of intimacy professionals:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/01/movies/shooting-film-and-tv-sex-scenes-what-really-goes-on.html>

<https://www.glamour.com/story/sex-scenes-facts>

Examples of a couple of articles on Intimacy Coordinators sharing practice of their modesty garments:

<https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/drama/filming-sex-scenes-intimacy-coordinator/>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-6558051/The-worlds-intimacy-coach-Alicia-Rodis-tells-guides-listers-faking-orgasms.html>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-7329771/HBO-intimacy-coordinator-reveals-special-kit-uses-sex-scenes.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/aug/14/modesty-pouches-and-masturbation-montages-the-making-of-sex-education>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-56746268>

The Romans production in UK and their legal journey:

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/oct/28/theatre>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/19/romans-in-britain-play-mary-whitehouse-trial-archive-1982>