Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style

ISSN: 2045-2349

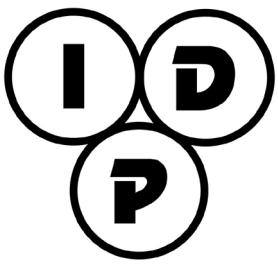
Subscriptions

Published twice yearly, two editions per year.
1st September and 1st March each year.
Optional special editions will be announced.

Individual subscriptions: £39.95 per year.
Institutional subscriptions: £79.95 per year.
Single issue purchase: £25.95 per edition

Prices do not include Special Editions.

https://www.interdisciplinarypress.net/online-store/journals/catwalk-the-journal-of-fashion-beauty-and-style



2012

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style

Volume 1 Number 1 September 2012

Contents

Book Reviews:

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. iii-iv (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style.* Our starting point is that fashion, beauty and style lie at the very heart of each of each of us, our sense of identity and individual expressiveness and that all three influence the way we live, look and feel; what we think, dream and believe and the communities and world in which we live. In the pages that follow you will find an array of articles and reviews that convey our commitment to inter- and trans-disciplinary scholarship, social theory and cultural critique. Blind peer reviewed by referees and part of the *Global Interdisciplinary Research Studies* series, *Catwalk* is focused on the historical, social, cultural, psychological, political, business, media, technological, performance, representational and artistic dimensions of fashion, beauty and style. To do justice to these visual worlds, *Catwalk* is unusually well and colourfully illustrated with images provided by fashion photographers, artists, museum curators, publishers, and photo agencies.

The first article in the issue, 'The Lumberjack Shirt: The Fabric and Fabrication of Zeitgeist,' uncovers the origins and evolution of the iconic red and black chequered flannel shirt that has become a global fashion statement. Maria Mackinney-Valentin, a trend studies and literary scholar, finds that the North American shirt with Scottish Tartan origins, an inspiration for *Monty Python*, Curt Cobain, fashion designers and 'urban lumberjacks,' functions in relation to shifting cultural, social and historical parameters. Mackinney-Valentin pays particular attention to how dominating ideals/attitudes and events inform the shirt's various iterations.

Moving from the shirts on our backs to the world of art, 'Fashioning Baroque-Centric Identities: Vanessa Beecroft, Francesco Vezzoli and Maurizio Cattelan' focuses on the fascinating collusion of fashion, beauty, commerce and contemporary Italian artists. Using Severo Sarduy's concept of the Neo-Baroque, the art historian Laura Petican examines how a 'national' aesthetic vision, originating in the historical environment, industrial achievements and cultural cachet of Italy, and an evolving socio-political environment have influenced the subject matter of these avant-garde artists. Petican hones in on their execution of glossy, disconcerting, highly produced works that rely heavily on the language, materials and methods of contemporary fashion; in doing so, they deconstruct the allure of accessories, clothing, luxury brands, celebrities and supermodels – and, for that matter, art.

In 'Fashion and Its Otherness: The Representation of Peru in Mario Testino's High Fashion Photography,' Julie Valqui Vidal, whose academic training is in fashion studies and art history, reflects on the themes of the exotic and the travel narrative in high fashion photography. Vidal's post-colonial oriented analysis of three case studies reveals the remarkable continuity in representations of Peruvian identities and cultural myths in the photography of Irving Penn for American *Vogue* in 1949, Toni Frissell for *Harper's Bazaar* in 1952, and Mario Testino for British *Vogue* in 2008.

Moving from twentieth and twenty-first century fashion magazine representations to nineteenth-century Greece, 'Amalia Dress: The Invention of a New Costume Tradition in the Service of Greek National Identity,' traces the birth, evolution and symbolic functions of the readily recognizable part-Greek, part-Viennese national ensemble called the Amalia Costume.

Nadia Macha-Bizoumi, whose scholarship in history, archaeology, folklore and museum studies informs her investigation of the subject, argues that the creation in 1837 of this invented costume by the Bavarian born Queen Amalia (who with her husband Otto was installed by European powers to rule post-Ottoman Empire Greece), corresponds with the Greek people's need for a unifying symbol at time of nation building and interest in folk culture.

In the imaginatively titled 'Vampirical Stick Pins, Deleuzian Folds, Noir Pastiches and other Wearability Conundrums: *Fashion in Film*,' the historian Michael A. Langkjær critiques *Fashion in Film*, a collection of essays edited by Adrienne Munich, to which fourteen distinguished scholars have contributed. Langkjær enters the realm of cinema, movie stars and costume design to evaluate and reflect upon the influence film's fashions have on the audience and culture and vice versa.

Catwalk's exhibition and book reviews are uncommonly diverse and well-illustrated. Under the leadership of Michael A. Langkjær, the exhibition reviews range from the extraordinary *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* to shows focused on the designs of Gaultier, the photography of Corrine Day, and the wardrobe of Daphne Guinness. The subjects of the book reviews are equally varied, ranging from the photographer Cecil Beaton, the designer Hussein Chalayan, the fashion house Louis Vuitton, the history of fashion in Trinidad and Tobago, and general introductions to fashion and to beauty.

I would like to thank Rob Fisher, Lisa Howard, Michael A. Langkjær, the members of the Advisory and Editorial Boards of *Catwalk*, the authors of the articles and the reviews, and the army of referees who made this journal possible.

Enjoy!

Jacque Lynn Foltyn, PhD
Chief Editor

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. 1-20 (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

The Lumberjack Shirt: The Fabric and Fabrication of *Zeitgeist*

Maria Mackinney-Valentin

Abstract

There lies a certain fascination in the idea that *zeitgeist* can be materialized in clothing or textiles. The way fashion and textiles relate to a contemporary social, cultural and economic context has been explored and debated by industry professionals and academics alike. The article takes a critical approach to the construction, function and perception of *zeitgeist* as a mode of understanding fashion. This study of the fabric of *zeitgeist* focuses on a specific type of garment with a distinct textile identity: The red-and-black chequered shirt known in North America as the *lumberjack shirt*, *flannel shirt* or *buffalo plaid* (or *buffalo checks*).[1] The case forms the testing ground for the relation between textile and context within an historical framework. Particular attention will be paid to dominating ideals/attitudes and events to explore how context informs fashion. Questions of demographics, class, gender, and sexuality are of special interest in this endeavour. In line with the historian Christopher Breward, fashion is defined here as 'material artefact and idea' that is organized according to a 'system of innovation' intended to 'fulfill cultural requirement' and 'define ever-shifting social identities and relationships.'[2] That is to say, that the lumberjack shirt is analysed as fashion in relation to cultural and social parameters. Related terms such as garment, dress, and costume, though at times also influenced by fashion, are here considered to be organized according less to a system of taste and innovation and more to issues of tradition, national identity, and rank as relatively more stable structures. The method for exploring the effect ideals/attitudes and events have on fashion will be looking at how media represents the lumberjack shirt. *The New York Times* has been chosen as the primary media source because of its substantial reader base that would suggest a more comprehensive representation than a regional paper or fashion magazine.

Key Words

Zeitgeist, fashion theory, lumberjack, tartan, sexuality, gender, class, grunge, logger culture.

*****

1. Check it Out: The Fabric and Fabrication of *Zeitgeist*

The dialectic between fashion and *zeitgeist* assumes that social, economic, political, and religious influences are somehow materialized through dress practice or the creative expression of designers. While a compelling notion for cultural comprehension and even a useful tool especially in fashion communication and branding, the validity of *zeitgeist*, i.e. fashion as a mirror of an age, may have its limitations. In order to assess the extent to which *zeitgeist* determines a possible meaning of a particular fashion item and which factors are relevant in doing so, a case study is performed of the red-and-black check shirt known in North America as the *lumberjack shirt* (Image 1). The shirt is also referred to as *buffalo plaid* (or *buffalo checks*) or simply as *flannel shirt*. This article does not attempt to offer an authoritative examination of the North American lumberjack shirt. Rather, the aim is to explore the potentials and limitations of *zeitgeist* as an analytical tool for understanding contemporary fashion.

While the pattern of the lumberjack shirt is associated with the family of tartans, it has a distinct pattern consisting of large blocks formed by the intersection of two different colour yarns, typically red and black. Plaid, in general, and lumberjack checks, in particular, experienced a revival in the fashion industry for Autumn/Winter 2011 with Alexander

McQueen, Rag & Bone, Carven, Ashish, Jean-Paul Gaultier and Isabel Marant among the brands driving the trend in fashion. In addition, the checks are seen on a wide range of other products: Ski clothes, shoes, rubber boots, hats, sheets, cakes and even cars. The focus will be mainly on the shirt to sharpen the analysis of *zeitgeist* as a mode of interpreting the social and cultural significance of fashion at a given time and place.

Semiotic structures in fashion are often more volatile than for instance linguistic signs. The visual communication in fashion is linked to multiple and even conflicting agendas covering economic, psychological, social and cultural paradigms. So while the lumberjack pattern is essentially a two-colour tartan – 'one of the simplest of all tartans, the variant of MacGregor known as Rob Roy'[3] – the article aims to unfold the complex set of meanings associated with the pattern when seen within the context of fashion history. While the rich history of Scottish tartans informs the perception of the pattern to a certain extent, the shifting temporal and spatial setting for the lumberjack shirt suggests that *zeitgeist* as an analytical tool for understanding fashion takes us beyond the tartan roots. Opting for the narrower focus on the lumberjack pattern rather than tartans as such will allow for exploring possible meanings of the shirt that are not linked to its Scottish heritage.

Image 1: Paul Bunyan stamp, 'American Folk Heroes,' courtesy of the American Philatelic Society © 1996

The fashion historian Jonathan Faiers argues that even tartans themselves are empty signs open to any number of meanings. According to Faiers, tartan is 'a form of masquerade,' that precludes it 'functioning as anything other than an "empty" vestimentary sign ready to be filled with whatever significance the wearer chooses.'[4] The fact that the tartan, in general, and the Rob Roy, in particular, represents relative changing meanings makes the lumberjack shirt a suitable case for exploring the fabric and fabrication of *zeitgeist*. So while the link between the lumberjack shirt and tartans is important, there are many other aspects informing the meaning associated with the pattern as a reflection of *zeitgeist*. That is to say, the article does not aim to provide an exhaustive study of the heritage and genealogy of the lumberjack shirt, check patterns or tartans. Rather, historical and cultural aspects are brought up only in so far as they serve to support the study of the fabric and fabrication of *zeitgeist*.

The lumberjack shirt is a rich fabric that is especially entwined in the popular culture and consciousness of North America and the UK. It is a seductive fashion material with a multitude of political, economic and historical layers, which makes for a good case.[5] In line with the historian Christopher Breward, fashion is defined here as 'material artefact and idea' that is organized according to a 'system of innovation' intended to 'fulfil cultural requirement' and 'define ever-shifting social identities and relationships.'[6] Fashion, then, is viewed as a production system as well as a symbolic system. The visual and communicative qualities implicit in the symbolic realm of fashion are pertinent especially to the specific focus on *zeitgeist*. That is to say, the meaning we associate with fashion objects is always open to negotiation. This seems to conform to the premise of shifting *zeitgeists* reflecting fashion. At the same time, this relativity of fashion meaning challenges the often normative core of *zeitgeist* analysis that assumes literal understanding of fashion. In addition, notions of heritage, origin and authenticity, which may be considered dominating ideals in contemporary fashion, do not appear compatible with shifts in society. Therefore, an account of the link between fashion and spatial-temporal setting is called for.

2. Fashion as a Mirror

The study of fashion as a mirror of society assumes that fashion is what the fashion historian Elizabeth Wilson refers to a 'cultural barometer.'[7] A number of scholars have touched upon this reflective nature of fashion. In relation to the presumed relationship between fashion and context, the historian Valerie Steele mentions Louis XIV (1638-1715) as an early source who is supposed to have said 'fashion is the mirror of history.'[8] A review of the literature on the relationship between *zeitgeist* and fashion indicates a consensus throughout the twentieth century that there is indeed some reflective relationship between fashion and its temporal or spatial context. The reference to this relationship employs varying terms. The photographer Cecil Beaton considers fashion to be a reflection of the age. 'Fashion is the subtle and shifting expression of every age,'[9] and the sociologist Ingrid Brenninkmeyer argues that: 'clothing is symbolic of the values and aspirations of an age.'[10] The sociologist Herbert Blumer uses the phrase 'spirit of the times,' which he defines as 'the collective taste as reflection of social and cultural events.'[11] The psychologist Ernest Dichter moves along the same lines when he claims that 'fashion expresses the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the times, and in turn can influence it.'[12] Elizabeth Wilson talks about fashion as an expression of 'mood.'[13] Other scholars have held similar views of the relation between garment and context. The sociologist Joanne Entwistle suggests that 'fashion responds to social and political changes,'[14] and the historian Christopher Breward describes 'the ability [of designers] to read the implications of cultural and stylistic change and incorporate it into a characteristic and very-well promoted personal vision.'[15]

While the above references to the relationship between fashion and *zeitgeist* work at a relatively abstract level, a more operational approach is needed to explore the construction of

zeitgeist in fashion. An early source is the American marketing professor Paul Nystrom who offers a systematic view of what he perceives to be the factors in determining the *zeitgeist*.[16] He lists three factors: 1) dominating events such as wars and macro-economic conditions, 2) dominating ideals such as patriotism or Greek ideals after the French Revolution, and 3) dominating social groups such as those of power and wealth. In *Fashion Forecasting*, the fashion and media scholar Evelyn Brannon updates these factors established by Nystrom by adding two additional ones: 4) dominating attitudes such as casualness or conformity, and 5) dominating technology such as the invention of the automobile or the Internet.[17] The purpose of updating these factors is to create a framework for analysing the concept of *zeitgeist* in order to determine whether the construction serves a social or societal purpose or whether it is simply a narrative tool intended to help sell news and feature stories. The categories established by Nystrom and Brannon will be followed despite the argument that class, gender and sexuality may be considered social statuses rather than ideals/attitudes. This has to do with the function of *zeitgeist* as a metaphoric tool rather than as a direct representation of social or cultural constructions, as will become clear in the analysis.

The focus in this case study is on 'dominating events' and 'dominating ideals/attitudes.' 'Dominating social groups' will not be a focal point on its own. Rather, different social groups will be a part of the discussion of class, gender, and sexuality in the case study. The social mechanism driving the social aspect of *zeitgeist* is related to the strategies of distinction and imitation as formulated by the sociologist Georg Simmel,[18] the economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen,[19] and the anthropologist Grant McCracken.[20] Here the concern is the negotiation of social currency, the quality of which is determined by its ability to stall the inevitable process of emulation that forces the process of distinction, identity, and imitation to start over. Within the framework of this article, the social currency and the notion of dominating ideals/attitudes are synonymous and therefore the former will be incorporated in the latter for the analysis of the case. Considering that the lumberjack pattern is centuries old and is not the result of new technological developments, the fifth category – 'dominating technology'– is not relevant to the analysis.

The sociologist Stanley Lieberson has taken a more sceptical approach to the *zeitgeist* understanding of fashion than do Nystrom and Brannon. In *A Matter of Taste: How Names, Fashions, and Culture Change*, based on a quantitative study of first names, Lieberson describes *zeitgeist*, or what he calls 'reflection theory,' as a 'search for substantive significance behind each new fashion.'[21] He argues that social commentators make more of 'reflection theory' than is justified[22] because they engage in 'after the fact' explanations of trends that thereby become self-fulfilling prophecies.[23] Lieberson's approach to *zeitgeist* forms the critical frame of this case study of the lumberjack shirt, the purpose of which is to determine how fashion and textiles are viewed as somehow materializing the contemporary *zeitgeist*, mood, or spirit of an age.

The case study uses media representations of the lumberjack shirt to explore how the link between *zeitgeist* and a material object is constructed. Media is in the business of communicating current attitudes/ideals and events, making media and *zeitgeist* related in terms of narrative qualities. Always aiming for current stories, much fashion journalism is taken by the *zeitgeist* approach to fashion. An example is provided by the fashion writer and editor Suzy Menkes, of the *International Herald Tribune*, the global edition of *The New York Times*, who explores the possible link between the Autumn/Winter 2006-2007 collections in Paris, that were characterized by long and layered silhouettes in black with veils and hoods, with current events such as the war in Afghanistan, riots among mainly Muslims in the suburbs of Paris, debate over headscarves in Europe, and the Danish Cartoon Crisis when a Danish newspaper printed satirical cartoons of the prophet Mohammad that created strong reactions in Europe and in the

Middle East.[24] The paper is an example of how the *zeitgeist* approach adds narrative qualities to fashion that is assumed to materialize the context in which it arises. This makes for good stories for the newspaper and adds symbolic layers to the fashion that consumers adopt in creating social identity. Considering the mutual exchange of stories between media and fashion, it makes sense to use media material such as *The New York Times* to explore the lumberjack shirt through *zeitgeist*. *The New York Times* was chosen because of the massive global impact the paper has both in print and online. The paper's website alone has over 30 million unique users a month, making it the most popular online newspaper in the United States.[25]

To explore the three main themes associated with the lumberjack shirt, namely gender issues, sexuality and rural or working class emblems, articles about the shirt from *The New York Times* in the period 2003-2011 were used to flesh out the notions of events and ideals/attitudes as linked to *zeitgeist*. As the paper does not attempt to outline the evolution of the lumberjack shirt in each of the three themes but rather looks at how *zeitgeist* is constructed, data from the media is ideal because it is one of the primary sites of this construction.

Special attention will be given to the role of *origin* in the narratives concerning the lumberjack shirt. The conceptions of origin and related terms such as heritage and authenticity have been suggested as rising over the past two decades as sources of status and meaning for consumers, who are interested in the provenance of the items they buy.[26] Each theme explored in relation to the lumberjack shirt will suggest different notions of *zeitgeist* in terms of chronology, geography, gender, social identity, etc. This diversity is intended to bring out the richness of the link between fashion and *zeitgeist* but also the potential relativity.

3. Warp and Weft

In order to explore the notions of origin in relation to *zeitgeist*, it is important to establish an historical framework of the lumberjack shirt. Stripes have been known as long as humans have decorated their textiles. A check pattern is essentially traversing stripes that are created from the unique repetition of a striped design in both the warp and weft of the cloth. The traversing stripes are determined by the direction of the threads in the loom to form the pattern. This method creates a pattern ranging from intricate aesthetics to minimalist check patterns such as those associated with the lumberjack shirt.

When looking at the possible origin of the red-and-black checks of the lumberjack shirt, there appears to be a strong suggestion both visually and historically between what we understand as the lumberjack shirt and the Scottish tartan (Image 2). One of the earliest recorded semblances of the lumberjack pattern is seen in the beginning of the eighteenth century in Scotland[27] with the tartan Campbell of Lochlane named after Sheriff Campbell of Lochlane.[28] In *Scottish Art 1460-1690*, Campbell of Lochlane is portrayed in a painting from 1730, wearing clothes in the red-and-black checks. According to the Scottish Tartans World Register, the pattern may also be associated with the 'Rob Roy' tartan named after the Scottish highlands rebel Rob Roy Macgregor (1671-1734) before the Battle of Culloden in 1746, after which tartans were banned.[29] The ban on tartans can be argued to have imbued tartans as such and perhaps Rob Roy in particular with an air of rebellion and pride that may have appealed to varying counter-cultural appetites through the second half of the twentieth century with the sense of activist authenticity enhanced through fashion. One example from popular culture is seen in the classic movie *The Breakfast Club* (1985) in which the rebel character John Bender, as played by the actor Judd Nelson, wears a red-and-black plaid shirt.

Image 2: Duncan MacGregor, mid-1800s, courtesy of Scottish Tartans Authority

The Scottish heritage and narrative is linked to the American lumberjack shirt through more than visual similarities. According to Gregor McCluskey, founder of Braeval Sporting Apparel, which sells lumberjack shirts, the pattern was brought to North America in the nineteenth century by his great uncle Big Jock McCluskey who emigrated from Braeval of Scotland to Montana. Big Jock traded blankets and shirts in the pattern. According to the Braeval website, the origin of the name buffalo plaid comes from Native American culture: 'Legend has it that Native Americans had never seen cloth dyed a brighter red, and believed it was made from the blood of McCluskey enemies and prey. Like many things that crossed the Atlantic, the tartan received a new name and became distinctly American. Buffalo Plaid was born.'[30] This account attests to the link between tartan and the lumberjack shirt but also brings in Native American culture and mythology of the American West, which is also woven into the symbolic fabric of the checks.

This heritage narrative is evidently part of the Braeval branding strategy. The plaid pattern runs as a banner across the website as an indication of the importance of linking the brand to the checks. However, the link may be more than a corporate branding strategy. In a feature in *Tartan Herald* (the newsletter of the Scottish Tartans Authority), buffalo plaid/Rob Roy tartan is also linked to Big Jock McCluskey, who was hailed by American Indians as an invincible warrior.[31] 'From the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne, McCluskey bartered for buffalo pelts, offering a myriad of finished goods in exchange, the most coveted among the Indians were the heavy woven Scottish blanket, their dense, hearty weave colourfully emblazoned with his clan tartan's signature red-and-black colors.'[32] McCluskey also traded with the U.S. Army

outposts and fort traders and in that way the term was spread. Though not mentioned in the account, the fact that Braeval is located in Montana, which has a long logger heritage, also marks a connection between the pattern and logging.

Another example of a corporate use of the heritage of the checks is seen with the American outdoor clothing company Woolrich (Image 3). The company was founded by John Rich II, a native of England, and the first Woolrich-owned woollen mill was established in Plum Run in 1830 by Rich and his partner, Daniel McCormick. At the time, Northern and Central Pennsylvania were experiencing a lumber boom. Rich travelled to the lumber camps with woollen fabric in a mule cart to sell to the wives of lumberjacks. One of the earliest finished clothing items produced at the mill was the Buffalo Check Shirt in 1850 at the newer mill in what later became known as Woolrich in 1888. The company offers a similar narrative concerning the origin of the term. 'The name Buffalo Check was inspired by a herd of buffalo owned by the designer at the company who developed the pattern. The Buffalo Check pattern became popular with the lumberjacks, railroad workers, and others who had to work outdoors for a living.' So successful is this pattern for the company that it uses it as a part of its corporate logo.[33]

The terms buffalo plaid and buffalo checks are used presumably to foreground the authenticity of that particular brand rather than constituting historical documentation as such. This point is supported by sources in the field of logger culture that claim not to be familiar with the term as related to logger culture.[34] The commercial potential in associating a brand with the buffalo, a potent animal deeply associated with the mythical imagery of the American West, seems like an obvious choice for brands looking to signal a traditional, masculine image. That there does not seem to be any evidence of an actual folkloristic link between the animal and the characteristic pattern seems less important in branding matters.

Finally, the popularity of the plaid shirt may to a large degree be the result of Pendleton, the Oregon-based company famous for their woollen shirts.[35] The American manufacturing company founded in 1909 built its business on work wear, and the durable shirts became a cultural icon in the 1950s and 1960s. The importance of this particular brand is seen by the fact that the popular band *The Beach Boys* wore Pendleton shirts as their signature look on several of their album covers; when they first got together in 1961 they called themselves *The Pendletones*.[36]

This diversity in the presumed sources of the lumberjack shirt highlights how the notion of origin may be ambiguous. This makes for a suitable premise for analysing the perceptions of *zeitgeist* in and through fashion.

4. The Great Outdoors

In late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century media representations, the lumberjack shirt is rarely associated with Scottish history. Rather, the checks are generally linked to the narrative of the great American and Canadian outdoors as both a mythologized form of recreation and profession. Though there may be a narrative similarity between the masculinity and strength of a Scottish rebel and the North American logger, not all loggers wore lumberjack shirts. The local historian James LeMonds, who has documented logger culture extensively in *Deadfall: Generations of Logging in The Pacific Northwest*,[37] argues that the 'lumberjack shirt is a myth.' LeMonds comes out of a logger family and claims that no members of his family have worn the red-and-black plaid shirt. Rather, twilled cotton shirts often with vertical stripes – 'hickory shirts' – have been the standard for at least 50 years: 'My dad is 90 and has been around logging since 1935. He said that in the first half of the twentieth century, loggers either wore hickory shirts or just wore mackinaws over their wool underwear.'[38]

Image 3: Buffalo plaid fabric, Woolrich, courtesy of Alan Jalowitz, The Pennsylvania Center for the Book

Exploring digital collections of visual documentation of the logger culture supports this statement. For example, the University of Washington Libraries' Digital Initiatives Program shows no examples of apparel resembling a lumberjack shirt pattern. The archive includes 130 images from the collections of one of the most important and prolific photographers of logging activities in the Pacific Northwest, Darius Kinsey (1869-1945), who photographed loggers between 1890 and 1939. However, the photo archives of logger culture are also deceptive in the sense that we are not able to sense whether or not they wore colourful clothes, as the images are in black and white.

While the pattern may not have been common in the Pacific Northwest, it was seen in other parts of the country, according to the folklorist Robert Walls, an expert on logger culture. Walls argues that loggers in the Upper Midwest (Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota) and New England, prior to the 1920s and especially prior to 1900, often wore very colourful checked, striped, and otherwise patterned outerwear (sweaters and jackets) in the snow while logging as it gave them maximum visibility – probably an act of occupational self-preservation more than sartorial style. 'When it started snowing hard, or if you were injured and in need of assistance, or you just needed to be seen on a dangerous logging operation, the patterns and colours stood out.' Walls also suggests that various ethnic groups brought colourful winter clothing traditions with them from Northern Europe, especially the Scandinavians who settled in the Upper Midwest.[39] Tensions and the need to contrast one ethnic group from another were intense, and clothing likely became one way to distinguish among different ethnic logging

camps. Walls points out that part of this practice started with Native American-Indian loggers – especially members of the Penobscot and Wabanaki tribes – in northern New England back in the 1700s, as much early logger culture was intercultural.[40] While adding further perspective to the link between logger culture and Native Americans, this also suggests that logger dress practice may not be reduced to one pattern and colour scheme. Rather, there seems to have been regional and ethnic diversity. This challenges the stereotypical association of the lumberjack shirt with logger culture, per definition. At the same time, it adds depth to the symbolic layers of that particular pattern as something not only associated with the strength necessary in the logger profession, but also frames the colour red as a signal of courage as a manly trait.

LeMonds ascribes the rise of the red-and-black check pattern to the popular mythology of Paul Bunyan, originally a French Canadian legend about a giant logger who fought against the British. Legend has it that a particularly large logger, Paul Bunyon (French spelling), fought fiercely during The Lower Canada Rebellion (1837-1838) when local French Canadians revolted against the new British rule. Through the nineteenth century, the legend of Paul Bunyan grew as U.S. and Canadian loggers entertained themselves in logging camps by telling stories about him.[41] Though others had printed stories about Paul Bunyan earlier,[42] it was the American copywriter William Laughead who reworked the legend for an advertising campaign for The Red River Lumber Company in 1914-1922 in which the Bunyan figure appeared in a red-and-black plaid shirt that has become synonymous with the iconic lumberjack.

The mythical strength of Paul Bunyan plays on the narrative of logger culture, which is characterized by freedom, the outdoors, hard work, rugged individualism, and masculinity. This corresponds with the description by the sociologist Norman S. Hayner in 1947 of the logger in 'Taming the Lumberjack.' 'He likes the woods, the fresh air, the good mountain water, the hard work,' wrote Hayner.[43] A similar characterization of the logger is seen in a 1938 work by the river driver Marsh Underwood in *The Log of a Logger*, where the world of the logger is described by 'great and glorious freedom' where 'he-men could talk to he-men in he-man language.'[44]

While advertising may have served to integrate the myth of lumberjacks with the red-and-black checks, the pattern was already there. Nevertheless, these stereotypical characteristics of the logger may be what are transported into the contemporary practice of wearing the lumberjack shirt. In relation to *zeitgeist*, this would bring into play the factors of ideals/attitudes, as defined by Nystrom and by Brannon, to explore how they are perceived in the media and are materialized in and through the red-and-black fabric.

With reference to the categories established by Nystrom and Brannon, the focus of the next section will be on three examples of these ideals/attitudes – class, gender, and sexuality – finishing with a discussion of the role – or lack thereof – of dominating events, which appear to be absent in the media material used in the case study. This will be done within the contexts of origin as an organizing narrative and Stanley Lieberson's 'reflection theory,' operating with after-the-fact explanations that make the notion of *zeitgeist* problematic.

5. Blue Collar Chic

The association with the lumberjack – whether symbolic, commercial or actual – has made the lumberjack shirt a working class identity marker. The novelist Rosecrans Baldwin calls the lumberjack style 'the fashion elite's recent romance with blue-collar emblems,'[45] while Men's Fashion Director for *The New York Times Magazine* Robert Bryan refers to the trend as 'elevating those rustic shirts to sophisticated chic.'[46] Linked to blue collar emblems is the association of the lumberjack shirt with rural life and the Wild West, i.e., 'the Outdoorsman with his lumberjack checks' as phrased by Jessica Michault, the Online Style Editor of the *International Herald Tribune*.[47] An example from popular culture is the 2009 movie, *Did You*

Hear about the Morgans?, in which the actor Hugh Grant goes from wearing a suit in New York City's corporate world to sporting a lumberjack shirt in Wyoming as a sartorial demonstration of his involuntary relocation.

The incorporation of rural dress practice within an urban setting is not new. Figures such as the iconoclast writer Jack Kerouac and the rock star Bruce Springsteen are also associated with the lumberjack shirt. The urban personification of the shirt may be seen in former lead singer of *Nirvana*, Kurt Cobain (1957-1994). With the Seattle-based Cobain, the shirt became a tool in an anti-fashion movement under the heading of *grunge* that emerged in the 1980s. Coming out of the Pacific Northwest with its heritage rooted in Native Americans, logging, and pioneering, the link between the lumberjack shirt and grunge is striking. When the music genre and dress practice of grunge spread from Seattle and into the rest of the world, the plaid shirt became the material expression of the grunge state of mind, accompanied by worn-out sneakers, parkas, and jeans.[48] Often purchased second-hand, the shirt referenced the nihilistic, anti-commercial message of grunge music, while the outdoors-reference of the shirt also echoed the rough and rumbling expression of the sound. An example of the lumberjack style is seen on fans in the opening sequence of the legendary video for *Nirvana*'s hit 'Smells like Teen Spirit' (1991), in which it has a prominent visual impact. Faiers suggests that the grunge movement in the 1980s and 1990s appropriated the plaid shirt as an emblem of the working class as a reaction to dominating ideals at the time epitomized by the yuppie movement. For Faiers, it was 'an antidote to the prevailing strait-laced, clean-cut images.'[49] However, the revolt did not seem to move beyond the surface of the fabric because the lumberjack shirt was adopted by the 'disaffected offspring of wealthy middle-class parents rather than the genuinely dispossessed.'[50] The reporter Ruth La Ferla takes it further by arguing that the grunge rockers turned 'lumberjack plaids into the insignia of yuppie revolt.'[51] In that sense, the lumberjack shirt appears to have expressed dominating ideals/attitudes but not in the literal sense of expressing actual social revolt, but rather as a social strategy for demonstrating distinction. Here the connection between fabric and significance seems to be based on a cultural convention and semiotic mash-up rather than being rooted in an actual desire among consumers for a more rural or working class life style. In the case of the 'romance with blue collar emblems' the accuracy of the historical origin does not appear to be relevant. Rather, the attitudes appear to be linked to what the anthropologist Ted Polhemus calls the 'supermarket of style,'[52] determined by the postmodern perception of sartorial presences as bricolage.

Since 2000, this demographic context has taken a genealogical step further as the lumberjack shirt was adopted by the off-spring of the yuppies in the shape of 'urban hipsters' (Image 4). Rural, working class identity markers are often appropriated by the urban highbrow, 'the lumberjacks you see browsing the aisles at Barneys New York.'[53] The journalist Tom Kuntz refers to this as 'workwear couture' worn by the 'urban hipster lumberjack' and notes that 'it seems a little ironic that slender urban saplings are dressing like Paul Bunyan and the Marlboro Man.'[54] What appears to be happening here with the media narratives about the lumberjack shirt is a clashing of cultural barometers. While the *zeitgeist* approach to fashion assumes that meaning shifts with the changes in socio-cultural context, the association of the shirt is fixed in a context that is not only long gone but also may have existed at the same time as other *zeitgeist* narratives. Suggesting that loggers of yore and urban hipsters of today wearing the same shirt share common ground poses a conflict and assumes that a stable, normative meaning is ingrained in the very fabric of the shirt. So when the fashion reporter Bill Cunningham refers to 'lumberjack looks' and 'the traditional Paul Bunyan checks' as having only a 'distant and romantic connection to the forest,'[55] it attests to the flexible nature of the construction of *zeitgeist* because the distant connection itself is based on yet another narrative in the shape of the 'traditional' Paul Bunyan checks.

Image 4: Urban lumberjack, Copenhagen, courtesy of Maria Mackinney-Valentin.

Considering what may be dominating events, and ideals/attitudes in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the concerns of climate and the dedication to greener alternatives have been high on the global agenda. Speculating on how these issues may have manifested in dress practice, the outdoor and modest associations of the lumberjack shirt would seem to be a suitable sartorial candidate for conveying the *zeitgeist*. Factors linking climate concerns and the lumberjack shirt could be the celebration of hard work, conscientiousness over convenience, back to nature and slow living and these similarities in ideals might be seen as stimulating a taste for the red-and-black shirt. However, considering the diversity in the meanings associated with the lumberjack shirt, seeing it as materializing our concerns over climate change and the environment seems to be a narrative designed to comfort us rather than a direct reflection of current events. A direct reflection assumes that other interpretations – in this case issues of for instance gender and sexuality – are not at play. So a connection between climate changes and the lumberjack shirt may be an instance of what Stanley Lieberson refers to as 'reflection theory,' which is concerned with the after-the-fact 'search for substantive significance behind each new fashion.'[56]

6. Gender and Sexuality

Because of its association with conventional masculinity as strong, physical, and hardworking, the lumberjack shirt has become so synonymous with hard-working, straight masculinity that it has become an ideal site for negotiating both gender identity and sexual

orientation for subversive effect. On the level of satire, the 'The Lumberjack Song' (1969) performed in *Monty Python's Flying Circus* is a classic example of how the shirt plays a role in breaking with stereotypical notions of gender. While the relationship between North America and the UK might also be a perspective in the sketch, what is interesting in this context is the play on gender identity through the lumberjack persona. The sketch features Michael Palin as the hard-working, freedom-loving North American embodiment of masculinity in a red-and-black chequered shirt. The song opens with Michael Palin singing: 'I'm a lumberjack and I'm okay/ I sleep all night and I work all day.' However, as the song progresses, the impression of the stereotypical man is gradually dismantled as it is revealed that the lumberjack is a cross-dresser: 'I cut down trees, I wear high heels/ suspenders and a bra/ I wish I'd been a girlie/ Just like my dear papa.'

The television series *The Simpsons* offers a different satirical take on the role of the lumberjack shirt in relation to gender stereotypes. In season 13, episode 5 of *The Simpsons* entitled 'The Blunder Years' (2001), Marge Simpson, the character of the housewife, accidentally buys Burly paper towels – a take on the brand Brawny – and falls in love with the image of the Burly Man. Dressed in a red plaid shirt as the embodiment of North American perceptions of masculinity he says: 'Hello, I'm Chad Sexington, the lumberjack from Burley paper towels.' This stereotypical representation of gender categories is exaggerated for humorous effect when Marge says: 'Burly you're insatiable' and 'Burly you're so rugged and manly.' The lumberjack shirt is also specifically foregrounded as a material expression of this masculine image: 'Look at those massive plaid shoulders.' What might be satirized here is the notion that the castrated male in the form of Homer Simpson is being overtaken by the figure of Burly Man. How seriously one should take this apparent act of attempted re-masculinisation is uncertain, but the example illustrates how the lumberjack as the stereotypical embodiment of rugged, North American manliness opens up to satire concerning gender roles and categories.

As synonymous with hard-working, straight masculinity, the lumberjack shirt also holds potential for negotiating perceptions of sexuality, particularly in relation to marginalized orientations. Homosexual gay male American culture has used the plaid shirt by pushing the male stereotype to the limits, creating a subversive effect in defining macho-gay identity.[57] An example of this is the 1970s concept disco band *Village People*, which originally targeted a gay audience. Part of the band members' onstage performance is dressing up as straight North American male stereotypes such as the policeman, the Native American Indian chief, and the construction worker. One of these gay fantasy stereotypes is the 'cowboy,' originated by singer Randy Jones, who performed in Western wear including a red-and-black lumberjack shirt. The example shows how the apparently paradoxical practice of a gay band incorporating the image of straight males serves as a subversive motion intended to empower gay identity. By adopting the identity markers of straight sexual identity, *Village People* are moving themselves from the margin to the centre, disturbing the entire construction of sexuality in the process. An example mirroring that of *Village People* is the role of the lumberjack shirt as an identity marker among certain groups in the American lesbian community, who have foregrounded the shirt as a site for issues concerning sexuality; hence the colloquial term 'flannel shirt lesbian.'

In the context of gender and sexuality, the analysis of the lumberjack shirt brings out the composite nature of this particular fabric of fashion. The shirt lends itself to the subversive efforts of both male and female homosexuals, to hyper-masculine markers expressed by males in both rural and urban settings, and even plays a part in the trend in women's fashion for 'boyfriend chic' where the feminine is underscored by wearing iconic male garments such as the lumberjack shirt, blazer, or oversized jeans.

This approach to the gendered and sexuality meanings of the lumberjack shirt is indebted to the scholarship of the feminist philosopher Judith Butler who in her critique of identity

categories proposes an anti-essentialist understanding of the construction of gender and sex as a dialectical, existentialist process.[58] The negotiation of gender and sexuality through the lumberjack shirt appears to confirm the formation of these categories as an open-ended endeavour that is always in a state of becoming. In relation to the theme of *zeitgeist*, it might be argued that this performative approach to the lumberjack shirt as a site for negotiating gender and sexuality reflects an academic ideal of post-structuralism and post-modernism that was dominant at the time Butler's *Gender Trouble* was first published in 1990. In that sense, the lumberjack shirt becomes the vehicle for communicating certain social constructivist views on the perception of gender or sexuality. However, seen as a reflection of contemporary events or ideals/attitudes, this approach to the lumberjack shirt might reveal a trend for opposing the presumed orders. In that way, the theme of gender and sexuality is linked to that of class in the sense of attempting to rework or even dismantle structures organizing us socially and culturally in various ways. But while the hipster example represented the paradoxical strategy of creating social distinction in an urban setting by adopting rural or working class emblems, the ideals/attitudes in the themes of both gender and sexuality are of a more culturally subversive nature. While the former operates with sartorial signals as symbols with only fleeting meaning, the process of the latter is rooted in deeper issues of identity, adding more urgency. Again, the more layers of meanings and agendas are added to the lumberjack shirt, the more complicated the notion of fashion as a reflection of events or ideals/attitudes. More than a mirror, the analysis of *zeitgeist* takes the shape of a prism through which a multitude of narratives are refracted.

7. Is There a 'Right' *Zeitgeist*?

The lumberjack shirt opens up to a number of possible interpretations when viewing according to *zeitgeist*, i.e. the reflection of dominating events or dominating ideals/attitudes and how they are played out in three social statuses and identity categories: class, gender, and sexuality. In the analysis we saw how shifts in time, place, and demographics to a certain extent determine the narrative associated with the lumberjack shirt. The process of social distinction associated with the hipsters' use of the shirt is not as relevant for certain gay and lesbian groups as the subversive role the shirt may play. Other possible *zeitgeist* interpretations have also been suggested such as the shirt materializes the concerns about climate and environment issues. Considering the association the shirt has with the great outdoors as well as the notion of simple living linked to both logger culture and the cowboy, the lumberjack shirt might be seen as reflecting a dominating ideal for back to basics and harmony with nature. These concerns might also be seen in the grunge culture, in which the lumberjack shirt is synonymous with dressing down and buying second hand, both of which imply 'green' consumption.

The lumberjack shirt as a working class emblem with hard work and simple living as ideals might be seen as a response to the dominating event of recession where for instance unemployment may lead to a lower standard of living. The lumberjack shirt could be understood as symptomatic of a trend among consumers to go against conspicuous consumption and luxury concepts and instead move towards a focus on independence, freedom, hard work, self-sufficiency and a less materialistic lifestyle. However, when studying *The New York Times* archives about the lumberjack shirt, the notion of dominating events was absent. This may be due to the editorial profile and target group of the newspaper or to the individual priorities of the fashion writers and reporters, addressing the topic of the lumberjack shirt. A broader study of the topic might have revealed a greater role of dominating events but within the framework of this article, the factor in the perception of *zeitgeist* was the less relevant of the two factors studied. This may be due to the more literal nature of dominating events as opposed to the more

abstract and therefore also more open factors of dominating ideals/attitudes, which were present in much of the material in relation to the themes of working class, sexuality, and gender.

Implicit in the notion of *zeitgeist* is that any sartorial presence necessarily shifts in meaning as the spatial and temporal context changes. As suggested already in 1931 by the linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir: 'the same expressive elements tend to have quite different symbolic references in different areas.'[59] This relativity between meaning and context still seems to apply when considering the lumberjack shirt and *zeitgeist*. As it became evident in the study of the dominating ideals/attitudes concerning the lumberjack shirt, the meaning, values, and attitudes associated with the shirt have varied over time. This is clear when considering the role the lumberjack shirt has played in such diverse contexts from Scottish rebels to Native Americans, from *The Beach Boys* to grunge, from grunge to hipster, from loggers to *Village People*.

There are not only variations over time in terms of origin and perception of the lumberjack shirt as both work wear and fashion, but also within a contemporary context and the relatively narrowly defined field represented by *The New York Times*. Here the themes of class, gender, and sexuality pull the perception of *zeitgeist* as dominating ideals/attitudes in different directions.

While the lumberjack checks are at least visually connected to Scottish tartans, other geographical connections are also made, adding further diversity to the meaning of the pattern. One example is the traditional check pattern found in Masai culture which may resemble the lumberjack checks because of their simplicity. The two patterns seemed interchangeable in recent fashion. In the Louis Vuitton Spring/Summer 2012 collection, blue-and-red checks were described as 'Masai.'[60] Similarly, check coats featured in designer Thakoon Panichgul's Autumn/Winter 2011 collection were described as 'quilted lumberjack coats.'[61] In other media, the same Thakoon pieces are referred to as 'Masai.'[62] Finally, lumberjack checks are visually related to other checks such as gingham, houndstooth or madras, giving the fabric of the lumberjack shirt a variety of possible meanings and associations.

Does this mean that we can reduce the notion of *zeitgeist* as a tool for understanding fashion to self-fulfilling prophecies and after the fact explanations? Perhaps the important question here is not so much whether or not media narratives can tell us the truth about the lumberjack shirt at a given time, i.e. reveal 'a substantive significance,' to use Lieberson's term. Rather – and here the absence of the dominating events in the material makes sense – the potential of the *zeitgeist* approach to fashion may be in the discourses and representations themselves. That is to say that these *zeitgeist* narratives concerned with the ideals/attitudes form a symbolic space in which to create stories that can aid in the understanding of contemporary society and ultimately in the understanding of ourselves, each other, and our roles in the world. It is the performance of visual narratives rather than the unearthing of the correct origin and significance that is in focus. It may be argued that *zeitgeist* offers common ground on which we play out our collective hopes and fears through the narrative fabric provided by the example of the lumberjack shirt. In that sense, the lumberjack shirt is reflective of a context, but not of a mirrored one-to-one representation. The approach may rest on a phenomenological take on perception as defined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty who argues that the self is constructed through a dialectical process with the 'other.'[63] The other might be a person but it may also be an object or perhaps even an event. The phenomenological idea of the reciprocal nature of awareness offers a more dynamic view of *zeitgeist* in fashion because it suggests replacing the normative aspect of especially media representations of *zeitgeist* with a transforming notion of meaning as a series of 'becomings.'

In this sense, our sartorial selves may be seen as constituted by the other – the temporal context defined by dominating events and ideals/attitudes – making the notion of *zeitgeist*

highly relevant for further research in fashion. But what may be concluded so far is that the fabric of the lumberjack shirt works as the site for fabricating narratives intended to create cohesion and to negotiate identity – and perhaps to increase circulation.

Notes

[1] The pattern is also associated with the Mackinaw coat often used for hunting.
[2] Christopher Breward, *Fashion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 63.
[3] Jonathan Faiers, *Tartan* (Berg: Oxford: 2008), 14.
[4] Faiers, *Tartan*, 93.
[5] To read more about tartans see *Tartan* by Jonathan Faiers, and for a detailed account of logger culture in North America see *The Making of the American Logger: Traditional Culture and Public Imagery in the Realm of the Bunyanesque* by Robert Walls.
[6] Breward, *Fashion*, 63.
[7] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, 2003), 47.
[8] Valerie Steele, *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History* (Berg: Oxford, 1998), 20.
[9] Cecil Beaton, *The Glass of Fashion* (The Shenval Press: London, 1954), 337.
[10] Ingrid Brenninkmeyer, *The Sociology of Fashion* (Verlag P. G. Keller: Munich, 1962), 87.
[11] Herbert Blumer, 'From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection', *The Sociological Quarterly* 10 (1969): 283.
[12] Ernest Dichter, 'Why We Dress the Way We Do', in *The Psychology of Fashion*, ed. Michael R. Solomon (Lexington Books: Lanham, 1986), 29.
[13] Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 249.
[14] Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 63.
[15] Breward, *Fashion*, 23.
[16] Paul Nystrom, *Economics of Fashion* (New York: Ronald Press, 1928).
[17] Evelyn Brannon, *Fashion Forecasting* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2005).
[18] Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).
[19] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1899).
[20] Grant D. McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
[21] Stanley Lieberson, *A Matter of Taste: How Names, Fashions and Culture Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 272.
[22] Lieberson, *A Matter of Taste*, 273.
[23] Ibid., 69-73.
[24] Suzy Menkes, 'The New Sobriety: Covering up the Body', *New York Times*, 27 February, 2006, viewed 29 May 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/27/style/27iht-rdark.html?pagewanted=all.
[25] Russell Adams, 'New York Times Prepares Plan to Charge for Online Reading', *Wall Street Journal*, January 24, 2011, viewed 25 May 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704213404576100033883758352.html.
[26] See James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 2007).
[27] Because of the relatively simple methods involved, the pattern may go as far back as 700.
[28] According to the Scottish Tartans Authority.

[29] Duncan Macmillan, *Scottish Art 1460-1690* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1990).
[30] Located on 23 August, 2011 at http://www.braeval.net.
[31] 'Buffalo Plaid', *Tartan Herald*, June 2010, 2.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Megan E. Baker and Alan Jalowitz, 'Rich in Tradition', The Pennsylvania Center for the Book, Penn State, http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/Woolrich.html.
[34] Such as Jens Lund, PhD in Folklore and American Studies, University of Washington and Robert Walls who wrote his PhD diss., in Folklore and American Studies entitled *The Making of the American Logger*.
[35] Faiers, *Tartan*, 124.
[36] http://www.pendleton-usa.com/custserv/custserv.jsp?pageName=PlaidShirt&parentName=Heritage.
[37] James LeMonds, *Deadfall: Generations of Logging in the Pacific Northwest* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2000).
[38] E-mail interview with James LeMonds on 19 November, 2010.
[39] E-mail interview with Robert Walls on 14, 17 and 18 November, 2011.
[40] E-mail interview with Robert Walls on 14, 17 and 18 November, 2011.
[41] The Smithsonian Institute, viewed 25 May 2012, http://smithsonianlibraries.si.edu/smithsonianlibraries/2011/06/paul-bunyan-day.html.
[42] For instance newspaper reporter James MacGillivray, former logger, who published stories about Bunyan in the *Detroit News Tribune* in 1910. The Smithsonian Institute, http://smithsonianlibraries.si.edu/smithsonianlibraries/2011/06/paul-bunyan-day.html.
[43] Norman S. Hayner, 'Taming the Lumberjack', *American Sociological Review* 10, No. 2, (1945): 217-225.
[44] Marsh Underwood, *The Log of a Logger* (Kelso, Washington, 1938), 30.
[45] Rosecrans Baldwin, 'Pop Your Blue Collar', *New York Times*, 6 April, 2009, viewed 25 May 2012, http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04//the-digital-ramble-pop-your-blue-collar.
[46] Bryan Robert, 'Plaid Men', *New York Times*, 12 September, 2010, viewed 25 May 2012, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9902E6D7153CF931A2575AC0A9669D8B63.
[47] Jessica Michault, 'A Moment to Enjoy', *New York Times*, 21 June, 2011, viewed 25 May 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/22/fashion/a-moment-to-enjoy.html.
[48] See Michael Lavine, *Grunge* (New York: Abrams Image, 2009) and Faiers, *Tartan*.
[49] Faiers, *Tartan*, 124.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ruth La Ferla, 'Smells like Grunge Again', *New York Times*, 30 September, 2003, viewed 25 May 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/30/nyregion/front-row.html.
[52] Ted Polhemus, *Stylesurfing: What to Wear in the 3rd Millennium* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 93.
[53] Guy Trebay, 'With Weather as a Composed Prop', *New York Times*, 16 January 2011, viewed 25 May 2012, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C05E3D7103FF935A25752C0A9679D8B63.
[54] Tom Kuntz, 'Flannel-Shirt Bipartisanship', *New York Times*, 27 October, 2009, viewed 25 May 2012, http://ideas.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/flannel-shirt-bipartisanship/.
[55] Bill Cunningham, 'Mad Plaid', *New York Times* column *On the Street*, 31 January, 2010, viewed 25 May 2012, http://video.nytimes.com/video/2010/01/29/style/1247466790284/on-the-street-mad-plaid.html.
[56] Stanley Lieberson, *A Matter of Taste*, 272.
[57] Faiers, *Tartan*, 124.

[58] See for instance Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
[59] Edward Sapir, 'Fashion', in E*ncyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 6 (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 24.
[60] Suzy Menkes, 'Out of Africa', *New York Times*, 22 June, 2011, viewed 25 May 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/23/fashion/paris-spring-2012-new-mens-style-director-at-louis-vuitton.html.
[61] Lynn Yaeger, 'Thakoon's Unpretentious Charm, Preen's Inimitable Craft', *New York Magazine*, 14 February 2011, viewed 25 May 2012, http://nymag.com/daily/fashion/2011/02/yaeger_donna_karan_diane_von_f.html.
[62] Eric Wilson, 'Thakoon: Masai Meets Marie Antoinette', *New York Times*, 13 February, 2011, viewed 25 May 2012, http://runway.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/13/rope-line-for-the-elevator/.
[63] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible: Followed by Working Notes* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000).

Bibliography

Adams, Russell. 'New York Times Prepares Plan to Charge for Online Reading.' *Wall Street Journal*, January 24, 2011. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704213404576100033883758352.html.

Baker, Megan E. and Alan Jalowitz. 'Rich in Tradition.' The Pennsylvania Center for the Book, Penn State, 2010. Viewed 24 October 2011. http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/Woolrich.html.

Baldwin, Rosecrans. 'Pop Your Blue Collar.' *New York Times*, 6 April 2009. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04/the-digital-ramble-pop-your-blue-collar/.

Beaton, Cecil. *The Glass of Fashion*. London: The Shenval Press, 1954.

Blumer, Herbert. 'From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection.' *The Sociological Quarterly* 10 (1969): 275-291.

Bourque, Bruce J. and Laureen LaBar. *Uncommon Threads Wabanaki Textiles, Clothing, and Costume*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Brannon, Evelyn. *Fashion Forecasting.* New York: Fairchild Publications, 2005.

Brenninkmeyer, Ingrid. *The Sociology of Fashion*. Munich: Verlag P. G. Keller, 1962.

Breward, Christopher. *Fashion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

'Buffalo Plaid.' *Tartan Herald*, June 2010, 2.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Cunningham, Bill. 'Mad Plaid.' *New York Times* column *On the* Street, 31 January, 2010. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://video.nytimes.com/video/2010/01/29/style/1247466790284/on-the-street-mad-plaid.html.

Dichter, Ernest. 'Why We Dress the Way We Do.' In *The Psychology of Fashion*, edited by Michael R. Solomon. Lanham: Lexington Books, 1986.

Entwistle, Joanne. *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

Faiers, Jonathan. *Tartan*. Oxford: Berg, 2008.

Gilmore, James H. and B. Joseph Pine II. *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want*. Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 2007.

Hayner, Norman S. 'Taming the Lumberjack.' *American Sociological Review* 10, No. 2 (1945): 217-225.

Kawamura, Yuniya. *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*. Oxford: Berg, 2005.

Kuntz, Tom. 'Flannel-Shirt Bipartisanship.' *New York Times*, 27 October, 2009. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://ideas.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/flannel-shirt-bipartisanship/.

La Ferla, Ruth, 'Smells Like Grunge Again.' *New York Times*, 30 September, 2003. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/30/nyregion/front-row.html.

Lavine, Michael. *Grunge*. New York: Abrams Image, 2009.

LeMonds, James. *Deadfall: Generations of Logging in the Pacific Northwest*. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2000.

Lieberson, Stanley. *A Matter of Taste: How Names, Fashions and Culture Change*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Mackinney-Valentin, Maria. 'On the Nature of Trends: A Study of Trend Mechanisms in Contemporary Fashion.' PhD diss., Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Design School, 2010.

Macmillan, Duncan. *Scottish Art 1460-1690*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1990.

McCracken, Grant D. *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Menkes, Suzy. 'The New Sobriety: Covering Up the Body.' *New York Times*, 27 February 2006. Viewed 29 May 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/27/style/27iht-rdark.html?pagewanted=all.

———. 'Out of Africa.' *New York Times*, 22 June 2011. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/23/fashion/paris-spring-2012-new-mens-style-director-at-louis-vuitton.html.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Visible and the Invisible: Followed by Working Notes*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000.

Michault, Jessica. 'A Moment to Enjoy.' *New York Times*, 21 June 2011. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/22/fashion/a-moment-to-enjoy.html.

Nystrom, Paul. *Economics of Fashion.* New York: Ronald Press, 1928.

Polhemus, Ted. *Stylesurfing: What to Wear in the 3rd Millennium*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1996.

Rich, M. B. *History of the First 100 Years in Woolrich*. Williamsport, PA: The Grit Publishing Co., 1930.

Robert, Bryan. 'Plaid Men.' *New York Times*, 12 September 2010. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9902E6D7153CF931A25750A9669D8B63.

Sapir, Edward. 'Fashion.' In *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 6, 139-144. New York: Macmillan, 1931.

Simmel, Georg. *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Steele, Valerie. *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History.* Oxford: Berg, 1998.

Tartan Herald. June 2010.

Trebay, Guy. 'With Weather as a Composed Prop.' *New York Times*, 16 January 2011. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C05E3D7103FF935A25752C0A9679D8B63.

Underwood, Marsh. *The Log of a Logger*. Portland: Kilham Stationery & Printing, 1938.

Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions.* London: The Macmillan Company, 1899.

Walls, Robert. *The Making of the American Logger: Traditional Culture and Public Imagery in the Realm of the Bunyanesque*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1997.

Wilson, Elizabeth. *Adorned in Dreams*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

Wilson, Eric. 'Thakoon: Masai Meets Marie Antoinette.' *New York Times*, 13 February, 2011. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://runway.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/13/rope-line-for-the-elevator/.

Yaeger, Lynn. 'Thakoon's Unpretentious Charm, Preen's Inimitable Craft.' *New York Magazine*, 14 February 2011. Viewed 25 May 2012. http://nymag.com/daily/fashion/2011/02/yaeger_donna_karan_diane_von_f.html.

Maria Mackinney-Valentin, PhD, earned her doctorate in Trend Studies from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design where she is currently a Senior Research Fellow. She also holds an MA in English Literature from Copenhagen University. Her work centres on the social and cultural mechanisms of fashion with special focus on age, gender, and ethnicity.

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. 21-44 (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

Fashioning Baroque-Centric Identities: Vanessa Beecroft, Francesco Vezzoli and Maurizio Cattelan

Laura Petican

Abstract

In the contemporary art arena, Italian artists express a unique vision that is at once innovative and conventional. Works conceived in new media, performance and installation, traversing boundaries of space and time, deploy materials, craft and an appeal to the senses that locate the expression within a nationalized type of aesthetic 'brand' intricately tied to Italy's prominence in the realm of fashion. Vanessa Beecroft, Maurizio Cattelan and Francesco Vezzoli explore the boundaries of experimentation where bodies, clothing, spectacle and decadence, propriety and provocation are the protagonists in vignettes of contemporary style. Stemming from traditional forms of painting and sculpture, contemporary Italian art confronts the simulacra of a past visual language to engage its beholder in an image of heightened vitality, pulsing with the life of its materials, derived from realms of popular culture, high fashion, beauty icons and from the manipulation of desire at the base of the industrial consumer complex. In this sense, contemporary works are also securely rooted in the past; that is, in relation to the forms and functions of the Baroque, where spatial-temporal realms merge in a vital act of sensory confrontation. Severo Sarduy's concept of the Neo-Baroque as a site of disruption and instability, modelled on Johannes Kepler's ellipse, provides a conceptual point of reference in terms of contemporary Italian works conceived as expressions of alterity. Described as baroque-centric, they maintain aspects of Neo-Baroque expression, along with a connection to their predecessors of the seventeenth century. From an historiographical perspective, these artists participate in a social history of art and aesthetics where works speak to the evolving socio-political environment. In works of a slick, highly produced and sensory quality, each artist relies on the language and methods of contemporary fashion to articulate an innovative, yet 'national' aesthetic vision entrenched in the historical context.

Key Words

Italy, contemporary art, Baroque, Neo-Baroque, fashion, beauty icons, Vanessa Beecroft, Francesco Vezzoli, Maurizio Cattelan, Severo Sarduy, national identity.

*****

1. Introduction

Since the late twentieth century, Italian artists have occupied the forefront of the international avant-garde with works that articulate equal footing in areas of traditional and innovative artistic practice where materials and conception are concerned.[1] Artists such as Vanessa Beecroft (b. 1969, Genoa), Francesco Vezzoli (b. 1971, Brescia) and Maurizio Cattelan (b. 1960, Padua) produce works that are conceived, commissioned and consumed within this international arena. However unfashionable it may be to say so, their works exhibit characteristics suggestive of national tendencies related to a particular conception and execution of the artistic act; that is, they are rooted in the country's classical legacy with respect to the Renaissance and Baroque eras, periods the sociologist and nationalism and ethnicity scholar Anthony D. Smith refers to as a nation's 'golden age.'[2] This is to suggest a consolidated vision of national artistic identity – one that is also dependent on Italy's cultural and industrial success

as a leader in fashion, design and image production in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries.

Since the mid-twentieth century, Italian artists' movements such as Informale and Arte Povera have worked against any such association in favour of a more universal expression where art and life co-existed on the same experiential plane. Indeed, postwar artists have roundly denounced an artistic practice defined in nationalistic terms, as it is associated with Mussolini's exploitation of Italy's past in the inter-war and World War II eras.[3] Subsequent generations of artists, movements such as the Transavanguardia, and later individuals interested in performance and new media have oscillated between a return to traditional modes of expression and a surge forward, exploring new tendencies and subject matter beyond artistic and geographic borders. In particular, Beecroft incorporates the international language and materials of fashion (-ing) and the body – live performance, stylized bodies, covetable garments, luxurious fabrics, etc. – to explore and exploit the dynamics that unfold between art and audience. Vezzoli's fake movie trailers appeal to the universal, contemporary curiosity for decadence and celebrity; his glamorous icons – Roman emperors, faded Hollywood stars and 1980s' supermodels – are rendered vulnerable with the artist's hand-embroidered, glittering teardrops, while Cattelan's sculptural, figurative works address human emotion, weakness, vulnerability and internal conflict via truncated, yet immaculately attired self-portraits and busts of desiccated lingerie models. Nevertheless, along with the wide reception of the latest generation of Italian artists and the long reach of their conceptual concerns, works of the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries, like their postwar predecessors, exhibit distinct connections to the national context. By way of familiar, yet compromised and deconstructed imagery, the work of Italy's contemporary artists marks a crisis in the certitudes of nationalized icons – those pillars of classical beauty, proportion and luxurious styling so well-articulated by Italy's fashion industry – while contributing to and proliferating a national, cultural identity rooted in these very images.

To define contemporary Italian art within the parameters of an inherited cultural tradition is to suggest a transhistorical dynamic in the articulation of new forms of expression. Multidisciplinary works by Beecroft, Vezzoli and Cattelan, while informed by current modes of practice (performance, video, installation) that navigate issues of personal identity, spectacle and consumption, employ traditional and unconventional materials and icons in a spirit of irreverence. They challenge conventions of artistic practice and problematize the capacity to construct identity via a common iconography related to tropes of beauty and fashion, while maintaining this iconography as the basis of visual communication; they deploy paradigms only to deconstruct and re-present them as something new. This confrontation of icons – whether classical columns, famous actresses, or modes of pictorial composition – discloses a connection to the historical Baroque that links contemporary Italian artists to their cultural past. A particular conception of materials and their symbolic qualities, a sensitivity to the physicality of the work and its occupation of space, and an iconoclastic tendency with respect to disruption of viewers' expectations, links contemporary Italian art to Baroque works that unfold over space and time, exploit the sensuality of their modelled surfaces and confront the viewer with surprising turns of visual phrase. Baroque and Neo-Baroque scholars Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup discuss this effect with respect to the Latin American historical and cultural context, where the Baroque is conceived simultaneously as 'overflowing and yet articulated; globalizing and yet also specific.'[4]

Contemporary Italian artists similarly work on a plane of highly controlled aesthetic elements but whose reach overflows into dynamic works that engage the viewer in real space and time; their polished surfaces and slick presentation not only complicate the process of consumption, they confound perceptions and expose expectations that are ultimately frustrated.

Their reach is international but marked by the cultural legacy of their national context and the modes and materials of Italy's twentieth-century advances in industry and economics, particularly as it relates to the fashion industry. Beecroft, Vezzoli and Cattelan use fashion's materials and forms to construct situations where, as Zamora and Kaup suggest, 'historical continuity is balanced against historical rupture.'[5] Paradigms of 'Italianness' persist but their iconic status is challenged by the near-borderless environment in which the artists live. Their careers are largely pursued outside of the national context but hinge upon its stereotypes and meld with images and forms of an international spectacular nature. Here, Italian fashion has served to extend works of fine art to a wider audience primed to consume.

Image 1: *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, by Caravaggio (1598-1600)

2. Toward a Baroque-Centric Methodology

A baroque-centric methodology is formed upon a general understanding of the historical Baroque from both technical and conceptual perspectives. Referring to the art and culture of the seventeenth century, the Baroque is commonly understood as an era of great innovation with respect to art, architecture, music, literature, city planning, philosophy and science and commonly takes Rome, Italy as its centre. Various manifestations of the Baroque developed in other parts of the world; however, for the purposes of this discussion, iconic works from the Roman context, such as those of Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, will be used to illustrate their resonance in the works of contemporary Italian artists. As the art historian John Rupert Martin writes, the term 'baroque' has acquired so vast a scope of reference that its meaning has become ambiguous.[6] However, it is still possible to ascertain a broad understanding of characteristics that mark the era as distinct from others. It is a style derived from the classical principles of the Renaissance, which held symmetry and proportion as defining principles. It evolved from a static aesthetic to a dynamic and vital one, through forms that extend through space and time that implicate the viewer in a lived experience of the artistic act. Baroque forms in painting, sculpture and architecture engage the

viewer in works of heightened naturalism, which function on real notions of space and time and exploit the dynamism of light and shadow via curved forms, diagonal projections, and games of concave and convex structures. They retain, however unconventionally, connections to antiquity via subject matter and aesthetic form, and in mythological and biblical narratives wrought around classical columns and arcades. The overriding principle of the Baroque, however, is connected to ideas of disruption and instability, contrasted with the tranquillity and stability of classical, Renaissance forms.

To qualify the claim for a manifestation of the Baroque in contemporary Italian art, Severo Sarduy, the Cuban poet, playwright, and art and literary critic, offers a conception of disruption and instability modelled on the seventeenth-century resistance to Renaissance symmetry and notions of perfection symbolized in the circle.[7] Severo's reference to the seventeenth-century German mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler's concept of the ellipse as a form used to describe the planet Mars' orbit, as an alternate form with a directional axis, or two centres or foci, as opposed to a centralizing focus, can be conjured to describe the effect of twentieth-century works of art conceived along similar lines of alterity and disruption. The decentring effect of this shift from Galileo's heliocentric universe to one without a discernible centre carried ideological and social implications. Sarduy argues that 'God himself no longer seems to be a central, unique given, but rather the infinity of certainties of the personal cogito.'[8] He identifies a parallel development in the twentieth century as the Neo-Baroque, described as 'an intensification of the decentring and destabilization of the universe begun by the former.'[9] For Sarduy, the ellipse is generative as opposed to static and presents 'multiple dynamic components, capable of being projected into other forms.'[10] He locates the notion of a disrupted centre in 'the symbolic space par excellence: urban discourse,' where Baroque architects such as Pietro da Cortona extended their buildings' facades into the city's 'limbs' to disrupt the 'circular and motivated network' of the pre-Baroque city, whose centre maintained symbolic authority. The Baroque city is by contrast an 'open argument' that challenges the reading imposed on it by a 'privileged signifier.'[11] The twentieth-century Neo-Baroque, manifested in instances of 'dynamism, heterogeneity, and transgression,'[12] is found in works by Beecroft, Vezzoli and Cattelan, where artistic conventions are reinterpreted in reflections of contemporary existence to confront viewers with the revelation of their own expectations.

The notion of accumulation, or as Sarduy phrases it, 'acculturation,'[13] describes the process by which contemporary Italian artists function within a cultural context of immense historical presence. Like the Baroque, as Sarduy writes, artists of the twentieth century deploy 'heterogenous elements from other cultural strata' toward a new expression rooted in the past. The resulting works exhibit 'the accumulation of diverse nodes of signification, the juxtaposition of heterogeneous units, various lists and collages.' Sarduy refers to the process of 'proliferation,' where former meanings associated with certain forms and concepts are 'emptied of their functions' to take on new meaning that is both evocative of the former, a ghost image, so to speak, and re-presented as something new.[14] A process unfolds whereby successive readings 'negate and cancel each other out.'[15] In this course of juxtaposed, temporal signifiers, the spectator undergoes a process by which apprehension of the work is rendered increasingly complex. The shifting nature of aesthetic experience is realized in the work's own variable properties and compounded signs, indeed, in its 'movement' as one image into another.

This 'anamorphosis' or 'condensation' is described by Sarduy as the 'displacement of the spectator – a process in this case comparable to reading – [which] condenses all the visual units into a fourth element – the definitive painting, chromatically and geometrically "open."'[16] In this model, each moment experienced by the viewer is 'uncapturable.' Moving from one moment to another, the work is experienced in stages, as a living entity. Its very material, as

Sarduy writes, is 'variation and time, a mechanical modulation of a schema X of multiple articulated variables and their self-combinations.' For the Neo-Baroque, and the contemporary Italian artists cited, the resulting works elicit 'a certain deliberate stylistic use of this procedure…not of a simple linkage, but of metaphor; insisting on their analogies.' In this way, the Neo-Baroque artist creates tension between the forms used, the past and present significations of those forms, whose 'condensation' leads to the creation of a 'new signified.'[17]

In a transhistorical sense, then, the relationship between the Baroque and Neo-Baroque is a matter of connections and re-imaginings between the conventions and/or innovations of disparate eras, toward the articulation of a new language or signifier, a 'fourth element,' understood as a product of this temporal assimilation. As Sarduy writes, the Neo-Baroque is thus 'a space of dialogism, polyphony, carnivalization, parody, and intertextuality,' which stems from the Baroque and can be seen as a non-linear network of connections, spatial and dynamic.[18] The cultural past is thereby realized by contemporary artists as 'a field of extraction, of quotable material: perspective, light and shadow, geometry, all the conventional signs denoting space and volume and that have been naturalized over centuries are used here.'[19]

Describing the presence of the Baroque or Neo-Baroque in the work of contemporary Italian artists working in various strains of current aesthetic inquiry stipulates the use of a specialized vocabulary in order to establish a methodological approach. A baroque-centric trait complex proposes a set of common denominators associated with Baroque art and architecture, derived from seminal works in Baroque historiography by Heinrich Wölfflin, William Fleming, John Rupert Martin, Marshall Brown and Giuliano Briganti, and incorporates in particular, a specific understanding of materials, space, time, tension and theatricality.[20] Kepler's notion of the ellipse and its effect of decentring and destabilization are applied, following Sarduy, to contemporary Italian works. Like Baroque works, the physicality and iconoclasm of contemporary works manifest in a process of accumulation or acculturation which compels the viewer by virtue of familiar forms and visual constructions. The result is an increasingly complex aesthetic experience unfolding in an anamorphic handling of space. The analysis of Baroque influences in contemporary Italian art is not taken to be a literal extension of the Baroque or a manifestation of the Neo-Baroque, but a baroque-centric expression modelled on abstract Baroque traits.[21] A baroque-centric trait complex is thereby informed by common denominators related to an artistic act rooted in co-extensive realms of space and time, one that functions on inherent and exploited tensions and theatricality, fashioned with a heightened sense of material and physicality, and which implicates the spectator as a part of the living and unstable aesthetic act. Contemporary baroque-centric works such as Beecroft's living, breathing, shifting, yet tightly styled models; Vezzoli's overtly contrived filmic ruse and untenable commodities; and Cattelan's pristine yet dysfunctional Italian wool suits uphold paradigms while drawing attention to their inherent instabilities.

3. Socio-Political and Economic Contexts

An additional factor to consider in the analysis of a baroque-centric expression in contemporary Italian art is the socio-economic climate of the post-World War II era, in matters of industrialization and the effects of the *miracolo italiano* in the 1950s. Social advances in areas of education, women's rights and a growing labour force led the path to the country's position as a leader in an international, neo-liberal economic climate. The social, political and economic reforms of the 1970s, as fallout to the strikes of the 'Hot Autumn' of 1968, included advances in areas of pensions, housing, divorce, abortion and health care, among others, and oscillated between periods of advance and regression.[22] The rapid industrialization and *aggiornamento* (bringing up to date or catching up with) of the postwar era has resulted in Italy's being positioned among the most industrious and rapidly growing national economies of

the late twentieth century, particularly in the areas of fashion, textile and industrial design, despite the 'anti-capitalist, collectivist and egalitarian' intentions of late-1960s' activists. [23] As the political historian Paul Ginsborg writes, the average working class family living in the northern Industrial Triangle of Milan-Genoa-Turin in the 1980s was both 'more prosperous and smaller than ever before.'[24] It may be no coincidence that Beecroft, Vezzoli and Cattelan were all born within this northern region and that their visual repertoire is comprised of the materials, icons and processes of a national economy based in areas of textile, fashion, industrial design and the generation of compelling images and media associated with the industrial consumer complex. As the cultural historian Stephen Gundle writes, fashion 'became Italy's most successful industry in the 1980s,'[25] a formative decade for these artists.

A baroque-centric sensibility – both conceptual and aesthetic – on the part of Italy's contemporary artists is rendered more complex in its complicity with industries that have flourished in the course of twentieth-century economics and progress in manufacturing, which have developed alongside experiments with materials and new media. Specifically, the collusion of fashion and art in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries contributes to the notion of an expressed national aesthetic at work, where the visual language and forms of fashion, merchandising and spectacle collide with art forms conceived as dynamic, extravagant productions that conflate realms of popular beauty and decadence.

Contemporary Italian artists have incorporated the visual language of fashion and beauty – its materials, its modes of communication and its slick, polished presentations – as a pivotal aspect of works that confront the spectator with an anarchic and disconcerting presentation of what would be easily consumed images within the purely economic realm. The persistence, indeed, an insistence, on glossy production manifests in works that deconstruct the allure of fashionable clothing and accessories, where Hollywood icons cry needlepoint glitter teardrops, epic false movie trailers promise a film full of trademark names and faded supermodels, and sculptural self-portraits revel in tailored, yet slightly disproportionate Italian wool suits. All are rendered with an eye to the works' internal combustion, a glamorous undoing and a revelation in disconcertion and disorientation, what may be described as a baroque-centric version of a 'mobile and decentred but still harmonious universe.'[26] Contemporary Italian art is highly articulated and deliberate; its canonical forms overflow from history into disrupted representations marked by national modes of cultural production.

4. Vanessa Beecroft

Vanessa Beecroft's video work *VB52*, of 2003, performed at the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Turin, Italy, explores these baroque-centric effects of decentring and shifting signs in a tableau vivant of movement and colour-coded live bodies that share in a fashion-conscious, communal event (Image 2). Presented in dramatic foreshortened view, attendants at a dinner party occupy a long banquet table and shift with subtle movement as they methodically consume a monochromatic feast, arranged according to an unknown colour theory which loosely follows a prismatic progression from one end of the table to the other. As the work unfolds throughout the filmic space over time, it echoes the living experience of the spectator, mimicking the sacred act of breaking bread. The work traverses boundaries between art and life, as the food on the feast table reflects dietary experiments conducted by the artist herself. In this instance, and possibly as a reflection of the contemporary obsession with nutrition- and fashion-related body issues, Beecroft's own consumption of food of only one colour was obsessively documented for a specified period of time, as she observed biological changes according to the food's perceived chromatic effect on her body. Aesthetically, the performance and documentation of its highly produced images are redolent of the overly wrought culinary/fashion experiments of the blogger sensation Luxirare,[27] who

prepares, arranges and photographs decadent ingredients on various objet d'art-like serving vessels, waxes poetic about their gastronomic merits, but is never seen eating them.

Image 2: *VB52* performance, by Vanessa Beecroft, 2003, courtesy of the artist, ©2012 Vanessa Beecroft[28]

Beecroft's dinner party is similarly so highly articulated in aesthetic terms that even her guests appear subject to a 'cool-factor' screening process; indeed, the guests are not there to consume food but rather each other as moving images. Beecroft's dinner guests symbolically consume her food and by extension her body; they shift next to each other and share in the communal event that is a representation of the artist's own psyche. Their multi-hued clothing reflects the artist's own biological transitions, and a baroque-centric Eucharist is played out in real time.

The heightened fashion aesthetic of Beecroft's video, articulated in wigs styled in distinct shapes, colours and styles, echoes the choice of currently fashionable shoes and clothing to affirm the aesthetic event in the now, locating it in a first world community of affluence and material consumption. The highly styled participants embody the dynamism associated with Baroque works such as Caravaggio's *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, c. 1598-1600, whose figures, in a similarly dramatic foreshortened pictorial space, gesture beyond the picture plane to implicate the viewer in the depicted event while animated gestures declare their life force (Image 1).

For Beecroft, the use of live bodies and comestibles also emphasizes the fleeting nature of beauty and life in the tradition of vanitas images – decay, inevitable death and decline, etc., in works such as Caravaggio's *Basket of Fruit*, c. 1596, whose subject is pictured in an imperfect, evolving state.

Likewise, the living aspect of Beecroft's models introduces a lack of closure and destabilization. Counter to the conventions of fashion where designers' campaigns present a

cohesive image of their products, Beecroft has deconstructed would-be iconic 'looks' and reassembled wigs, clothing and accessories in a disorienting, internally coded system of meaning. The colours and fashionability of her materials appeal to the viewer sensually, but the items remain inaccessible; they are not for sale. Conceptually, the baroque-centric work unfolds over space and time and deconstructs the highly coded language of fashion; using an accumulated repertoire of pictorial references, it presents a decentred account of a sacred event articulated in connection with the artist's own body.[29] Subsequent to the work's filming, it remains unclassifiable because it is no longer a live performance but may be re-visited in video form; yet it exists in photographic form as colour-coded renditions (i.e., some photos depict only green food or only red). The work is also not an exercise in gratuitous beauty, yet its psycho-social commentary is made beautiful. As Sarduy suggests, these works, influenced by the Baroque, defy containment literally and in terms of categorization. Attempts at constitution only succeed in stifling a work's 'blossoming meaning,' which in the Baroque, must remain inconclusive.[30]

Image 3: *VB35* performance, by Vanessa Beecroft, 1998, courtesy of the artist, © 2012 Vanessa Beecroft[31]

Beecroft's *VB35*, of 1998, was performed at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and similarly invalidates and decentres the language with which it communicates. Functioning on baroque-centric devices articulated with fashion vocabulary, this time with a gallery of models wearing glittered-logo Gucci bikinis and matching high-heeled mules, the performance and subsequent photo series confront viewers with a blank stare back at their own gaze with models who seem disengaged in Beecroft's aesthetic fantasy (Image 3). The models' awkward posing and obvious discomfort belies the myth of glamour associated with luxury goods and confronts the spectator with the burden of the system of commodities of which they are part. The work defies the otherwise familiar icon of an Italian luxury brand's logo and introduces an unstable reading that confronts the impulse to consume. Beecroft's use of current fashion merchandising, fine art and luxury – those 'familiar bedfellows' – are combined in an

iconoclastic performance with respect to conventional constructions of consumable beauty, while finding 'refuge in the brand identities of mass marketing.'[32]

A more sophisticated type of corporate relationship is evolving, beyond the supply and demand model. Recent partnerships between fine artists and luxury brands offer a reciprocal benefit for both parties and help to extend brand identity to an international, culturally educated and receptive audience. Associated with an artist's presumed critical interpretation of his/her materials and subject matter, corporate brands may gain intellectual credibility with such alliances and extend branding opportunities to interdisciplinary realms of museums, biennales, and other cultural institutions and events where their style may be implemented. While Beecroft's choice of garments may be somewhat arbitrary, the status of a luxury label is not lost and has helped to launch subsequent large-scale, expensive projects that propagate a finely tuned art-world persona, for example, her 2008 documentary *The Art Star and the Sudanese Twins*, directed by Pietra Brettkelly. Explaining her choice of outfits for the models in *VB35*, Beecroft states, 'At the Guggenheim, I just shopped for the most expensive bikini they had, the rhinestone one.'[33] She elaborates on her method of selecting attire as partly determined by chance or the willingness of (corporate) sponsors, what may be seen as an 'open' approach to an otherwise highly controlled work. With reference to other performances Beecroft explains,

> At that time I was wearing Manolos myself, but I could afford only one pair, not for all the models. I was trying to get as close to the real thing as I could, but I was limited by the budget. One day in 1995 I decided to call Prada. I asked for shoes and they sent me a box full of them. Prada was the first to send me items with no questions asked. For *VB16* at Deitch Projects I wanted Chanel slippers, but I could only get Todd Oldham. I wanted the transparent sheer underwear that was Agent Provocateur, instead I got handmade underwear. In the performances, it's hard to control the details.[34]

Beecroft's performances function similarly to each other with respect to the baroque-centric model – both aesthetically in terms of their use of fashion which centres the artistic act in a contemporary living moment, and conceptually in their playing out over space and time. Further, the performances' involvement of the audience and use of live bodies clothed in partially deconstructed signature 'looks' exploits the characteristic tension of Baroque works. Here, this tension is introduced by the notion of chance in Beecroft's method and is heightened by the impossible insistence on the models' lifeless demeanour.

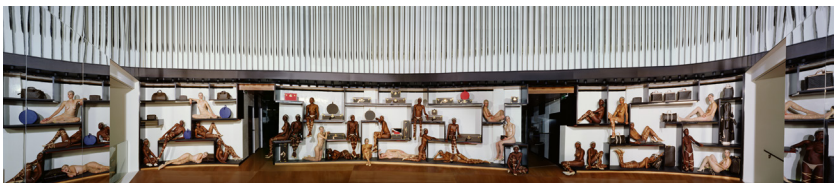


Image 4: *VB56* performance, by Vanessa Beecroft, 2005, courtesy of the artist, © 2012 Vanessa Beecroft[35]

As with *VB56*, of 2005, conceived for the re-opening of Louis Vuitton's Champs Élysées flagship store in Paris, where semi-clothed models were 'installed' on the shelves next to the company's handbags and accessories, the artist prescribed minimal contact among the models and with the audience (Image 4). As a result, their life force struggled against itself to hold a

pose while the environment elicited uncontrollable bodily functions – a Baroque spectacle par excellence. The models shifted from one foot to the other, shivered and perspired, and at times whispered to each other. Beecroft's attempt to impose a rigid aesthetic on living beings recalls the Arte Povera artist Jannis Kounellis' untitled work of 1969 involving twelve live horses chained to the wall of a gallery over several days, their large bodies filling the space with the sounds and smells of their existence. Beecroft's instruction to limit movement to the occasional shift from one foot to the other fails to fully stifle the life forces at work. Conversely, the dynamic and fleeting nature of fashion and ensuing impulse to consume – Beecroft's materials – are deadened by the blatant discomfort of the models' unglamorous presentation of these items of popular desire. The audience's expectation is effectively frustrated and decentred by this denial. As the artist, critic and curator Daryl Chin writes, the effect is one of a taunt, played out in the repetition of bodies similarly fashioned from one to another, that attempts to homogenize the individuals involved. In this, Beecroft challenges the conventions of fashion once more, in an affront to its conformity and in questioning its capacity as a vehicle of individual style.[36]

Beecroft's baroque-centric vision is 'superabundant and wasteful.'[37] It does not communicate as it should according to the fashionable and glamorous materials it uses; that is, aside from the commercial environment in which it is staged (this is not a museum setting), and the commodities it plays with, it fails to deliver on the promise of gratification via consumption. The work's image will not give, and the luxury items used are not presented as accessories for a fashionable person but rather as a pillow or step for someone to lean on. The visual language and already-coded materials problematize the experience for would-be consumers. As Sarduy writes, 'In contrast to language that is communicative, economic, austere, and reduced to its function as a vehicle for information, Baroque language delights in surplus, in excess, and in the partial loss of its subject.'[38] Beecroft's performances have accumulated the tropes of conventional aesthetic language in the use of sculpture in the round whose materials derive from the world of popular, twentieth-century desire. Indeed, those materials are of Italy's national renown in areas of fashion, textile and glamour, and Beecroft's work positions her as somewhat of an ambassador for Italian culture and style. As the performative work functions over space and time, its physicality is exploited by virtue of the models' living presence that overshadows their live audience. Beecroft's deconstructed fashion vision destabilizes the expectation that these models will perform as we are conditioned to experience them, refusing to be consumed. They embody a baroque-centric vision that lives in the same space as the spectator, yet proposes an elliptical experience that decentres conventional modes of behaviour related to that highly coded space. In this context, Beecroft's live models animate the neutral space of the fashion retail environment and problematize the processes of consumption.

A recent and more explicit collaboration with a main outlet of the fashion industry transpired with Beecroft's March 2011 work titled *VB68* for the lifestyle and fashion publication, *Wallpaper** magazine (Image 5). The work followed the artist's participation in the exhibition *Not in Fashion: Fashion and Photography in the 90s*, in Frankfurt, Germany, where she re-staged a previous VB performance.[39] For *Wallpaper**, Beecroft conceived what could otherwise be termed a fashion photo shoot, if not for the artist's proclamation, 'I don't do photo shoots.'[40] Provided with a selection of clothing and accessories from a variety of contemporary fashion design firms' current collections, Beecroft dressed and arranged models in the gallery in response to other artists' works included in the exhibition. Her own installation involved models dressed in sorbet-hued, colour-blocked, seemingly partial outfits, wearing wigs shifting in colour and style from one inert body to another. For her responses to other artists' works in the exhibition, Beecroft instructed a different set of models to re-enact the hair flipping gesture of concert goers pictured in a mosh pit. Other models, wearing half-outfits, stood/sat/lounged on

the gallery floor in an anti-fashion, deconstructed aesthetic, seemingly counter to what a promotional view of the clothing would require. Although *Wallpaper**'s likely intention was to provide its readership with a view of the most current trends fusing art and fashion, the art and cultural critic Dave Hickey notes something retroactive in Beecroft's work. He notes a measure of anxiety and 'immediacy' derived from Renaissance art, where multiple genres are employed in a single work, painting in the space of sculpture, for example, which confounds conventions. Hickey cites the Baroque sculptor and architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini as an artist who worked in this interdisciplinary manner and characterizes Beecroft's performances and photographic works similarly as those that deploy 'the rhetoric of painting in the space of live performance.'[41]

Again, the audience is confronted with the notion of an aesthetic expression conditioned by accumulated cultural influences as described by Sarduy. The complicity of art and fashion in Beecroft's works not only entrenches her live performances in the contemporary, complicit domains of big brands, luxury, commerce and fine art, it also succeeds by virtue of its dynamic technical and conceptual elements in conjuring a baroque-centric vision. Spanning time and space, and appealing to the audience via a heightened sensuality in luxurious and desirable confections of fashionable shapes, textures and colour, Beecroft's works offer a baroque-centric confrontation of Italy's cultural legacies in the realms of both art and fashion.[42] They expound upon Italy's virtuosic output where fashion and aesthetics are concerned, only to turn an iconic, national visual repertoire on its head in deconstructed ellipses of form, texture, colour and medium.

Image 5: *VB68* performance, by Vanessa Beecroft, 2011, courtesy of the artist, © 2012 Vanessa Beecroft[43]

5. Francesco Vezzoli

Fashion's imagery is deployed further in Francesco Vezzoli's video works toward a decentring and destabilization of expectations that derive from seventeenth-century notions of alterity. Fashion, but more specifically, clichés of beauty, glamour, excess and spectacle, furnish the artist's visual vocabulary, spun around non-existent worlds of products and consumption. Vezzoli's materials range from old Hollywood movies, Cinecittà – the hub of Italian cinema production, established in the 1930s by Benito Mussolini – and the faded style of iconic female actresses and models such as Veruschka and Marisa Berenson, for whom he imagines elaborate cinematic events composed of his own fantasies and the public persona nurtured by these women throughout the twentieth century. A multimedia work of epic proportions, Vezzoli's *Trailer for a Remake of Gore Vidal's Caligula*, of 2005, is a video and promotional material that involved the collaboration of a cast of Hollywood and European actors, assembled to stage a trailer for a remake of a movie that will never be made. The grand proportions and heroic imagery, accompanied by a cameo appearance by Gore Vidal, confound the viewer with the compelling, brief appearances of otherwise unrelated celebrities (Helen Mirren and Courtney Love, for example). They speak empty, bombastic prose, dressed as pseudo-Greek/Roman goddesses in costumes designed by Versace, while naked bodies writhe in the orgiastic background. Vezzoli's decadence echoes Sarduy's 'revolutionary Baroque,' described by Zamora and Kaup as a 'celebration of non-utilitarian sexual and textual pleasure.'[44] The viewer's expectations are destabilized by the professional, high-budget and overall convincing delivery of the fake movie trailer; these expectations are thwarted with the realization (and disappointment?) that the show stops here; there will never be a full-length feature to indulge in. The video work and the obvious investment in the project, not only financially, but on the part of professional and well-known actors, refers only to itself. As Sarduy writes with respect to seventeenth-century literature, there is no other reading hidden beneath the surface of what it appears to tell. He states that 'what is masked by its mask is precisely the fact of being merely a mask.'[45] The function of the work is tautological and parodic, which renders it Baroque.

This self-referential work functions by 'pointing out the work within the work,'[46] observes Sarduy, a process of accumulation in references to the ancient and near pasts, which in Vezzoli's case, ends with disrupted expectations and fails to give the viewer that which the accultured individual has been conditioned to expect. The idea of a 'work within the work' also plays out in Vezzoli's highly polished trailer, flush with the creations of other artists, actors and fashion designers. Vezzoli has followed Sarduy's prescription of the Baroque as similar to the Russian ('nesting') doll in its repetitive and encompassing form, which is recopied in reduced form and depicts the artist's dream within a dream. In Sarduy's characterization, the contemporary work resembles 'a clumsy ruse, a formal, fashionable game that has preserved nothing of its original significance.'[47] Like Beecroft's baroque-centric Louis Vuitton installation, Vezzoli's ruse similarly upsets and challenges the audience's will to consume and destabilizes expectations related to familiar images and modes of viewing.

A fashion (-able) aesthetic is also deployed in Vezzoli's later *Greed, the Perfume that Doesn't Exist* and *Enjoy the New Fragrance (Georgia O'Keeffe for Greed)* (Images 6 & 7), both of 2009, a suite of works conceived in both print and video promoting a fictional perfume that will similarly never be made, where again, the viewer's expectations of consumption are frustrated by the illusory quality of the product offered. Vezzoli's interest lies in the production value and slick appearance of these would-be commodities, rather than the commodity itself. The artist collaborated with the Hollywood actresses Natalie Portman and Michelle Williams to stage a television advertisement for the perfume that features the two fighting over the precious bottle with a self-portrait of the artist on its front. The work is complemented by a series of print

portraits of historical, iconic female artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe, represented as in a fashion advertisement, with Vezzoli's trademark embroidered tears streaming down their faces.

Image 6: *Greed, the Perfume that Doesn't Exist*, by Francesco Vezzoli, 2009, installation photo by Matteo Piazza, permission granted by Francesco Vezzoli and Matteo Piazza[48]

In these and other works, Vezzoli's use of embroidery conjures a traditional, domestic practice, seemingly archaic when up against the high glamour personages of his film divas and Versace-designed costumes. The embroidery introduces another against-the-grain effect of a baroque-centric device that disquiets the consumable image. Its hand-wrought overlay onto a mechanically produced print jars the viewer into the realization that multiple times, spaces, media and sensory stimuli are at once active and part of a multidisciplinary experience. Vezzoli's *Caligula* and *Greed* works, in their use of clichéd fashion, beauty and popular imagery, play on notions of excess, luxury and spectacle, and conspire with works such as Beecroft's that provoke real expectation in the viewer while pretending to exist in real space and time.

In this exploitation of a multidisciplinary space that melds the real and fictive, the works function similarly to Bernini's *The Ecstasy of St. Teresa* of 1645-1652 in the Cornaro Chapel in Rome, where a manipulation of architectural space takes the spiritual experience – or visceral reaction – of its audience as part of its goal. In the Baroque painting, rays of real light shine down on the dying saint through concealed openings in the architecture above, while sculptural portraits of the Cornaro family, in separate architectural niches surrounding the altar, discuss the miracle unfolding before them in animated gesture. The architecture is controlled and manipulated in order to channel light and simulate movement towards an aesthetic experience that traverses real space, implicating the viewer in the sacred event. The contemplation of the life of the saint, floating heavenward on a cloud, is augmented by illusionistic painting of architectural elements that extend real structural elements into the supernatural. The work is realized via the illusion of an infinitely extending space where illusionistic devices and virtuosic handling of material establish the spatial co-existence of heavenly and earthly realms, and an

anamorphic process completes apprehension of the work via real movement through space. Vezzoli's video works and accompanying promotional material play out correspondingly in a work that is not there, despite their testament to contemporary, real world personas and commodities. As with Bernini's sculptural group, the work's narrative is incomplete and 'open' without the viewer's movement from one element to the next. Vezzoli's multidisciplinary works are similarly open-ended and leave the viewer hanging with the realization that the slick marketing is for naught. With the audience's destabilized expectations, Vezzoli's performance and video works use the dramatization of aesthetic experience as their very material and bank on the appeal of high fashion and luxury. Highly articulated, his works assuage the viewer with the smooth, gleaming surfaces of contemporary Italian fashion and the allure of glamorous personas and disrupt the experience in an accumulated baroque-centric pastiche.

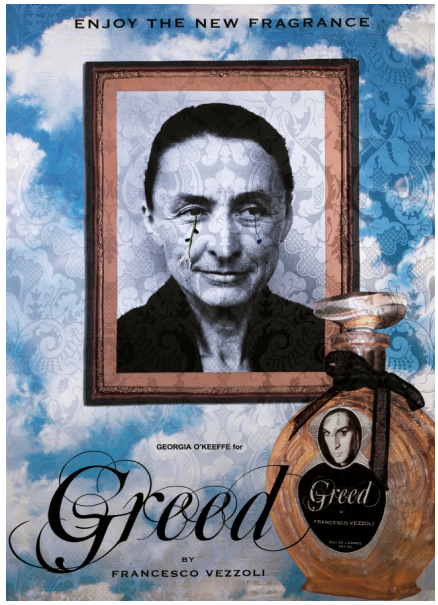


Image 7: *Enjoy the New Fragrance (Georgia O'Keeffe for Greed)*, by Francesco Vezzoli, 2009, installation photo by Matteo Piazza, permission granted by Francesco Vezzoli and Matteo Piazza[49]

Vezzoli's recent *Sacrilegio* works, a series of portraits of 1980s' supermodels posed as Renaissance and Baroque Madonna and Child icons – again with the artist's embroidered, glittery tears – similarly employ a manipulated architectural feature to evoke the deconstructed confines of the Baroque. *Crying Portrait of Kim Alexis as a Renaissance Madonna with Holy Child (after Giovanni Bellini)* and *Crying Portrait of Cindy Crawford as a Renaissance Madonna with Holy Child (after Andrea Mantegna)*, both of 2010, present the viewer with an historically conflated image of iconic Italian altar painting, rendered with twentieth-century cultural icons in the form of high fashion models, with a further reference to Italy's fashion traditions in the artist's embroidered surfaces. As the images seem to melt and drip out of their irregularly shaped frames and enter the real space of the spectator, the gilt frames of their historical counterparts are evoked. The opulence of Baroque interiors infuses Vezzoli's contemporary church of pop culture with the weight of the past as the materials and

iconography of Italy's fashion industry articulate a baroque-centric expression. Vezzoli's supermodel madonnas transport the viewer into a heavenly realm of luxe surfaces, intricate textures and spectacle. They extend beyond their frame, like Bernini's Cornaro family, to reach out to the viewer and summon the same devotion, which of course, they already have. Vezzoli's and Beecroft's *ars combinatoria* evoke the *retablo* or altarpieces of the New World Baroque, according to Zamora and Kaup, who describe the complex architectural structures composed of sculpture, painting, silver, gold, mirror and wood. They write that, 'The *retablo* is an emblem of the Baroque compulsion for connectedness and the merging of forms, what Wöfflin calls the "painterly" quality of Baroque compositions, where volumes and outlines conjoin to create "the apprehension of the world as a shifting semblance."'[50] Vezzoli's movie trailers and fake perfumes with their diva spokeswomen and supermodel madonnas similarly merge disparate temporal realms and media into works that place the spectator along the axis of an elliptical form. It pulls from all directions to affirm and disorient in an assimilated art/fashion vision.

6. Maurizio Cattelan

The staged quality of works by Beecroft and Vezzoli is also identified in works by Maurizio Cattelan, who uses taxidermy in animal and humanoid sculptural works as a method of forming commentary on the inherent tension of inhabitable forms and the notion of accumulation with respect to the historical milieu. Cattelan's use of iconic forms and bodies – often recognizable political, religious, cultural and art figures such as Hitler, Pope John Paul II, Pinocchio, Picasso, etc. – has been attributed to their seductive value with respect to the media as well as for their power as 'new contemporary icons,'[51] used in a process of appropriation and accumulation. In a 2006 monograph on the artist, the Tate Liverpool Artistic Director Francesco Manacorda explains that Cattelan's 'cynicism and violence' are less a symbol of an impulse to rejection but are tempered by 'sadness and inner pessimism,' reflective of violence suffered. He writes that Cattelan's frequent themes of suicide and death are confronted 'theatrically,' where taxidermied forms are deployed as alter egos.[52] This theatricality is further exploited in Cattelan's use of fashion both literally as material or conceptually in figures of famous personalities associated with the fashion industry. Manacorda explains that Cattelan 'aims to distill the power from the icon in order to exploit it for deliberately personal ends. The availability of these images in contemporary culture means that Cattelan can act as a parasite of iconophilia.'[53]

Cattelan's sculptural portrait, *Stephanie*, of 2003 (Image 8), portrays the supermodel Stephanie Seymour, former icon of the Victoria's Secret lingerie brand and one of American *Vogue*'s November 1999 millennium 'Modern Muse' cover models. The sculpture, commissioned by Seymour's billionaire, art collector, industrialist husband Peter Brant, became a symbol of the tumultuous relationship between the couple, witness to acrimonious, public divorce proceedings and ensuing reconciliations in the years since its creation. In its verisimilitude, dewy flesh tone and violently truncated form, the work is evocative of the artist's taxidermied animals and functions on the tension and pathos of once-alive entities and the tradition of mounting animals' heads from a game hunt as trophies. Its nudity both capitalizes on the sensational aspect of its subject and captures the vulnerability and demeaned nature of desiccated animals. The work plays on this tradition and pokes fun at the other tradition of older, financially established men 'bagging' younger, gorgeous women as 'trophy wives;' indeed, within the art world, *Stephanie* has been nicknamed 'Trophy Wife.'[54] As William S. Smith writes, the work is 'a monument to Seymour's and Brant's good humor and a testament to Cattelan's appetite for biting the hand that feeds him.'[55]

Image 8: *Stephanie*, by Maurizio Cattelan, 2003, courtesy Maurizio Cattelan's Archive[56]

It is also antagonistic to Seymour's currency as an image of the glamour and high life associated with fashion imagery and the advertising industry. At the time of the commission, Seymour was among the most celebrated of the supermodels, a muse of the fashion photographer Richard Avedon and a Victoria's Secret 'Angel' who had risen to international fame as a *Vogue*, *Sports Illustrated* and *Playboy* model. 'Stuffed' and 'mounted' by Cattelan, her iconic status is undermined and rendered impotent, 'dead,' and as ridiculed as the artist's own 'corpse' self-image in an undersized wool suit (discussed below). However, castrated as an icon of style, beauty and composure, *Stephanie* shares qualities with Baroque sculptural portraits, such as those mentioned in Bernini's Cornaro Chapel. Both reach out to enter the real space of the spectator, and although *Stephanie* does not encourage the same traversal of space, the figure protrudes into the viewer's realm and counters the two-dimensional effect of being wall-mounted. The image demands attention and as it is life-size proclaims an assertive stance in a highly aestheticized environment. Its pathos is echoed in other Baroque works such as Bernini's sculptural *Beata Ludovica Albertoni* of 1671-1674, whose subject similarly clasps her breasts and appears in an ecstatic state of transcendence. *Stephanie*'s subject undoubtedly occupies a vastly disparate psychical realm; however, the dramatic force of both works is articulated via baroque-centric dynamism in a virtuosic handling of material and unconventional interpretation of subject. As a confrontation to the tropes of fashion and its contrived methods of presentation, *Stephanie* disrupts the boundaries among art, fashion, commodities and real people in a destabilizing interpretation of the artist's own irreverence toward icons and symbols of power. As Manacorda explains, every figure of authority, good or bad, is 'not only ridiculed and symbolically killed but grotesquely deprived of all possible authority, gravitas and ethical or symbolic standing.'[57] The iconoclastic nature of such works in their visions of arrested life and impertinence are countered by their pristine presentation and

attention to detail in clothing, fabric treatment and authenticity where individual likenesses are concerned.

Image 9: *We*, by Maurizio Cattelan, 2010, courtesy Maurizio Cattelan's Archive[58]

Cattelan's *We*, of 2010 (Image 9), is equally dependent on the sensory appeal of a virtuosic handling of material, this time in a well-made suit. A double self-portrait, Cattelan's sculptural work depicts the artist in bed with his own likeness, fully dressed, again in a pristine wool suit, and posed variously as if arranged in a coffin. As with other Cattelan works, *We* relies on shifts in scale and theatrical presentation to confront the viewer with a startling image of the artist's own double death bed. Immaculately turned-out, the artist's figures present not only Italian tailoring at its finest but play on the baroque-centric tension between life and death, as in *Stephanie*. The figures appear 'resigned' but are somehow 'aware' and dressed in their Sunday best. They appear artificial and overly posed in their stiff suits, in the custom of funerary rituals that fashion the deceased in ways contrary to what their former lives would have seen. With respect to its installation in an abandoned slaughterhouse on the Greek island Hydra, Diana Kamin, senior curatorial assistant at the Whitney Museum of American Art, explains that 'Amid meat hooks and former butcher's surfaces, it stressed a disturbing contrast between the violence and decay of death and the pristine funerary arrangement of Cattelan's effigies.'[59] The verisimilitude of the figures, however, suggests another life force at odds with the stuffy, embroidered lace bed sheets, suggestive of an austere, largely functional domestic environment. Faced with an impeccable image of the artist's own death, the viewer is reminded of Beecroft's Gucci bikini-clad models that are forbidden to live out the fantasy evoked by the brand's popular ad campaigns. The vitality associated with the glamour-myth of fashion (i.e., recall the recording artist/actor/fashion designer Lily Allen's lyric, 'If I buy those jeans, I can look like Kate Moss'), in this case, an Italian wool suit and the tradition of embroidery and handcraft upheld by Vezzoli, etc., is challenged in a baroque-centric interpretation of materials and form where tension is sustained in a tactile, sardonic use of Italian fashion. The work confirms Cattelan's acumen where appearances and spectacle are concerned and suggests his savvy in areas of fashion, beauty and style. For Cattelan, however, the apparent superficiality of these subjects is not precisely 'skin-deep;' rather, they are profound enough to touch upon society's innermost anxieties and fears.

The men's suit is a recurrent motif in Cattelan's oeuvre and has appeared earlier in an untitled work of 2000, this time rendered in felt and unpopulated (Image 10). As a formal precursor to *We*, the earlier suit conveys different ideological premises but discloses the artist's preoccupation with texture, finish, and proportion in clothing and fashion. Indeed, the 2000 work is an indication of the virtuosity and attention to detail that have come to characterize Cattelan's work in general. In this instance, a man's wool felt suit is hung against a gallery wall from a wooden hanger. The work draws from a suit worn by the German artist Joseph Beuys, which Cattelan scaled down and, in a related work of 2000, populated with a similarly reduced sculptural self-portrait titled *La Rivoluzione Siamo Noi* (*We Are the Revolution*), taken also from Beuys. As testament to Cattelan's preoccupation with failure and rejection, his use of Beuys' title marks a contrast between his self-image and the eminent artist's portrait, the younger artist self-consciously defeated in his attempt to imitate his predecessor.[60] In the untitled work, the diminutive suit is emptied of its wearer. Hung on the gallery wall and redolent of its creator, it evokes a certain baroque-centric pathos whereby a life force persists but is deflated. Its form transmits the tension and vitality of a living being and retains the 'shadow' of its wearer who has since faded in the shadow of the illustrious Beuys. Like Beecroft's stifled and controlled live bodies in the Louis Vuitton flagship, Cattelan's suit is immaculately rendered, as an Italian wool suit should be, but it is resigned, defeated, and dysfunctional in terms of the purpose it suggests it is capable of serving. Smaller than life size but larger than children's clothing, it is as useless as Vezzoli's fake perfume bottles and frustrates the viewer in its uninhabitability. Its highly wrought aesthetic suggests the luxuries, functionality and wearability of Loro Piana or Prada, but Cattelan has instead presented a dysfunctional would-be commodity. The viewer is again caught in a baroque-centric confrontation of expectations, witness to a highly charged personal symbol, lured by Italian tailoring and craft.

Image 10: Untitled, by Maurizio Cattelan, 2000, courtesy Maurizio Cattelan's Archive[61]

Cattelan's production of icons, his stated aesthetic objective,[62] is countered by the unconventional presentation of these icons, or their destruction, articulated in the spirit of destabilization conjured by Kepler's ellipse, whose centre is lost in the contemporary state of the artist's personal disillusionment. Cattelan's sculptural works, which occupy the same time and space as the viewer, and which in their visceral physicality exploit a baroque-centric iconoclasm, seek to disrupt the common order of everyday life. As Manacorda writes, the works succeed by virtue of a 'marketing of nonsense' that problematizes the various forces at once compatible and conflicting.[63] Their effect is both undermining and reinstating to relationships between consumer and consumed, art and audience, commodity and client. The accumulated repertoire of cultural icons and historical references of both popular history and of the artist's own internal history is deployed in the destabilization of canons related to political figures, religious leaders, and the contemporary fashion/art star system.[64] Cattelan's works suggest a mockery of these figures and the structures of power they inhabit and in a decentring baroque-centric gesture offer alternative readings. Sarduy points out that this mockery of conventions and of iconic figures in contemporary works is the 'best means for revealing the conventions, that deception.'[65]

For Cattelan, a baroque-centric vision is conjured in the alternative, left-of-centre, destabilized images of things and figures as they are not intended to be seen/consumed in their original conception. These 'monuments to failure and social defeat,'[66] like Beecroft's deconstructed fashion icons and Vezzoli's highly polished promotion of things that do not exist, exploit the physicality of their own materials to refer only to the spectacle of themselves. As Sarduy writes of the Baroque, its foundation is 'the carnival, a symbolic and syncretic spectacle in which the "abnormal" reigns, in which confusions and profanation, eccentricity and ambivalence are multiplied, and whose central action is a parodic coronation, that is, an apotheosis concealing mockery.' The carnivalesque aspect of the Baroque is transformed into baroque-centric constructions that confound the viewers' experience with familiar yet disconcerting accumulations of stimuli. This is not a matter of quotation of past forms but a 'staging' in graphic terms enunciated in a distorted vision.[67] This process uses the grammar of past forms to re-present and 'dethrone' icons to make way for a contemporary visual language aware of its past.[68] This is the 'empty centre' of the baroque-centric ellipse.[69]

7. Conclusion

In their polished and highly articulated, multidisciplinary works, contemporary Italian artists have become shrewd agents in the construction of an avant-garde artistic practice that trades on the historical environment, industrial achievements and cultural cachet of their national context. In a neo-liberal economy that trades on notions of artistic authenticity and cultural specificity as commodities, artists like Beecroft, Vezzoli and Cattelan are led to an iconoclastic approach, toying with these stereotypes, as the fallout of a society saturated with glossy images, elegant packaging and façades masquerading as genuine cultural material. Moving from the social tensions resulting from the rapid industrialization of the *miracolo italiano* in the immediate postwar period, Vincent Carducci observes that, 'These days, the art world seems to have gotten over its discomfort with commodity culture and even cuddled up to once-abhorrent concepts such as fashion.'[70] While embracing the codes and efficiencies of private enterprise, liberalized trade and relatively open markets related to fashion and popular icons, Beecroft, Vezzoli and Cattelan maintain an aesthetic production rooted in the past, a tendency which may reflect a certain nostalgia for a lost past, while looking toward the future.[71] Similarly, the Italian fashion scene in the interwar period displayed a tendency to discard the old while promoting innovation in new products, while emphasizing the intersections between art and industry. It demonstrated awareness of style and its capacity for both social and aesthetic

statements.[72] Contemporary Italian artists, similarly seduced by the trappings of style, exploit its physical manifestations and turn a sophisticated vision inside out. These contemporary baroque-centric visions, in decentring the certitudes offered by fashion, commodities and popular icons, propose an elliptical experience that disrupts the impulse to consume at the centre of our existence. The crisis of national identity is promulgated by Italian artists in art forms that seek to deconstruct a paradigmatic visual language, all the while depending on its enduring relevance as a means of identification within the decentred realms of visual currency.

Notes

[1] See Francesco Bonami's catalogue for Palazzo Grassi's 2009 exhibition, *Italics: Italian Art between Tradition and Revolution 1968-2008*, for contemporary Italian artists' situation in the historical, cultural milieu; in particular, Bonami's essay, 'An Ancient Contemporary Civilization,' in *Italics: Italian Art between Tradition and Revolution 1968-2008*, ed. Francesco Bonami (Venice: Palazzo Grassi, 2009), 25-31.
[2] Anthony D. Smith, 'The Resurgence of Nationalism? Myth and Memory in the Renewal of Nations,' in *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1999), 263.
[3] See Emilio Gentile, sub-chapter 'From National to Universal Country,' in *La Grande Italia: The Myth of the Nation in the 20th Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 257-260.
[4] Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, 'Baroque, New World Baroque, Neobaroque,' in *Baroque New Worlds*, eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.
[5] Ibid., 2.
[6] John Rupert Martin, *Baroque* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 11.
[7] Ibid., 267. Zamora and Kemp, 'Baroque Cosmology: Kepler,' in reference to Sarduy's essay 'Baroque Cosmology: Kepler,' in his Barroco (1974).
[8] Severo Sarduy, 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque,' in *Baroque New Worlds*, 270.
[9] Zamora and Kaup, *Baroque New Worlds*, 267.
[10] Severo Sarduy, 'Baroque Cosmology: Kepler,' in *Baroque New Worlds*, 293. Excerpt taken from Sarduy's *Barroco* of 1974, chapter 3.
[11] Ibid., 294, 296.
[12] Zamora and Kaup, *Baroque New Worlds*, 265.
[13] Sarduy, 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque,' 270.
[14] Ibid., 275.
[15] Ibid., 276.
[16] Ibid., 277.
[17] Ibid., 279.
[18] Ibid., 280-281.
[19] Ibid., 283.
[20] 'Baroque-centric' is distinct from Baroque and Neo-Baroque, as it addresses the possibility of Baroque influences in contemporary Italian art as a product of national association and cultural milieu. While it incorporates aspects of the Baroque related to seventeenth-century art and architecture, as well as the Latin American Neo-Baroque's interest in sensuality and spectacle, the term baroque-centric posits a more tightly defined conception of a twentieth-century, Italian baroque, identified in a particular understanding of materials, physicality and iconoclasm. For an application of baroque-centricity to postwar Italian art, see Laura Petican, *Arte Povera and the Baroque: Building an International Identity* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2011).

[21] See Thomas Munro, 'Style in the Arts: A Method of Stylistic Analysis,' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5, no. 2 (1946): 129. Munro defines style as, 'a combination of traits or characteristics which tend to recur together in different works of art, or have done so in the art of some particular place and period.'
[22] Paul Ginsborg, 'Family, Culture and Politics in Contemporary Italy,' *in Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy*, eds. Zygmunt G. Baranski and Robert Lumley (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1990), 42.
[23] Ibid., 43.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Stephen Gundle, 'Fame, Fashion, and Style: The Italian Star System,' in *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, eds. David Forgas and Robert Lumley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 322.
[26] Zamora and Kaup, *Baroque New Worlds*, 267. Zamora and Kaup refer to the European and early Latin American colonial Baroque.
[27] See http://www.luxirare.com.
[28] *VB52*, Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy, 2003.
[29] On *VB48*, 2001, Beecroft states, '[…] the image I wanted to reproduce was inspired by the 1600s, by the Baroque and by Caravaggio's painting.' See Marcella Beccaria, 'Conversation Piece,' in *Vanessa Beecroft: Performances 1993-2003*, ed. Marcella Beccaria (Skira Editore, Milan, 2003), 16.
[30] Sarduy, 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque,' 276.
[31] *VB35*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1998.
[32] Vincent Carducci, 'Fabula: Consumer Media and Contemporary Art,' *New Art Examiner* 29, No. 1 (Sept/Oct 2001): 89.
[33] Vanessa Beecroft in Munro Galloway, 'I Prefer Nudity,' *Art Press,* no. 265 (Fall 2001): 27.
[34] Ibid.
[35] *VB56* performance, Louis Vuitton, Petit Palais, Paris, 2005.
[36] Daryl Chin and Vanessa Beecroft, 'Models of Fashion,' *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 20, no. 3 (September 1998): 25.
[37] Sarduy on the Baroque. See 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque,' 287.
[38] Ibid.
[39] From September 25, 2010 to January 9, 2011, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.
[40] Beecroft in Skye Sherwin, 'Art Stopping,' *Wallpaper**, March 2010, 152.
[41] Dave Hickey, 'Vanessa Beecroft's Painted Ladies,' in *VB 08-36: Vanessa Beecroft Performances*, eds. Dave Hickey and Vanessa Beecroft (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 8.
[42] Zamora and Kaup write, 'In fact, Baroque artifacts are almost always mixed media, *ars combinatoria* in their aesthetic and formal continuities, and often in their materials as well.' *Baroque New Worlds*, 22.
[43] *VB68*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany, 2005.
[44] Ibid., 266-267.
[45] Sarduy, 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque,' 284.
[46] Ibid., 286.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Francesco Vezzoli, *Enjoy the New Fragrance (Georgia O'Keeffe for Greed)*, 2009. Inkjet on brocade, wool, cotton and metallic embroidery, custom jewellery. 180cm × 130cm × 5cm. Photo, Matteo Piazza. Courtesy, Matteo Piazza and Francesco Vezzoli.

[49] Francesco Vezzoli, *Greed, The Perfume That Doesn't Exist*, 2009. Crystal, paper, ribbon. 40cm × 27cm × 13cm. Photo, Matteo Piazza. Courtesy, Matteo Piazza and Francesco Vezzoli.
[50] Zamora and Kaup, *Baroque New Worlds*, 23.
[51] Francesco Manacorda quoted in Francesco Bonami, ed., *Maurizio Cattelan* (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2006), 9.
[52] Ibid., 13.
[53] Ibid.
[54]'Against the Odds: The Strange Case of Maurizio Cattelan,' *The Economist*, 2 October 2009, viewed 22 July 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/14576280.
[55] William S. Smith, 'Catalogue [1989-2011],' in Nancy Spector, *All* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2011), 232.
[56] Maurizio Cattelan, *Stephanie*, 2003. Wax, pigment, synthetic hair and metal. 110cm × 65cm × 42cm. Photo, Achim Hatzius. Courtesy, Maurizio Cattelan's Archive.
[57] Francesco Manacorda in Francesco Bonami, ed., *Maurizio Cattelan* (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2006), 8.
[58] Maurizio Cattelan, *We*, 2010. Polyester resin, polyurethane rubber, paint, human hair, fabric and wood. 68cm × 148cm × 79cm. Installation view: Maurizio Cattelan, Slaughterhouse, Deste Foundation Projecte Space, Hydra, Greece, June 16-September, 2010. Photo, Pier Paolo Ferrari. Courtesy, Maurizio Cattelan's Archive.
[59] Diana Kamin, 'Catalogue [1989-2011],' in Nancy Spector, *All* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2011), 243.
[60] Katherine Brinson, 'Catalogue [1989-2011],' in Nancy Spector, *All* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2011), 223.
[61] Maurizio Cattelan, untitled, 2000. Felt suit and wooden hanger. 110cm × 48cm × 6cm. Photo, Zeno Zotti. Courtesy, Maurizio Cattelan's Archive.
[62] Francesco Manacorda in Francesco Bonami, ed., *Maurizio Cattelan* (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2006), 11.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 8.
[65] Sarduy, 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque,' 283.
[66] Francesco Manacorda in Francesco Bonami, *Maurizio Cattelan*, 12.
[67] Sarduy, 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque,' 287.
[68] Ibid., 287.
[69] Zamora and Kaup, *Baroque New Worlds*, 268.
[70] Carducci, 'Fabula,' 89. See Germano Celant's catalogue, *Fondazione Prada-Ca' Corner della Regina* (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2011), for an example of these partnerships.
[71] Michael Boodro, 'Art and Fashion,' in *The Fashion Reader, Second Edition*, eds. Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun (Oxford: Berg), 370.
[72] Emily Braun, 'Futurist Fashion. Three Manifestoes,' *Art Journal* 54, no. 1, Clothing as Subject (Spring 1995): 34.

Bibliography

'Against the Odds: The Strange Case of Maurizio Cattelan.' *The Economist*, 2 October 2009. Viewed 22 July 2012. http://www.economist.com/node/14576280.

Beccaria, Marcella, ed. *Vanessa Beecroft: Performances 1993-2003*. Milan: Skira Editore, 2003.

Bonami, Francesco, ed. *Italics: Italian Art between Tradition and Revolution 1968-2008*. Venice: Palazzo Grassi, 2009.

———. ed. *Maurizio Cattelan*. Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2006.

Boodro, Michael. 'Art and Fashion.' In *The Fashion Reader, Second Edition*, edited by Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, 369-373. Oxford: Berg, 2011.

Braun, Emily. 'Futurist Fashion. Three Manifestoes.' *Art Journal* 54, no. 1, Clothing as Subject (Spring 1995): 34-41.

Briganti, Giuliano. 'Baroque Art.' In *Encyclopedia of World Art*. Vol. 2, 255-381. London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., 1960.

Brinson, Katherine. 'Catalogue [1989-2011].' In Nancy Spector, *All*, 181-243. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2011.

Carducci, Vincent. 'Fabula: Consumer Media and Contemporary Art.' *New Art Examiner* 29, no. 1 (September/October, 2001): 89.

Celant, Germano, ed. *Fondazione Prada-Ca' Corner della Regina*. Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2011.

Chin, Daryl and Vanessa Beecroft, 'Models of Fashion.' *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 20, no. 3 (September 1998): 22-25.

Fleming, William. 'The Element of Motion in Baroque Art and Music.' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5, no. 2 (1946): 121-128.

Galloway, Munro. 'I Prefer Nudity.' *Art Press,* no. 265 (Fall 2001): 24-28.

Gentile, Emilio. *La Grande Italia: The Myth of the Nation in the 20th Century*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.

Ginsborg, Paul. 'Family, Culture and Politics in Contemporary Italy.' In *Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy*, edited by Zygmunt G. Baranski and Robert Lumley, 21-49. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1990.

Gundle, Stephen. 'Fame, Fashion, and Style: The Italian Star System.' In *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, edited by David Forgas and Robert Lumley, 309-326. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Hickey, Dave. 'Vanessa Beecroft's Painted Ladies.' In *VB 08-36: Vanessa Beecroft Performances*, co-authored by Dave Hickey and Vanessa Beecroft, 5-8. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000.

Kamin, Diana. 'Catalogue [1989-2011].' In Nancy Spector, *All*, 181-243. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2011.

Martin, John Rupert. *Baroque*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

Munro, Thomas. 'Style in the Arts: A Method of Stylistic Analysis.' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5, no. 2 (1946): 128-158.

Petican, Laura. *Arte Povera and the Baroque: Building an International Identity*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2011.

Sarduy, Severo. 'Baroque Cosmology: Kepler.' In *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, 292-315. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

———. 'The Baroque and the Neobaroque.' In *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, 270-91. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

Sherwin, Skye. 'Art Stopping.' *Wallpaper**, March 2010, 152.

Smith, Anthony D. 'The Resurgence of Nationalism? Myth and Memory in the Renewal of Nations.' In *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 253-281. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1999.

Smith, William S. 'Catalogue [1989-2011].' In Nancy Spector, *All*, 181-243. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2011.

Wölfflin, Heinrich. *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*. Translated by M. D. Hottinger, 6th Edition. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1950.

———. *Renaissance and Baroque*. Translated by Kathrin Simon. New York: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Monika Kaup, eds. *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

Laura Petican, PhD, earned her doctorate in Art History from Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany. She also holds an MA in Art History from the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada, where she is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Her research focuses on postwar and contemporary Italian art and the intersections of art and fashion.

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. 45-63 (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

Fashion and Its Otherness: The Representation of Peru in Mario Testino's High Fashion Photography

Julie Valqui Vidal

Abstract

This article deals with the representation of Peruvian identities and cultural myths in Mario Testino's high fashion photography as exhibited in British *Vogue*, March 2008. The power relations within these images are analysed and discussed from a fashion studies and postcolonial perspective. The main argument is that fashion as a general entity has a close connection to North-Western society's imperialistic display of power and the establishment of an opposition between the active fashion and its fixed foreign, 'primitive' otherness (Peru). This is elaborated upon in connection to the postcolonial theories of Edward Said and Richard Dyer. The article criticises how this division often has been considered as a natural truth within the field of Fashion Studies, as exemplified in the writings of the philosopher-sociologist Gilles Lipovetsky. Additionally, the contemporary images by Mario Testino are seen in the historical and socio-cultural context of similar photographic representations by Irving Penn and Toni Frissell of Peru in the 1950s, published, respectively, in the December 1949 issue of American *Vogue* and the January 1952 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. The images are explored in relation to the visual cultivation of the constructed dichotomy between fashion and its otherness as well as to the potentially challenging strategies of subverting it. Furthermore, reflections on exoticism in fashion and the characteristics of the travelling narrative within fashion photography are presented.

Key Words

Fashion photography, postcolonial theory, Peru, *Vogue*, Mario Testino, Irving Penn, Toni Frissell.

*****

1. Introduction

The focus of this article is an analysis of Mario Testino's editorial fashion spread 'Trail Blazers,' published in British *Vogue* March 2008.[1] Inspired by his country of birth, Testino visually tells the story of two fashionable backpackers, travelling around the ancient Inca city of Cuzco in the landscape of the Peruvian Andes. A Peruvian himself, Testino was born in the country's capital Lima, as a child of Italian and Irish immigrants. His professional training and career, however, have primarily been shaped within a North-Western fashion context.[2] Testino has collaborated with the most dominant fashion magazines and brands in the production of glamorous, surface-perfected portraits of royals, celebrities and supermodels from Princess Diana and Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge, to Kristen Stewart and Kate Moss. A remarkable part of Testino's production centres upon the representation of the highly heterogeneous culture of South America. Besides his interest in Peru, which is the subject of this article, he has for example also recently devoted a book project entitled *Mario de Janeiro Testino*, to the fashionable people of Rio de Janeiro and to the tropical Brazilian beach life.

Testino's images of Peru are of central importance as they reflect a wide perspective on the complexities surrounding the concept of fashion in relation to the South American region.[3] Overall, 'Trail Blazers' exemplifies the historically superior role of European high fashion that

conventionally has been worn by the powerful upper class visitors and settlers in South America. Furthermore, it illustrates the North-Western fixation with South American indigenous cultures classed as 'less developed.' The main purpose of this article is to analyse how Peruvian identity and cultural myths are represented and constructed in high fashion photography. This will be discussed in relation to the traditional theoretical conceptualisation of fashion and its 'primitive' otherness, formulated by several fashion scholars as part of their ontological investigations of fashion and its origin in Western modernity.[4] South American fashion has primarily been approached by anthropologists and textile researchers.[5] Particularly absent are thorough visual cultural investigations of the representations of South America in relation to the orchestration of bodily performances and the powerful imperial gaze within fashion photography.[6]

In order to understand the chosen visual material as expressions of fashion, I will take my theoretical point of departure from a critical reading of the conventional conceptualisation of fashion, elaborated by early scholars and later influential researchers. The focus here will be centred on the prevalent essentialist understanding of fashion as a facet of North-Western modernity that has reductively naturalised the dichotomy between 'modern' and 'primitive.'[7] My discussions will be based on the postcolonial works of the literary theorist Edward Said and the film scholar Richard Dyer, concerning North-Western representations of the other, the imperialist gaze, and the hegemony of white culture.

The special interest for the exotic in Western fashion was nourished in the middle of the twentieth century, when fashion photographers began to leave their studios and travel around the world, depicting their models as fashionable conquerors of exotic spaces. In order to contextualise Testino's images within fashion photography history, I will demonstrate how his representations of Peru relate to Irving Penn's and Toni Frissell's earlier high fashion images of Cuzco, published in the December 1949 issue of American *Vogue* and the January 1952 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*.[8]

As with the case study of 'Trail Blazers,' the focus will be on the power relations expressed in this specific type of tourist narrative that revolves around the representation of the 'primitive' and fashion's infinite search for the new and authentic. The analysis will not only interrogate how fashion can work as a powerful device for exclusion but also point towards its potential for subversion and confrontation.

2. A Postcolonial Perspective on Fashion

What is fashion? This is a question that has been investigated and discussed for more than a century within academia and it has often been complemented by an additional query: What is not fashion? In other words, despite the different explanations fostered by the various disciplines investigating the fashion phenomenon, there has generally been a shared consensus in defining fashion by using a binary logic of explanation. The Norwegian-American socio-economist Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, from 1899, is an early and highly influential example of this theoretical tendency. He connected fashion to the 'conspicuous consumption' of the Western urban, wealthy population and the mobility and social competition within the upper classes. In his text, there is a rational evolutionary view that superficially looks at dress from historical (the antiquity of Greece and Rome) and cross-cultural (Japan and China) perspectives. Veblen's examples of dress are positively presented as stabile, homogeneous, local, beautiful, less wasteful and essentially different from fashion in modern Western society, whose mechanism of change he pessimistically seeks to explain. Another significant example of

Image 1: Fashion Model Following Women down a Street in Peru, courtesy of Toni Frissell Collection, Library of Congress

this dichotomist argumentation strategy can be seen in the writings of the German sociologist Georg Simmel. His text 'Fashion,' published in English in 1904, was contemporary with the writings of Veblen and shares the focus on class struggle, but additionally stresses the importance of individual differentiation. The early writings of Simmel and Veblen can be seen together as expressions of their time and a modern imperial/colonial order, characterised by historical and racial scientific categorisations of the World. Like Veblen, Simmel's primary focus is to investigate the role of fashion in the modern civilised society.[9]

Simmel presumes that fashion can occur in different societies, or as in his own progression-oriented theoretical terminology, within all races.

> Among primitive peoples we often find that closely connected groups living under exactly similar conditions develop sharply differentiated fashions, by means of which each group establishes uniformity within, as well as difference without, the prescribed set.[10]

However, Simmel points out that there is no fashion if two factors - union and isolation in social life - do not co-exist. These factors, writes Simmel, are not completely absent in what

he referred to as 'primitive' societies but often exist in a highly asymmetrical proportion. Simmel stresses that the reason for fashion's almost non-existence within primitive groupings is that social forces play a much stronger role to integrate the individual into the group than the individual's impulse to separate from the group. For Simmel, there is a more balanced relation between these two opposite components (unity versus differentiation) in the class societies of the modern era. According to Simmel, this balance is most apparent among the fashion dictating upper classes, where the strong dynamic between the social force and the individual impulse constantly activates the shifts of fashion. In this way Simmel makes a sharp and binary distinction between the primitive forms of fashion that in his text are mentioned frequently, but remain quite indistinct (who, where and when?), and the fashion of his own 'highly civilised' society. In the first case, fashion can exist, but is almost static and the changes of dress are rare and the lust for novelty is extensively missing.

> The savage is afraid of strange appearances; the difficulties and dangers that beset his career cause him to scent danger in anything new which he does not understand…. Civilisation, however, transforms this affection into its very opposite. Whatever…departs from the customary norm, exercises a peculiar charm upon the man of culture.[11]

3. Imperialism within *The Empire of Fashion*

The established imperial dichotomy between the so-called modern and primitive still haunts the field of fashion studies today, as found for example in the writings of the contemporary French fashion philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky in his book *The Empire of Fashion*. Lipovetsky is one of the strongest critics of the class theories that the above mentioned theoretical predecessors used as an explanatory basis for modern fashion. Yet, Lipovetsky implicitly continues their Eurocentric conceptualisation of the phenomenon by defining fashion in relation to its otherness. This is already made clear in the beginning of his book when he writes:

> Fashion does not belong to all ages or to all civilizations: it has an identifiable starting point in history. Instead of seeing fashion as a phenomenon consubstantial with human life and society, I view it as an exceptional process inseparable from the origin and development of the modern West. For tens of thousands of years, people lived together without a cult of fantasy and novelty, without the instability and ephemeral temporality of fashion.[12]

The main purpose of Lipovetsky's work is to characterise the logic of fashion, which he connects to the modern Western formation of an individual subject who desires novelty, freedom, originality, a unique personality, continuous changes and disruptions from tradition, variations in taste, creativity, transformations, frivolity, etc. Connected to this is the assumption (as an echo of Simmel) that modern individual subjects have managed to emancipate themselves from the absolute dominance of collective norms and values.[13] Lipovetsky firmly tries to detach his writings from the evolutionary thinking of Simmel and breaks with the socio-psychological understanding of fashion as an inherent potential in all human beings. Yet he gets caught in a paradox: eager to elaborate the connection between fashion and modernity, he seems to be unconcerned about being trapped himself by the reductive ideology of modernity, naturalising the apparent contradiction between fashion (Western liberal society) and tradition (past and foreign primitive civilisations).

Lipovetsky builds his argument primarily by rejecting the possibility of fashion existing among savages or primitive societies; and, as in the case of Simmel, these 'primitives' remain anonymous. In order to refute his predecessors' ideas about fashion being particularly activated by 'state' or 'class' societies, he then continues to look at what he considers to be more civilised human formations. These societies are also in a hasty listing, categorised as non-fashion without any reflections on the great differences among them.

> In ancient Egypt, the same type of tunic-dress…was maintained for nearly fifteen centuries with almost total consistency; in Greece, the peplos…prevailed from the origins of Greek society to the middle of the sixth century B.C.; in Rome, the male garb of toga and tunic persisted with slight variations from the earliest period to the end of the empire. The same stability was characteristic of China, India, and other traditional Asian civilizations….The Japanese kimono remained unchanged for centuries, while in China women's dress underwent no real transformation between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.[14]

Hence, in two pages he melts together all non-Western or pre-modern societies that do not have fashion into a homogeneous otherness, collectively imposed with adjectives, such as conservative, immobile, non-individual, collective, past-oriented, mythical and non-innovative. An instant reaction to this quote could be to question whether it is of relevance for the study area of this article, as South America is not mentioned at all. Yet, I find this absence particularly revealing in the sense that it indirectly points out that the different pre-Hispanic societies, within the American continent, are so far from fashion that they are not noteworthy enough to be included in the list of non-fashion examples.

Returning to Lipovetsky's treatment of fashion's otherness, he furthermore stresses that when transformations in dress do occur in non-Western and pre-modern societies, they are often caused by the interference of dominant outside forces. Hence, he characterises these societies as a passive opposite to the active West that has given rise to *The Empire of Fashion*. More precisely, the West's extreme resistance to foreign intrusions has 'allowed its civilization to give itself over to the pleasures of sophisticated forms and ephemeral follies.'[15] Later in the text, he mentions how international trade, like the (active) European import of goods, such as silk and feathers from Asia, Africa, etc., also stimulated the expansion of fashion. Unfortunately, he quickly leaves this part of fashion completely unelaborated and disregards any further discussion of the globally significant interaction among fashion, modernity, imperialism and exoticism.

4. Fashion and Postcolonial Theory

In order to understand how the discourse of fashion is tied to the colonial and imperial manifestations of Western modernity, it is relevant to extend the frame of inquiry and incorporate a postcolonial optic on the fashion phenomenon. Writing in the late 1970's, the postcolonial theorist and literature scholar Edward Said introduced the concept of Orientalism to critically explain how the Western world has represented Asiatic and Arab cultures as exotic and inferior and has tried to control them as the necessary opposition to Western superiority. Said is primarily interested in deconstructing Western knowledge of the Orient and looking at how this actually serves the power interests of the Western world in reproducing its own dominant political, scientific, ethical and cultural identities. Of central importance is the way in which the Orient has come to be essentially reduced to a static (versus dynamic), passive (versus active), stabile (versus mobile), chaotic (versus ordered) fantasy, lacking the forward

moving profile of modernity. Thought provokingly, it is exactly this Western idea of a modern progression that most fashion scholars have highlighted as a crucial aspect of fashion. Thus, fashion can be regarded as intrinsically interwoven into the discourse of imperialism.

If foreign imaginaries, as Said argues, are constructed as stereotypical opposites meant to positively highlight the Western world's own image, it is relevant to look at how this self-identity overall has been fashioned. Of interest here is the work of the film scholar Richard Dyer and his precise understanding of how Western culture has complexly represented itself through the superior image of the white body as being, at one and the same time, 'everything' and 'nothing.' According to Dyer, this 'body imaginary' has been essentialised to exist beyond the scheme of categorisation, which contrarily has classified non-Western peoples as belonging to different races. Hence, white Western culture is understood as *the* natural normative human model, with a neutral position and understanding of the World. As Dyer writes, 'white people set the standards of humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail.'[16] Like Said, Dyer does not particularly deal with the field of fashion, but I find a clear correspondence between the discourse of fashion (as presented by Lipovetsky and others) and the way in which the white Western culture has elevated itself to have the powerful privilege of being seen as racially unmarked individuals that are 'endlessly, diverse, complex and changing' with an 'infinite variety' and multiple options of images.[17] What fashion has shown throughout history is that white identity is not constructed as a fixed entity. Its norms have changed visually and materially; however, this practice has seemed to serve the cultural aim of continuously underlining Western people as the standard. Of central importance here is the Western conceptualisation of the white Christian subject as being both body and mind, while peoples of other cultures are simply seen as corporal existences marked by their races.[18] Interestingly, fashion traditionally has been disregarded within academia for being superficial and irrational because it is so closely connected to the body.[19] One could then suppose that this means that people defined as the racial other (as presumed mere bodies) are also allowed to orchestrate fashion. Paradoxically, the logic of fashion, namely the desire for the new, as presented by many fashion scholars, is still determined by the existence of a modern Western *mind* or the spirit of modernity.

5. Irving Penn

In its December 1949 issue, American *Vogue* published a series of colour photos under the heading 'Christmas at Cuzco.'[20] The feature depicted the citizens and rural Christmas-market visitors of the city in the Andes, which, at that time, was rather isolated from the rest of the world. These images were the unexpected, additional result of the magazine's house-photographer Irving Penn's sponsored travel to Peru one year earlier when he originally was hired to shoot a black-white fashion-spread, 'Flying down to Lima,' published in American *Vogue* in February of 1949.[21] When contrasted with the New Look-styled model Jean Patchett, who is positioned as the jet-set star of the images, the Cuzco people, who were dressed in woven red-toned ponchos, coloured layered skirts and white hats, must have seemed shockingly unfamiliar to the *Vogue* readers.

The astonishment that these images must have evoked in the context of *Vogue* has later been echoed in the multitude of opinions and disagreements within the interpreting accounts of Penn's work.[22] What has been the overall question is whether these images are fashion or not. The reason for this is undoubtedly connected to the way in which Penn ambiguously seems to fuse two major genres that came to form the discourse of photography since its invention in the nineteenth century: scientific photography (such as degrading anthropological studies of other cultures) and portraiture (elevating manifestations of the modern self). The way in which the viewer is meant to systematically go through the arranged grid of Penn's images, mimes the

gaze of the categorising social scientist when documenting and producing knowledge about the racial and ethnic characteristics of 'exotic' foreign cultures. Here the 'truth' about who and what Peruvian Andean people are and how they act is stated. In this respect, the viewer gets a comprehensive helping hand when reading each picture's one-lined subtitle, such as: 'Mother and child, shoes, a European influence' or 'beggar girl holding a precious orange.' That the 'abnormal' Peruvians in the images differ from the white North-Western *Vogue* standard is expressed in Penn's own words: 'From the very first glimpse the look of the inhabitants enchanted me – small, tight little ¾-scale people, wandering aimlessly and slowly in the streets of the town.'[23] It is from this perspective that some scholars have distinguished the images as ethnographic studies, differentiating them from the genre of fashion photography.[24]

According to Penn, the aim behind this work was to preserve 'their already dissolving cultures' with the aid of his camera lens.[25] Yet, this preservation strategy was not particularly interested in the daily life or an authentic context of the Peruvian Andean culture.[26] The images obviously have been staged and point back to the genre of portraiture, with the subjects' frontal postures and classical gestures in the centre of the image (proudly lifted chin, one foot in front of the other, hand on breast, hand on hip, etc.). The viewer's self-assuring gaze is disturbed by the depicted individuals' confrontational glances, as if they refuse to be seen as mere objects. They stand on either a yellow carpet or on a central-perspective lined flagged floor that points towards a studio curtain with a romantic trompe l'oeil motif. Thus, these Peruvians were depicted within a studio frame, just like many of the well-known art and fashion personalities that Penn photographed for *Vogue*. This staged composition of images has been observed by several scholars, who see the self-aware artificiality as a red thread in much of Penn's work and argue that the displacement of the Peruvians into the studio and further into *Vogue* stresses how they are to be seen as beauty or fashion images.[27] For example, the art curator Jan-Erik Lundström, in his reflections upon Penn's *Vogue* published images of 'exotic' peoples from around the World, highlighted that:

> what is related and represented in these rooms is primarily adornment, clothing, décor and taste. They are fashion pictures. They are pictures of beauty, seduction and desire. In the issue of *Vogue* in which the pictures from Dahomey were first published it says: 'Differences in their clothes, maquillage, jewellery, scarifications, hair, dressing reflect the different values and patterns of life of their peoples but under this variety, we find a common aesthetic orientation: We are in the world of art'. These photographs are fascinating in their anti-naturalism. They have nothing to do with the 'I was here' statement. It is the very absence of natural surroundings that permits concentration and makes Penn's focus on people and objects so scorchingly sharp.[28]

Implicit in this statement lies the presumption that it is due to the organisation of the 'exotic' peoples, by the capacity of an active and self-aware modern North-Western mind (i.e., the fashion photographer Irving Penn) that they are enabled to stand out of their pre-modern existence and be struck by the authoritative 'magic fashion dust' of the North American magazine *Vogue* and for a moment become fashion.

The image's double identity as imperial scientific photography and portraiture, within the framework of the fashion magazine, interestingly mirrors Simmel's conceptualisation of fashion as consisting of two contrasting socio-psychological tendencies: the desire to simultaneously differentiate oneself as an individual and to be part of a group.[29] More precisely, the representation of the Peruvian peasants serves to fulfil the desire of a North-Western *Vogue*

reader. She can obtain a secure self-assurance in two different ways: on the one hand, by distinguishing herself as the white modern standard from their presumably abnormal, racial and ethnic pre-modern features and on the other, by identifying with them as subjects in order to place her own identity within a larger universal context of belonging to the rest of humankind. Furthermore, the double-folded perspective on fashion represented in these images operates within the same imperialistic fashion discourse as Simmel's previously discussed writings. He claimed that fashion also can be seen in primitive societies, but is deemed to be different and less advanced than the fully active fashion of modern society.[30]

6. Toni Frissell

Irving Penn's Cuzco pictures illustrate how the genre of fashion photography in its early years was strongly connected to the tradition of portraiture. This tendency is also exemplified in other fashion photographers' interests with primitivism, such as Man Ray's famous surrealistic depiction of a woman with an African mask, published in the May 1926 issue of French *Vogue*. Here, the indoor studio functioned as a stable background for the perfectly staged compositions, lighting, scenery and theatrically arranged bodily postures. While this type of fashion representation is still of great currency in today's fashion photography, in the 1930s and 1940s it was complemented by what has been defined as snapshot realism.[31] This was a more informal, haphazard and movement-focused outdoor style, within which Penn's aforementioned American *Vogue* spread 'Flying Down To Lima' and Testino's later 'Trail Blazers' both work. One of the major exponents of snapshot realism was the photographer Toni Frissell, who followed in the footsteps of Penn and depicted fashion images from her journey to Cuzco, Peru, published in the January 1952 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*.[32] Alongside *Vogue*, this magazine was the financial sponsor that enabled the journeys as well as the introduction of adventure, spontaneity and tempo into fashion photography. The snapshot realistic style was not, as one might assume, an immediate reaction to new technological inventions. The Leica camera and 35-mm rapid film, suitable for shooting outdoors, were already widely available in the 1920s. It was rather an aesthetic response to the images produced by the newly born magazine *Life*'s barrier-breaking and action-packed photo-journalism.[33]

Toni Frissell's images are the other primary inspirational heritage to which Testino's 'Trail Blazers' pays homage, with the themes of travel, narration, composition and reflection of power-hierarchies in relation to fashion.[34] The photo 'Fashion Model Following Women down a Street in Peru' (Image 1) and the photo 'Fashion Model with Llamas' (Image 2) depict a sporty yet elegant North-Western-looking, female adventuress, observing the local surroundings and citizens of Cuzco.

The active lifestyle represented by Frissell's female traveller can also be seen in her other fashion spreads where the models take on the roles of fashionable skiers, boat paddlers, swimmers, equestrians and train passengers. The way in which they are always presented as on the move and on their own, unaccompanied by any male protector, has been interpreted as a sign of female emancipation. Or in other words, as a crucial break with the patriarchal power-dichotomy between the active male, ruling the public sphere, and the passive female, belonging to the private sphere. For example the journalists Noberto Angeletti and Alberto Oliva write: 'This style also altered the image of women in general, who ceased to be static monuments enclosed in decorated interiors and became active and healthy participants in sports activities.'[35]

Taking a glance at Frissell's Cuzco images that represent the extremely feminine New Look ideals (wide skirts, tiny waistline and organic soft lines), however, reminds us that this female explorer attitude was acceptable only because the models, due to their hyper-feminine performance, did not break completely with the patriarchal norms of North-Western society.

The model with the llamas connotes fragility, with her self-surrounding arms and tiptoe pointing posture.

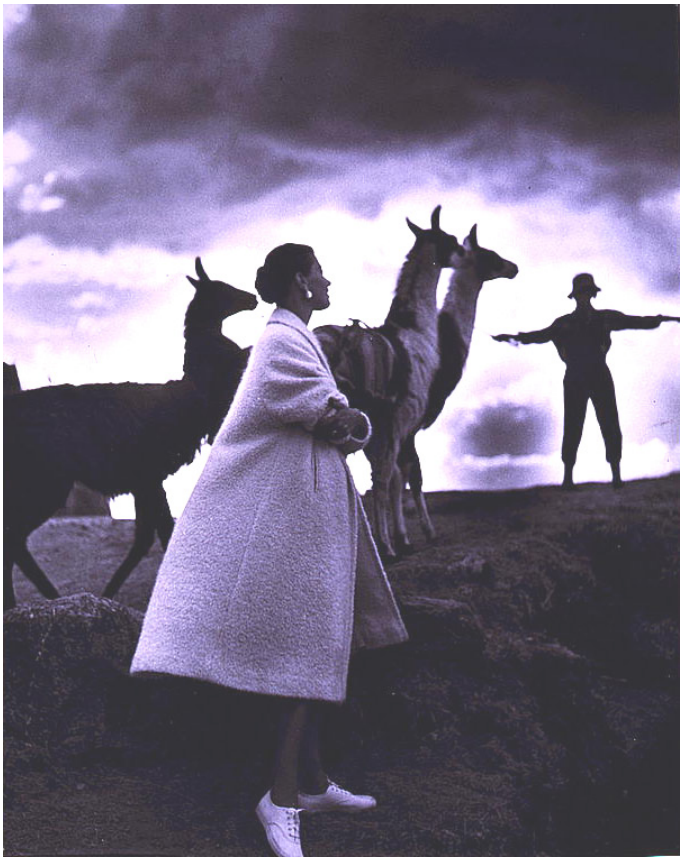


Image 2: Fashion Model with Llamas, Cuzco, Peru, courtesy of Toni Frissell Collection, Library of Congress

Furthermore, it is worth taking a closer look at what is actually included in Angeletti and Oliva's concept of so-called 'women in general.' This statement is especially noteworthy when considering my elaboration of Dyer's observation that white Western culture often positions itself as the normative human beings, leading civilisation and the continuous evolution of fashion.[36] This will be further discussed in the following examination of Testino's 'Trail Blazers' that will be analysed in light of Penn's and Frissell's earlier Cuzco images.

7. 'Trail Blazers'

In 'Trail Blazers,' shown in British *Vogue* in March 2008, Mario Testino photographically depicts the fashionable travel narration of two backpackers, the supermodels Daria Werbowy and Lily Donaldson. The photographs present an exploration of one of South America's most famous tourist sites: the ancient Incan city of Cuzco, situated in the picturesque Andes mountains of Peru. The introductory text painterly portrays the narration to *Vogue*'s readers: 'In the foothills of the Andes, two intrepid travellers become birds of paradise in this

season's swirling skirts, rainbow colours, exotic frills and feathers.'[37] From the perspective of Testino, one can see these eighteen visually spectacular pages as a proud celebration of the richness of Peruvian culture and, indirectly, as a support to tourism in Peru. This is highlighted by the fact that the same issue of British *Vogue* has a travel guide to the country, informing the reader of Testino's favourite place to stay.[38] However, it is important to consider how the viewer is invited to look at Peruvian national identity from the detached, yet all-powerful Western gaze within the normative context of a European fashion magazine. The established difference between the international models' high-end designer clothes and the representation of the indigenous people in folk costumes is of central importance.[39] Here the latter echoes the economic situation of local Peruvians dressing up in folk-costumes in order to get tipped by travellers taking photographs.[40] More generally, the travel scenario reproduced by Testino points back to the practice of tourist photography that can be regarded as a commercial extension of the aforementioned early anthropological photography and the superior, colonial desire for the exotic. What has happened in this process is that 'some of the ideological constructs of colonial domination have become so naturalised that we hardly notice them.'[41]

One of the most spectacular scenes in 'Trail Blazers' is the image on the double-page spread that portrays a herd of llamas and shepherdesses, set in a brown-green deserted barren landscape in the Andes.[42] In the background, a little blue tent and a heap of backpacker equipment can be seen as signs of a tourist exploration of uncivilized, untouched nature. In this manner, the image satirically replays an already well-known theme in the history of fashion photography of which Toni Frissell's Cuzco images were early examples: imperialism and the contrast between culture and nature. Frissell's model, as the observing Western outsider, kept a conspicuous physical distance from the animals and local people, symbolised by her vastly different aesthetic preferences in dress. In contrast, in Testino's images, the model Daria Werbowy takes on a chameleon identity to extremes, by discarding the backpacker persona and adopting the role of a llama-leading shepherdess. As the main character in the image, Werbowy, however, differentiates herself as the leader in the front (literally carrying a lamp) supported by the imperative text: 'Mountain high: stand out from the herd in bold embroidery, a riot of tulle and dramatic chevron tights.'[43] The following pricelist of what designer clothes *she* is wearing (Matthew Williamson, Nicole Farhi, etc.) highlights the power relations within the image. The conspicuously extravagant and colourful dress on her tall, slim model body signals individuality, authoritativeness and civilized international fashion. The constructed staging of the fashion photography is undisguised. She is clearly not a real Peruvian shepherdess but a professional model, set in a mythical environment that gives the impression of a particular 'Peruvian-ness.' She is Western looking, but without any specific national identity. Her ironic and irrational appearance (high heels and tulle skirt for taking care of llamas) connotes the superfluous excesses of Western society.

In contrast, the rest of the women in the picture blend into the natural surroundings and crowd of llamas as Peruvian national symbols. This is aesthetically stressed by the 'racial implications' of photographic lighting.[44] The light is adjusted to let the model's facial features stand out, defining her as a distinctive subject, while the Peruvian women's darker tinted faces are left to the shadow and thus neglected as less important. Hence, the people of Cuzco are here depicted in opposition to the way in which Penn highlighted them as exposed subjects. Their Peruvian bodies are, from a North-Western magazine perspective, less important, unfashionable, short, round and seemingly non-posing. They all wear knitted cardigans in earth colours, black pleated skirts, hats and traditional Peruvian woven colourful baby-bundles on their backs. Where the top model in the image stands for the unworried leisure class (the tent indicates that she is just a visitor) these women dissimilarly seem to be stuck within their laborious working sphere. The notion that they are fixed within the rigid imaginary idea of

Cuzco is further stressed by the fact that they are all carrying their babies. Thus, in conjunction with the Cuzco women in Penn's and Frissell's earlier images, they portray collectiveness (motherhood, family) as the otherness to the models' independence (travel, single), reminding us that 'the women in general,' whom Frissell's fashion photography was declared to emancipate, are none other but the privileged white North-Western women.[45]

Note that the understanding of the Peruvian woman as a sign of an ethnic, racial, socio-economic and cultural otherness is a long-lasting paradigm which has not only been maintained within the glamorous pages of high fashion magazines, it also has defined other cultural spheres concerning body and identity. One example is Mattel's Peruvian Barbie doll, which extraordinarily is equipped with a baby accessory, a signifier of her foreignness (traditional, familial), in contrast to the standard convention of Barbie as a young woman whose interaction with babies is confined to sporadic baby-sitting.[46] The first pages of 'Trail Blazers,' where Werbowy and Donaldson momentarily display global affection by holding two local children in their arms, mirror Barbie's identity as caring for children, but being detached from them.[47] The presence of Peruvian mothers in the images ensures the British *Vogue* reader that this is only a temporary occupation.

Returning to the image of the shepherdess in 'Trail Blazers,' the lower status of the Peruvian women and their non-participation in fashion is marked by the absence of their clothes on the descriptive pricelist. Their hats and full-pleated Peruvian skirts have 'bubbled-up' and been appropriated by late modern authenticity-seeking fashion, in the form of the colourful tulle skirt and the hat on the model. This can at first glance be seen as an opposition to the traditional trickle-down effect of fashion, dictated by the rich part of the World. However, this bubbling-up only serves to match the volatility of North-Western fashion; overall, the fashion image seems to fit perfectly into Ted Polhemus' observation about the asymmetrical relationship between local and global fashion.

> Local – usually 'exotic' and traditional – textiles and designs have been spotlighted throughout the long history of fashion as a way of paying a kind of homage to distant lands while, at the same time ultimately underlining the power and glory and reach of Western fashion – celebrating Peruvian peasant embroidery one season, capriciously discarding it as passé the next.[48]

When North-Western fashion, as presented in Testino's fashion spread, includes other cultures (in this case the representation of a Peruvian national image) it often functions as a differentiating tool to establish a superior fashion identity. The differentiation is clearly highlighted in Werbowy's shepherdess dress, whose triangular deep collar-line, marked waist and impertinent styling of her hat on a slant, pay less homage to the Cuzco women than to John Galliano's earlier famous fusion of Cuzco women's dress with Dior's characteristic New Look.[49] As fashion scholar Jennifer Craik argues, exoticism must be seen as a key concept that overall activates distinctive new fashions as a rousing disturbance of the standard norms in dress within different fashion systems.[50] According to Craik, North-Western fashion has particularly highlighted the exotic as a means to express power and progress by continuously marking what it has managed to move itself away from. For Craik, Western fashion 'relentlessly re-invents otherness, by references to the past (historical illusions), to non- and pre-industrial cultures (folk costume and ethnic looks), and to previous moments in fashion (cyclical re-vamping of the "look" of earlier decades).'[51]

Thus, the chameleon role-playing, ephemeral changes of dress and interaction with 'exotic' cultures are not synonymous with a degradation of the North-Western cultural identity. One could argue, supplementing Polhemus and Craik's understanding of exoticism, that it

illuminates white people's power to be diverse (versus stereotyped) and their presumed right to appropriate other peoples' aesthetics.[52] More generally, Testino's fashion spread is a good visual example of the dominant understanding of fashion within the discourse of fashion studies that has widely used the dichotomy of modern versus primitive to establish a framework of knowledge. The idea of some communities being too traditional, out of civilisation, and non-fashionable because of the lack of individuality in dress, is clearly represented by the Peruvian Andean people, wearing what *Vogue* readers – with a North-Western gaze – would characterise as local costumes.

Looking at the fashion spread from the viewpoint of Said, *Vogue*'s exercise of a particular Western superior taste connects to the idea about fashion as something, in the Saidian formulation that '"we" do and what "they" [in this case Peruvian indigenous people] cannot do or understand as "we" do.'[53] It is not so much the image of Peruvian national identity in itself, but rather the power to represent a Peruvian national identity that is visually characterised as fashion by Testino. In other words, to become a fashionable British *Vogue* reader, you should not identify with the local people, but instead demonstrate the ability to appropriate 'Peruvian-ness' within a modern North-Western context of taste and body ideals. The conception of white North-Western people as having the skill to create fashion through their capacity to control and to change their bodies and visual appearances is highlighted by the travel-theme and the snapshot-realistic style. Both, in terms of time and space, point to the Western self-image as progression and movement. Like Toni Frissell's Cuzco images, 'Trail Blazers' captures the models in moments of physical motion. This is further reinforced by their continuous changes of scenery, in which the Peruvians remain left behind. The models are energetically conquering new spaces and new fashion, walking, dancing and inspecting, with lively hair, and dressed in feathers and floating skirts. As Dyer notes, the particular genre of Westerns within film has held the space for the white man to reinforce his self-assured enterprising character and his superior role in world dominance.[54] The snapshot realistic style seen in fashion photography can, in my opinion, be regarded as complementary. It provides a permitted place for North-Western women to demonstrate agency, progression and imperial power.

8. Postcolonial Challenge?

Does this infer that Testino's fashion spread is just passively reproducing the dominant power-dichotomy between the North-West and the South-West, in this case Peru? Taking a second glance at 'Trail Blazers,' the presence of several elements of overtly self-referential irony (backpackers in stilettos) can be seen as Testino's way of taking a playful distance from tourism and the dominance of North-Western fashion. The last part of the images is theatrically centred on the festive theme of carnival, accentuated by local people dressed in highly decorated costumes and masks.[55] The tradition of ritual festivals in the Andes has roots back to pre-Hispanic times and has continually – quite opposite to Lipovetsky's idea of static non-North-Western societies – *changed* its appearance as a place where conflicts within and outside society have been debated and adapted. Here, costumes have played a crucial role representing different social identities and ethnicities like foreign people from the jungle, Turks, African slaves and Spanish conquerors and traders.

Testino's imagery of the Peruvian carnival culminates with the final picture capturing a moment of festival ecstasy where the two models are surrounded by a chaotic mass of masked and wildly dressed dancers and musicians. Noticeable are the white-knitted caricatured masks worn by local Peruvians as representations of white people. These masks were likewise on the last page of Penn's earlier 'Christmas at Cuzco.'[56] Here, the images seem to cautiously transgress Said's primary focus on the (North-) West as the singular force which is powerful enough to control other cultures and establish meaning through representation.[57] Testino's

carnival picture states the dynamic existence of an interacting double-representation: at one level, the dominant existence of a traditional North-Western fashion representation of Peru, as exotic otherness, and at another very implicit level, the existence of a similar kind of representation of foreigners by the local Peruvian community. Hence, the fashion spread visually thematises what postcolonial literature scholar Mary Louise Pratt has defined as the 'contact zone,'[58] a 'space of colonial encounters…in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.'[59]

One has to be aware that this interaction is entirely based on *Vogue*'s premises. It is not in the magazine's interest to disrupt the long lasting, economically profitable love affair between the Western readers' desiring gazes and the representations of other cultures. Yet, the images allow for a more complex understanding of the potentials for resisting the traditional power relation between subject (white) and object (Peruvian).

This disturbance is further visible if we focus on the looks exchanged within one of the last photos, in which the model Lily Donaldson is leaning against a stone wall.[60] She gazes strongly downwards at a Peruvian man who is wearing a mask. He stands in the right corner of the image and appears to understand that he is being ridiculed, and yet he is incapable of confronting her controlling exotification of him. His masked face, however, looks to the left, aware that a young boy is hiding at the corner of the wall. This boy does what the masked man cannot do: look curiously back at Donaldson with an evaluating and objectifying male gaze. The scene is a clear paraphrase of one of Penn's 'Flying Down to Lima' images,[61] the one depicting a shoeshine man at work, serving a rich white man, who is accompanied by the New Look-dressed Jean Patchett. Both customers are completely unaware of a little Peruvian boy, standing behind the shoeshine-shelter wall, foreshadowing his predetermined destiny in the hard work of his shoeshine-father. Contrary to Penn's depicted boy, Testino's boy shows agency and looks at Donaldson (the white man's trophy). The way in which he is doing this in secret, however, functions as a postcolonial reminder of the fact that the colonised do actually look back, even if only covertly.[62]

In this manner, the people in Testino's image perform a power struggle between two sub-ordinary roles within the phallocentric and imperial hierarchy. Both white women and non-Western people have traditionally been objectified and controlled by the superior white male gaze. This conventional relation is confronted in Testino's image where the white female model and the Peruvian men (the man through the boy) are presented more or less explicitly active, challenging their normally submissive roles. Once again, this narration is primarily staged in order to satisfy the identity project of the North-Western *Vogue* reader who in the end retains her power. With her surveying gaze she knows that the little Peruvian boy is looking at the white woman (that is, herself, the reader) and hence can punish him by identifying with Donaldson's 'control' of the masked man. I am here referring to the intended position of the viewer. The *Vogue* reader can of course also decide to go against her expected role and, for example, identify with the Peruvian boy instead of Donaldson. It is remarkable to note how the indigenous Peruvian woman is not present in the photo, and hence she is not depicted as a rival to the white woman's power in the constructed confrontation. This absence expresses how non-White women traditionally are placed in the lowest position of the patriarchal colonial hierarchy. However, the carnival mask of the man in the picture, through its character of disguise, can be interpreted as a resistance to being seen, read, understood and categorised. This statement echoes Penn's 'Christmas at Cuzco,' in which a Peruvian girl sits with her back to the camera on a piano bench, wearing a black full-body and head covering *manta*, topped with a white hat and complemented by the previously mentioned colourful bundle. This disguise can

be understood as a way in which she similarly refuses the power of the gaze, to see and to be seen.[63]

9. Conclusion

Fashion discourse has a close connection to the North-Western society's display of power and the establishment of an opposition between the superior active fashion and its fixed foreign, primitive otherness. This contradiction often has been considered as a natural truth within the field of Fashion Studies. Without any considerations of the proposals made within this article, other fashion studies of, for example, South America might blindly implement the discussed classical fashion theories and thereby reproduce the imperial ideology that has traditionally characterised fashion. In other words, the myth of some countries' cultures being essentially opposed to fashion needs to be continually deconstructed.

The travelling narratives within fashion photography have functioned as a central space for the North-West to orchestrate exoticism. Here fashion, in relation to the discourse of imperialism, constructs the distinction between the ephemeral, 'modern,' white individual and the passive, collective, non-Western 'primitive.' Yet, as Testino's postcolonial example demonstrates, in connection to Irving Penn and Toni Frissell, it is also within this space that the division has the potential of being challenged. However, this resistance has its limits and the dichotomy remains more or less prevalent if focusing on the dominant role of the *Vogue* reader's desire to endlessly travel around different localities of the World as a way to elevate her own fashion identity. Hence, Testino's images remind us that the colonial order still haunts the current postcolonial fashion world.

Notes

[1] Mario Testino, 'Trail Blazers,' last modified July 2007, viewed 1 July 2012, http://model-behaviour.fabsugar.com/Lily-Donaldson-Daria-Werbowy-Vogue-UK-March-2008-1022939. The 18 images will be numerated in sequential order when referred below.

[2] As South America is part of the West, I use the distinction between North-West and its other, in which the latter both refers to the South-West and the non-West. If West or non-West is written elsewhere, it is as a reference to other scholars working with this specific distinction.

[3] See Julie Valqui Vidal, 'Exclusion and Inclusion: Representing Peru and Brazil in High Fashion Photography' (Magister thesis, Centre for Fashion Studies, Stockholm University, 2011).

[4] George Simmel, 'Fashion,' in *The Rise of Fashion – A Reader*, ed. Daniel L. Purdy (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 298; Thorstein Veblen, 'Dress as an Expression of the Pecuniary Culture,' in Purdy, ed., 278; Gilles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*, trans. Catherine Porter (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1994).

[5] Regina A. Root, ed., *The Latin American Fashion Reader* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2005).

[6] An exception is Anandi Ramamurthy's short section on tourism, fashion and 'the other.' However, her text primarily analyses the conventions of photography and does not offer a profound fashion theoretical perspective. Anandi Ramamurthy, 'Constructions of Illusion: Photography and Commodity Culture,' in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 188.

[7] I am here referring to fashion in relation to its French counterpart *mode* and its etymological connection to the concept of modernity.

[8] See the photographs in: Irving Penn, 'Flying Down to Lima,' American *Vogue*, 1949, viewed 20 March 2012, http://whoreallyrulestheworld.blogspot.com/2010/03/ode-to-irving.html; The

January 1952 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. From Library of Congress: *Toni Frissell Collection*, last modified 1 January 1994, viewed 20 March 2012, 'Fashion Model with Llamas,' Cusco, Peru. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96506186/;
'Peru' http://www.loc. gov/pictures/item/96506444/;
'Fashion Model following Women down a Street in Peru,'
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96506179/.

[9] Fashion scholar Jennifer Craik has also noticed the theoretical Eurocentric tendency within the early social and philosophical investigations of fashion as civilisation. She criticizes how Western fashion history automatically has maintained a strictly closed canon and neglected obvious similarities between the 'body techniques' of Western and non-Western systems of dress and fashion. Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994).

[10] Simmel, 'Fashion,' 295.

[11] Ibid., 294.

[12] Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*, 15.

[13] In his quest for identifying fashion, Lipovetsky traces it back to the late Italian Middle Ages and connects it to trade-capitalism, urbanity, the expansion of craft industries and the aristocracy. He conceptualises fashion as an abstract non-universal, social experience and a system that has possessed different spheres of social life – especially dress and adornment – and been a dominant factor in the Western world until today.

[14] Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*, 19.

[15] Ibid., 38. Leslie W. Rabine has similarly criticised this Eurocentrism in her study of African fashion systems, where she argues that modernity and tradition do not necessarily function as opposites. Leslie W. Rabine, *The Global Circulation of African Fashion* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2005).

[16] Richard Dyer, *White* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 9.

[17] Ibid., 12.

[18] Ibid., 15-17.

[19] In this context the body has traditionally been regarded as a feminine signifier and otherness in opposition to the masculine mind.

[20] The photos can be seen in: Irving Penn, *Moments Preserved* (New York: Simon & Schuster 1960), 90, and Sarah Greenough, *Irving Penn: Platinum Prints* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2005), 9.

[21] Irving Penn 'Flying down to Lima' (the December 1949 issue of American *Vogue*), last modified 1 March 2010, viewed 20 March 2012, http://whoreallyrulestheworld.blogspot. com/2010/03/ode-to-irving.html.

[22] John Szarkowski, *Irving Penn* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984); Merry A. Foresta, 'Irving Penn: The Passion of Certainties,' in *Irving Penn: Master Images*, ed. by Merry A. Foresta and William F. Stapp (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 1; Jan-Erik Lundström, 'Voluptuousness and Asceticism: Irving Penn's Photographic Worlds,' in *Penn: Photographs: A Donation in Memory of Lisa Fonssagrives-Penn*, ed. Jan-Erik Lundström (Stockholm: Raster förlag, 1995), 40; Edmund Carpenter, 'Love thy Label as Thyself,' in *Irving Penn: A Career in Photography*, ed. Colin Westerbeck (Boston/New York/Toronto: The Art Institute of Chicago in association with Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown and Company, 1997), 54; Greenough, *Irving Penn: Platinum Prints*.

[23] Irving Penn, *Worlds in a Small Room* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), 10.

[24] Greenough, *Irving Penn: Platinum Prints*, 26.

[25] Irving Penn, *Worlds in a Small Room*, 8.

[26] In this way Penn's images differ from the traditional journalistic genre of documentary photography that contrarily works to depict 'the real life' in a presumably unfiltered manner, different from the more categorising and displacing method of scientific photography.
[27] Foresta, 'Irving Penn: The Passion of Certainties.' Jan-Erik Lundström, 'Voluptuousness and Asceticism: Irving Penn's Photographic Worlds.'
[28] Ibid., 40.
[29] Simmel, 'Fashion,' 295.
[30] Ibid., 295.
[31] Charlotte Andersen, *Modefotografi: En Genres Anatomi* (København: Museum Tusculanums forlag, 2006), 119.
[32] Toni Frissell, 'Peru.'
[33] Noberto Angeletti and Alberto Oliva, *In Vogue: The Illustrated History of the World's Most Famous Fashion Magazine* (New York: Rizzoli, 2006), 80-82.
[34] Meanwhile, in the period between the early images of the 1950s and Testino's recent photographs several fashion magazines have depicted similar fashion spreads with Peruvian themes. See for example Anandi Ramamurthy's short discussion of a fashion spread from British *Elle*, 1987 that also was shot in Cuzco, Peru. Anandi Ramamurthy, 'Constructions of Illusion,' 200-201.
[35] Angeletti and Oliva, *In Vogue*, 82.
[36] Dyer, *White*, 47.
[37] Mario Testino, 'Trail Blazers,' last modified July 2007, viewed 1 July 2012, http://model-behaviour.fabsugar.com/Lily-Donaldson-Daria-Werbowy-Vogue-UK-March-2008-1022939. See images 2 and 3.
[38] 'In Vogue – Fashion Travel in Peru,' British *Vogue* March 2008, 208.
[39] Testino's interest in Peru is also seen in the book *Lima, Peru* that featured over one hundred Peruvian artists' representations of the city. Due to the limited amount of space, this will, however, not be touched upon in this article.
[40] Anandi Ramamurthy, 'Constructions of Illusion,' 193-194.
[41] Ibid., 189.
[42] Mario Testino, 'Trail Blazers,' last modified July 2007, viewed 1 July 2012, http://model-behaviour.fabsugar.com/Lily-Donaldson-Daria-Werbowy-Vogue-UK-March-2008-1022939. See images 6 and 7.
[43] Mario Testino, 'Trail Blazers,' in British *Vogue* March 2008, 307.
[44] Dyer, *White*, 82-84.
[45] Angeletti and Oliva, *In Vogue*, 82.
[46] Karen Goldman, 'La Princesa Plastica: Hegemonic and Oppositional Representations of Latinidad in Hispanic Barbie,' in *From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*, ed. Myra Mendible (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 271.
[47] Mario Testino, 'Trail Blazers,' last modified July 2007, viewed 1 July 2012, http://model-behaviour.fabsugar.com/Lily-Donaldson-Daria-Werbowy-Vogue-UK-March-2008-1022939. See image 3.
[48] Ted Polhemus, 'What to Wear in the Global Village?' in *Global Fashion, Local Tradition – On the Globalization of Fashion*, ed. Jan Brand and José Teunissen (Utrecht: Terra, 2005), 83.
[49] John Galliano for Christian Dior. Haute Couture Collection A/W 2005-2006, last modified 8 May 2011, viewed 20 March 2012, http://www.leparisien.fr/laparisienne/mode/exposition-une-histoire-ideale-de- la- mode-contemporaine-03-12-2010-1176551.php?pic=1.
[50] Although not referring directly to Simmel, Craik here seems to elaborate on his understanding of fashion relating to persons not being afraid of 'strange appearances.' Contrary

to Simmel, she however sees the phenomenon of exoticism in a more universal perspective and not intrinsically bound to Western civilisation. Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion*, 17 and Simmel, 'Fashion,' 294.
[51] Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion*, 36.
[52] Dyer, *White*, 49.
[53] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 12.
[54] Dyer, *White*, 11.
[55] Mario Testino, 'Trail Blazers,' last modified July 2007, viewed 1 July 2012, http://model-behaviour.fabsugar.com/Lily-Donaldson-Daria-Werbowy-Vogue-UK-March-2008-1022939. See images 9, 10 and 11.
[56] Irving Penn, 'Two Men in Cuzco,' last modified 1 January 1996, viewed 20 March 2012, http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/144862.
[57] Said, *Orientalism*, 12.
[58] The 'contact zone' is also a theme that Testino depicts in his Brazilian works, where the constructed distinction between fashion and its otherness becomes extremely blurred. Julie Valqui Vidal, 'Exclusion and Inclusion,' 45-49.
[59] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London/New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.
[60] Mario Testino, 'Trail Blazers,' last modified July 2007, viewed 1 July 2012, http://model-behaviour.fabsugar.com/Lily-Donaldson-Daria-Werbowy-Vogue-UK-March-2008-1022939. See image 5.
[61] Irving Penn, 'Flying down to Lima,' last modified 2 March 2010, viewed 20 March 2012, http://whoreallyrulestheworld.blogspot.com/2010/03/ode-to-irving.html.
[62] Ann E. Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 9.
[63] The *manta* that she wears has also been noted by other travellers coming to Peru, such as the French-Peruvian female writer Flora Tristan, who describes this type of clothing as particular to the women of Lima in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Here she breaks with the dominant understanding of it being suppressive for women and instead argues that it quite contrarily can be seen as an emancipating fashion, permitting its wearer to conquer and look at the public sphere without being seen and objectified (versus Frissell's New Look women). Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 167.

Bibliography

Andersen, Charlotte. *Modefotografi: En Genres Anatomi*. København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 2006.

Angeletti, Noberto and Alberto Oliva. *In Vogue: The Illustrated History of the World's Most Famous Fashion Magazine*. New York: Rizzoli, 2006.

Cánepa, Gisela. 'Identidad y Memoria.' In *Fiestas en Los Andes – Ritos, Música y Danzas del Peru*, edited by Raúl R. Romero, 42-71. Lima: Universidad Católica, 2008.

Carpenter, Edmund. 'Love thy Label as Thyself.' In *Irving Penn: A Career in Photography*, edited by Colin Westerbeck, 54-62. Boston/New York/Toronto: The Art Institute of Chicago in association with Bullfinch Press/Little, Brown and Company, 1997.

Craik, Jennifer. *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion*. London/New York: Routledge, 1994.

Dyer, Richard. *White*. London/New York: Routledge, 1997.

Foresta, Merry A. 'Irving Penn: The Passion of Certainties.' In *Irving Penn: Master Images*, edited by Merry A. Foresta and William F. Stapp, 1-13. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990.

Goldman, Karen. 'La Princesa Plastica: Hegemonic and Oppositional Representations of Latinidad in Hispanic Barbie.' In *From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*, edited by Myra Mendible, 263-277. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Greenough, Sarah. *Irving Penn: Platinum Prints*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2005.

Kaplan, E. Ann. *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze*. London/New York: Routledge, 1997.

Lipovetsky, Gilles. *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Lundström, Jan-Erik. 'Voluptuousness and Asceticism: Irving Penn's Photographic Worlds.' In *Penn: Photographs: A Donation in Memory of Lisa Fonssagrives-Penn*, edited by Jan-Erik Lundström, 40-46. Stockholm: Raster förlag, 1995.

Penn, Irving. *Moments Preserved*. New York: Simon &Schuster, 1960.

———. *Worlds in a Small Room*. London: Studio Vista, 1974.

Polhemus, Ted. 'What to Wear in the Global Village?' In *Global Fashion, Local Tradition – On the Globalization of Fashion*, edited by Jan Brand and José Teunissen, 83-95. Utrecht: Terra, 2005.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London/New York: Routledge, 1992.

Rabine, Leslie W. *The Global Circulation of African Fashion*. Oxford: Berg. 2002.

Ramamurthy, Anandi. 'Constructions of Illusion: Photography and Commodity Culture.' In *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Liz Wells, 165-215. London/New York: Routledge, 2000.

Root, Regina A., ed. *The Latin American Fashion Reader*. Oxford/New York: Berg, 2005.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

Simmel, George. 'Fashion.' In *The Rise of Fashion – A Reader*, edited by Daniel L. Purdy, 290-309. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. Originally published in George Simmel, 'Fashion,' (*International Quarterly* 10, 1904).

Szarkowski, John. *Irving Penn*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984.

Testino, Mario, ed. *Lima, Peru*. Bologna: Damiani, 2007.

———. *Mario de Janeiro Testino*. Cologne: Taschen, 2009.

Valqui Vidal, Julie. 'Exclusion and Inclusion: Representing Peru and Brazil in High Fashion Photography.' Magister thesis, Centre for Fashion Studies, Stockholm University, 2011.

Veblen, Thorstein. 'Dress as an Expression of the Pecuniary Culture.' In *The Rise of Fashion – A Reader*, edited by Daniel L. Purdy, 278-288. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. Originally published in Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899).

Wells, Liz. *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. London/New York: Routledge, 2000.

Julie Valqui Vidal has degrees in Art History from University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and in Fashion Studies, from the Centre for Fashion Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden. Her main research interests lie in South American fashion design, fashion photography and postcolonial theory.

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. 65-90 (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

Amalia Dress: The Invention of a New Costume Tradition in the Service of Greek National Identity

Nadia Macha-Bizoumi

Abstract

The arrival in Greece of Queen Amalia in 1837 is a turning point in Greek costume history. Amalia created a romantic part-Greek, part-Viennese costume, known as the Amalia Costume. As in all societies ruled by a monarchy, it was the court that set this attire in its surroundings. Fashion often originates in the upper reaches of society and passes on to the middle class and from there to the lower social strata.[1] On the one hand, a series of 'Amalia-fied' costumes prevailed at the expense of older costume forms in nineteenth-century Greece; on the other, folkloric elements were incorporated in the Amalia style, making it a typical example of how fashion moves 'up.'[2] Until now, researchers of Greek costume have studied this type of dress from one aspect, describing it as a romantic courtier costume, the national female costume of the Greeks. An in-depth study indicates that it is a pre-constructed, or better yet, an invented, according to the historian Eric Hobsbawm, ensemble, created in a specific moment in history during which there was widespread interest within Europe in the folk culture of newly created states. In Greece, the manufacturing of a national costume originating in the royal court seems to have corresponded with the people's need for the creation of a unifying symbol. In this article, a dialectical approach to the Amalia Costume is attempted. Our method is based on analysis from a folklore point of view of the costume itself and analysis of its history/anthropology. Focus is placed on its symbolic nature, keeping under consideration that costumes, as all objects of material culture, serve as codes of message and meaning exchange and as indicators of cultural expressions and specific meanings.[3] The Amalia Costume functioned as a symbol of national identity, the making of which cannot be viewed out of the historic, economic, social and political circumstances of the nineteenth century.

Key Words

Queen Amalia, Greece, nineteenth century, national identity, invention, Amalia Costume, fashion.

*****

1. The Greek National Dress

Each year, the Greeks celebrate two national holidays – the 25th of March, the day marking the independence war (1821) that resulted in their liberation from Ottoman occupation, and the 28th of October, the date celebrated to mark Greek participation in World War II (1940) – by parading in Greek regional costumes and in their national dress.[4] This Greek national costume consists of two ensembles, one for men and one for women, and was established in the late 1830s by King Otto and Queen Amalia, respectively, immediately after their arrival in Greece in the late 1830s. Since then, the costumes have been symbolically linked with the identity of the Greek nation.[5] The male ensemble is characterized by a pleated white *foustanella*,[6] The female ensemble, known as the Amalia Costume,[7] to date, has been studied mostly by researchers of Greek regional costumes in two ways, as 1) a romantic courtier costume, identified with the Greek female national costume,[8] and 2) as a landmark in the development of Greek dress culture, through the creation of a particular costume type, whose

model served as the basis for the modification of a series of regional ensembles that included a *foustani* (dress) in the first half of the nineteenth century (Image 1).[9]

Image 1: Otto and Amalia in Athens, Chromolithography, Nafplion

The purpose of this article is to review the historical development of the Amalia Costume, the Greek national dress, by reading the 'silent biographical account'[10] of the garments it consists of, with the help of research tools provided to the costume researcher by folkloric and historical/anthropological analysis, in order to achieve the most comprehensive overview of the topic.

2. The Invention of a Standardized Greek National Costume Language

On February 3, 1830, the London Conference, by virtue of the Protocol of Independence, declared the political independence of Greece, which became a kingdom under a German ruler, Otto, second son of the King Ludwig I of Bavaria. The new king, accompanied by a Regency Council headed by Count Joseph von Armansberg, as Otto was still a minor, arrived in Nafplion,[11] the new kingdom's temporary capital, on January 25th (N.S.)/February 6th (O.S.) 1833.[12] Naturally, the modernizing policy adopted to form the new kingdom was based on Bavarian models. It was these models that shaped the identity of Greece as an independent nation-state,[13] the product of a national war of independence, under Bavarian custodianship. In fact, as the historian John Anthony Petropoulos points out, during the 1830s and 1840s, the foundations of the newly-formed Greek state were built on administrative centralism, the creation of a fiscal and tax system, etc.[14] The above practices contributed to the governance and organization of the new political entity by taking on a unified, standardized and homogenized image. That image, in turn, served as the grounding, the axis upon which the identity of the new state was built.

In the process of creating the identity of the Greek nation, the past, in the form of tradition, became the field that assigned meaning to the present. As the historian Eric

Hobsbawm observes, three criteria allow a people to 'be firmly classed as a nation.' The first is 'its historic association with a current state or one with a fairly lengthy and recent past,' the second is 'the existence of a long-established cultural elite, possessing a written national literary administrative vernacular,' and the third is 'a proven capacity for conquest.'[15] In that context, as the sociologist Konstantinos Tsoukalas maintains, 'the state is forced to construct its tradition, to standardize it, to convert it to a central symbol and to historicize it.'[16] For Hobsbawm, an

> invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.[17]

It was precisely upon this continuity with the recent, glorious past, that the invention as well as the construction of a standardized, symbolically charged costume language (Image 1) by King Otto and Queen Amalia, was based. This action was crucial since post-revolution Greece, as described by the historian Elli Skopetea, was subject to a social fluidity characterized 'by the coexistence of the mixed-origin members of the national ethnicity.'[18] The invention and creation of an ensemble, as a unifying element of the diverse human mosaic that was the newly formed Greek state, was part of a larger process, whose purpose was to strengthen and ensure the survival of that state by bringing about a transition from hyper-national to national consciousness. In Greece in particular, as Skafidas maintains, 'Greek national dress originated as the dress of certain ethnic groups within a newly independent nation-state composed of people determined to preserve its Greek heritage and the will of the ethnic groups to be part of it.'[19]

One could claim that the arrival in Greece of King Otto, dressed in a *foustanella*, and of his queen, dressed in what became known as the Amalia Costume, at the doxology of March 25, 1838,[20] on the occasion of the establishment of this day (March 25) as a national holiday,[21] functions as an expressive non-lingual tool, as 'an elaborate language of symbolic practice and communication,'[22] that strictly defines the Greek ethnicity.

This action, namely the creation of a standardized costume language,[23] symbolically tied to the establishment of a national consciousness, appears to be a common practice among European countries in the nineteenth century, as demonstrated by similar cases. A potent example of a costume scheme as a form of protest for those seeking political and cultural independence is the 'tartan philiberg,' the well-known kilt that symbolizes the costume of the Scottish Highlander.[24] Trevor-Roper observes that the

> creation of an independent Highland tradition, and the imposition of that new tradition, with its outward badges, on the whole Scottish nation, was the work of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It occurred in three stages. First, there was the cultural revolt against Ireland.... Secondly, there was the artificial creation of a new Highland tradition, presented as ancient, original and distinctive. Thirdly, there was the process by which these new traditions were offered to, and adopted by, historic Lowland Scotland: the Eastern Scotland of the Picts, the Saxons and the Normans.[25]

3. From Invention to Production

To create a national costume, the royal couple referred back to the recent historical past, to the *foustanella* worn by the 1821 Greek freedom fighters and to a series of female garments

that were representative of mainland and island Greek dress. From the evidence, it appears that Amalia wavered between two possible options in terms of the style of the costume she intended to establish as the courtier costume.[26] According to the Greek feminist and educator Sotiria Aliberty, Amalia 'deliberately didn't adopt the authentic and highly quaint costume of ancient Greek women, in a bid to avoid, as she put it herself, making such a retrospective innovation.'[27] It is implied, therefore, that the possibility of adopting ancient Greek dress as the costume of the Court of Amalia, as a creation of the golden age of classical antiquity, was initially examined. The other option – at least as demonstrated by the result – was to adopt as the costume of the Ladies of the Court a series of local costumes, originating from areas that contributed to the 1821 Greek Revolution. Queen Amalia, on the other hand, chose for herself and her Ladies-in-Waiting, a new costume, as a symbol of the identity of the newly formed state of Greece, and in so doing followed King Otto's lead (Image 2).

Image 2: The Court of Queen Amalia, Philibert Perraud, 1847, Athens

At the same time, the courts of Munich and Paris served as a compelling model for the royal couple, informing not only the furnishings and the decoration of the palace, but also the composition of the court and the development, to an extent, of its dress system. It is not clear who guided the queen to create a dress style inspired by Western European fashion and Greek traditional costume.[28] What we can be certain of is that right from the start both Otto and Amalia 'placed themselves, consciously, in the service of the honoured memory of the heroes of the Greek Revolution,'[29] choosing to dress both themselves and the members of their court, all of whom came from families that had fought in the revolution, in ensembles from the recent past.

Image 3: A young woman in Amalia Costume, postcard of the early twentieth century, Nafplion © Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation

When he arrived in Greece, Otto chose, as the national dress, an ensemble that included the *foustanella*, in which he appeared on official occasions. Amalia charged her Ladies-in-Waiting with wearing the traditional costumes of the areas they were originally from (Image 2). Foteini Gennaiou Kolokotroni, the daughter of the Soulian hero Fotos Tzavelas and the wife of the Peloponnesian Kolokotronis, appeared in an ensemble that was a fusion of the traditional costumes of the Souli and the Peloponnese; Kyriakoula A. Kriezi and Kondylo Miaouli dressed in costumes from the island of Hydra; and Maria Monarchidou wore the costume from Psara.[30] By order of the queen, the Ladies-in-Waiting wore an ensemble of her own invention, a romantic, folkloric outfit, which fused Western fashions with elements of recent Greek tradition. This ensemble, which was named after Queen Amalia, has since been known as the Amalia Costume (Image 3).

The first reference to the garments that make up the ensemble comes from Amalia herself. In correspondence with her father in letters dated October 12 and October 24, 1839, Amalia comments about her portrait painted by Hermann Kretzschmer, in which she appears in the Greek costume. 'I must say that my jacket is not red but crimson, and much more richly embroidered, but the painter believed it was more striking this way. My dress is much darker, but let the artist do what he thinks is best.'[31]

The Amalia Costume consisted of a long dress, the *foustani* or *kavadi*, which was sharply reminiscent of the Biedermeier style,[32] although its bodice was inspired by the Greek traditional *kavadi* (a type of a long-sleeved dress), and was left open to show a lavishly embroidered chemise front. A short, close-fitting gold-embroidered velvet jacket, the *kondogouni* or *zipouni*,[33] was worn over the *foustani*. The headwear was a red *fessi* (*fez*) with a long tassel, *papaz*, made of braided gold threads and adorned with pearls or sequins (Image 3).

Image 4: An Athenian with her daughter, wearing the *kavadi*, watercolor by Gerasimos Pitsamanos, 1817, private collection

The *foustani* or *kavadi* was made of precious raw fabrics, silk taffeta with woven floral motifs, silk moiré or costly brocade, often interwoven with gold thread, and consisted of a double skirt with ruffles or of a long skirt with rich folds at the waistline. Its style was influenced by an exceedingly romantic but at the same time simple fashion, informed by the Biedermeier style, which was popular in nineteenth-century Germany and Austria. The upper bodice of the dress was close-fitting, with a deep neckline and long sleeves, reminiscent of the short-waisted and very tight-fitting *kavadi* of the old Athenian[34] costume[35] (Image 4), an urban-type costume, modelled on Eastern costume traditions.

Image 5: Gold-embroidered *kondogouni* (*zipouni*), Athens © Museum of the History of the Greek Costume (cat. No. 551)

The Amalia Costume *kondogouni* or *zipouni,* a vest with long narrow sleeves, was made of silk velvet in black, red or deep blue, and embroidered by specialized tailors, known as *terzides*, who were both tailors and professional gold-thread embroiderers. From a technical point of view, the *terzides*' embroidery work was executed in sewn-on silk cords, as well as gold cords and silver cords (Image 5).[36] The neckline, hemline and cuffs of the Athenian Costume's jacket were often lined with fur and it was heavily adorned – especially on the

sleeves and back, with stylized flowers, an elaborate combination of symmetrical spiralling motifs and flowering branches and flower ornaments, which are stylized in geometric patterns.

Image 6: Island-type *zipouni*, from Hydra, Athens © Museum of the History of the Greek Costume (cat. No.778/2)

According to the scenographer and costume designer Ioanna Papantoniou, the cut of *Kondogouni* was influenced by the cut of *zipouni*, the Greek island-type jacket (Image 6).[37] We also come across the *zipouni* in the Athenian Costume where it is worn over the *kavadi*. In fact, from 1834 onwards, it takes the form of a short jacket, with a deep opening at the front, which hugs and squeezes the bust,[38] bringing to mind the jacket of the Amalia Costume. A *zipouni*, combined with a *kavadi*, is also part of the costume of Pyrgos Ileias (Peloponnese) (Image 7). An extremely rare example of this nineteenth-century costume is held by the Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation collection in Nafplion. I believe that during that period the *zipouni* was a common garment with regional variations and an essential part of women's costumes, as it functioned as a close-fitting bodice that supported the bust. And it was upon this common costume scheme that the development of the Amalia *kondogouni* was based, which we come across in variations with or without tips at the front (Images 8a, 8b).

Image 7: *Kavadi* with *zipouni*, Pyrgos (Peloponnese), nineteenth century, Nafplion, © Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation (cat. No. 1998.06.210, 1998.06.211)

The Amalia Costume *fessi*, according to the Greek regional costume researcher Angeliki Chatzimichali,[39] was placed at the top of the head, at an angle, and held in place by a gold- or pearl-embroidered band, which was secured under the chin. Papantoniou mentions that when going to church, women would drape black lace over the *fessi*, as was the habit of Roman Catholic ladies.[40]

Image 8a: *Zipouni* from an Amalia Costume, with tips, Athens © Museum of the History of the Greek Costume (cat. No.780)

The Athen-München catalogue (1980), published by the City of Athens Museum in conjunction with the National Museum of Munich, presents and analyses what is probably the earliest version of the Amalia Costume, which is part of the National Museum's collection. The costume in question was likely made in Munich in its entirety, based on information derived from a letter by Queen Therese of Bavaria, to her son Otto.[41] According to Stabenow, the design and cut of the dress 'denote a romantic reversion to medieval models. There are also obvious references to late gothic Italian costumes.'[42]

What was Amalia's 'true' relationship with the ensemble she invented? Research up to the present day has shown that Amalia, in contrast to Otto, preferred to dress in Parisian fashion ensembles for palace balls rather than in the Amalia Costume.[43] According to Penelope Papailiopoulou, one of the queen's Ladies of the Court, the garments worn by Amalia at the palace balls 'were sewn by one of the official dressmakers from Paris.'[44] Indeed, in describing one of them, Edmond About mentions that the queen appeared 'in a tight dress with a small tail, the masterpiece of a Parisian dressmaker.'[45] In a portrait of the queen painted by Joseph Stieler (1836-1837), Amalia is pictured in a red velvet fashion dress, which leaves her shoulders exposed.[46] She also appears in European dress in a portrait made by Spyridon Chatzigiannopoulos (1820-1905).[47] A striking fact is that in 1859, in the first large-scale portraits of the royal couple painted by Viennese artist Carl Rahl (1812-1865), the king is pictured in the *foustanella* while the queen wears a Parisian fashion dress. The fact is that Amalia wears the Greek costume only on a few special occasions.

So why did Amalia avoid wearing the costume that she invented and that is directly connected to her national and royal status? In a letter to her father, on December 24, 1837, Amalia mentions that the day of her birthday was especially tiring, not only because she received many visitors but because she was wearing the 'Greek costume, which wears you out because it is very heavy.'[48] A few years later in an 1845 letter to her brother Peter, she mentions

that she avoids wearing the 'Greek costume' in her official appearances, although she is aware its symbolic content, because she does not find it, 'comfortable.'[49]

Image 8b: *Zipouni* from an Amalia Costume, Athens
© Museum of the History of the Greek Costume (cat. No.545)

To which costume is Amalia referring when she mentions the general term 'Greek costume,' which is so 'heavy' and not at all 'comfortable'? This is a reasonable question, since we know that the Amalia Costume is an ensemble adapted from schemes the queen was familiar with as it had many common elements with styles of European dress, and was not that different, in terms of the dress, from the fashion gowns she liked to wear. We also know, through a comparative study of well-known portraits in which Amalia is pictured in 'Greek costume,' that in her early years on the throne, the queen was not painted exclusively in the Amalia Costume. She also appears in the above described Athenian Costume, the costume worn by the noble ladies of the Greek capital, an ensemble that was, indeed, heavy, having been developed on the basis of eastern dress traditions. This costume consisted of *salivaria*, wide long bloomers, a chemise, and a particularly long dress with a vertical opening at the front, a *kavadi*. A silk belt, or a large silk or woollen stamped scarf, folded into a triangle shape, is tied low at the waist, over the *kavadi*. It was also not uncommon for another shorter dress to be worn over the former and, depending on the season and the occasion; the ensemble was completed by a short or long overcoat, with long or short sleeves, or even sleeveless (*anteri*, *tzipouni*, *tzoubé*). Only women of the upper social class wore the *tzoubé*, an overcoat trimmed with fur and made from precious fabrics such as silk velvet.[50]

That Amalia wore the Athenian Costume is supported by other evidence. The City of Athens Museum collection includes a needlework piece, dating from around 1837, by the embroiderer Maria Briakou, in which the royal couple is portrayed from the waist up, on their wedding day.[51] The king wears the *foustanella*, and the queen is dressed in the Athenian Costume, with a *kavadi* and a *tzoubé*. According to the museum curator Marilena Kasimati, Briakou based her portrayal of Otto on a chromolithograph by Gustav Kraus; for Amalia she used a lithographic version of Stieler's portrait, from the collection known as the Gallery of Beauties (Munich, Nymphenburg Palace).[52] In addition, in a wood engraving circa 1840, based on a piece by the French painter Louis Huard, Amalia is again portrayed in the Athenian Costume, complete with a *tzoubé*.

Image 9: Queen Amalia in the Amalia Costume, regal portrait, by Nikiforos Lytras, 1893, Athens, © Filekpaideftiki Etaireia

These early depictions of the queen in Greek costumes are followed by a series of portraits of the queen clearly dressed in the Amalia Costume. Indicatively, in 1849, the German painter Friedrich Becker was commissioned in Oldenburg to paint Amalia's portrait in national dress. Some consider this piece the earliest oil painting in which the queen wears the Amalia Costume.[53] In any case, in her aforementioned correspondence of the 12th (N.S.) /24th (O.S.) October 1839, the queen excitedly describes to her father another portrait of herself in the Amalia Costume, the one painted by Hermann Kretzschmer (1811-1890), which, as she writes Otto considered 'her first successful portrait' and thus 'commissioned a copy to send to his parents.'[54] Finally, Amalia is pictured in national dress (Amalia Costume) in an emblematic portrait by the Greek painter Nikiforos Lytras in 1893 (Image 9), painted thirty years after the royal couple was expelled from Greece in 1862.[55] The portrait was commissioned by the Friends of Education Society (Filekpaideftiki Etaireia), probably in 1890, to decorate the premises of the Arsakeio School, for 'educational-historical' reasons.[56]

While we cannot overlook the fact that the visual representation of the queen in Greek national dress semiotically connects her with Greek ethnicity, the true relationship of the queen with the national costume does not appear to be close.

4. The Social and Symbolic Content of the Amalia Costume

This section focuses on a morphological analysis of the actual pieces that comprise the Amalia Costume, an analysis necessary to understand the costume scheme that is the object of this study. A morphological analysis of the garments of the Amalia Costume allows us to identify with certainty the garments upon which its creation was based and the extent to which it borrowed features from both Greek costume tradition and Western European fashion. This knowledge is also helpful in understanding the symbolic content of the costume in question, as well as the reasons behind its dissemination, evolution and persistence.

The Amalia Costume is approached – as a whole, and in respect to the individual garments it consists of – as an historical piece, imbued with multiple meanings and anthropological content.[57] As objects of material culture, clothes are agents of multiple messages, defined by their relationships with other objects and with people through the course of their history. Their material dimension charges them with a complex and complicated role,[58] as their material 'life' is transcribed with multiple realities in a process of constant evolution. As well as utilitarian objects, often emotionally-charged at that, clothes are also symbolic, as they function as codes for the exchange of numerous messages and meanings regarding the social and local identity of their user, and as indicators of cultural expressions, connected to economic behaviours, social and technical practices, and their dissemination and evolution in space and time.[59]

Approaching Amalia's Costume on the basis of the above methodological positions, one could argue that the costume in question is a pre-constructed or, better yet, an invented ensemble, created in a specific moment in history during which there was widespread interest within Europe for the folk culture of newly created states. In the newly created state of Greece, the manufacturing of a romantic national costume, originating in the royal court, seems to have corresponded with the people's need for the creation of a unifying symbol, a fact demonstrated – as will be shown below – by the prevalence of the costume scheme in question, and its widespread assimilation.

This new form of tradition, a chosen tradition, which was based on selected familiar schemes (an Athenian-style bodice, informed by Eastern traditions, and a Viennese-style dress) functioned as a mark of national identity, expressed through the standardized image of an ensemble that dominated the dress culture of Greece, at the expense of earlier dress schemes. I believe that this construction, inspired by Western European fashion and Greek traditional dress, was handled in an ingenious way, as the fusion of the two styles symbolized the transition of Greek society from its Eastern past to Western modernity.

It could be also pointed out that the persons selected to serve as Amalia's Ladies-in-Waiting, and the fact that they dressed in local costumes from island and mainland Greece, functioned in collective memory as a tribute to the powerful symbols of the 1821 Revolution and the families that contributed to it. It is very likely, however, that this practice also functioned as an attempt to symbolize the political unity of the areas that had just been liberated and now comprised the newly formed Greek state. This supposition is further supported by the 'selective' fusion of features from Peloponnesian and Soulian costumes as demonstrated by the outfit worn by Foteini Gennaiou Kolokotroni (the daughter of the Soulian hero Fotos Tzavelas and the wife of the Peloponnesian Kolokotronis). Furthermore, the uniformity achieved by adopting the Amalia Costume for the Queen's Ladies-in- Waiting functions in semiotic terms as an attempt to establish a dress style that refers directly to a particular ethnicity.

In essence, the Amalia Costume is a dress 'tradition' that was invented deliberately and instituted officially for a particular reason.[60] The new tradition drew rich material from the recent historical past, from the powerful reserves of Greek folk tradition. The incorporation of folkloric elements in the Amalia style makes it a typical example of how fashion moves 'up' from the masses and influences the upper class style.[61]

The Amalia Costume influenced Greek women, initially in the urban centres of liberated Greece (Athens, Nafplion - Peloponnese) and subsequently in rural areas. A series of Amalia-fied costumes prevailed at the expense of older costume forms in nineteenth-century Greece. As in all societies ruled by a monarchy, it was the court that set this attire in its surroundings. Fashion often originates in the upper reaches of society and passes on to the middle class and from there to the lower social strata.[62] For example, see the Amalia-fied costume of the Greek island of Samos, as it developed in later years (Image 10).[63]

Image 10: Ourania Negri, photographed in 1910 in an 'Amalia-fied' Costume of Samos, Private collection

An example of an Amalia-fied costume can be seen in a model developed in Samos in the mid-nineteenth century, with its dress with a tight-fitting bodice, with or without sleeves, or a skirt, with a *sako*, a type of jacket. It served as the official village costume of Samos and survived until the early twentieth century.[64] In contrast, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the upper class women of Samos began to adopt European fashions.[65]

Another example of an Amalia-fied costume survives in the collection of the Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation in Nafplion. It is a most interesting version of an everyday outfit (early twentieth century), whose creation was based on the modification of a local costume by its owner, using the Amalia Costume, which was still very popular at the time, as a model. As Ioanna Papantoniou explains,

> The costume belonged to Maria Metaxa, who came from Leonidio in Kynouria (Peloponnese). When Metaxa came to Nafplion as a bride, she wore her local costume, which consisted of the dress of her home town, known as *vrachani*. Upon arriving in Nafplion, she converted this dress to an 'Amalia-fied' skirt, combining it with a white *plastron* and a felt *kondogouni*, decorated with shop-bought tassels. As her official costume, however, Metaxa wore the authentic Amalia Costume, which was basically the urban costume of the Peloponnese, which she had made in Nafplion.[66]

The Amalia Costume also influenced the women of the bourgeoisie throughout the Balkans. This can be seen in the common elements in town costumes worn in Serbia and Greece in the nineteenth century.[67] A cursory comparison between the Serbian and Greek town costume ensembles from the first half of the nineteenth century, which were still worn in some towns as late as the early twentieth century, brings out similarities in the cut of the garments the materials used, the adornments and the manner of dressing.[68]

The Serbian costume is characterized by the *fistan* (the counterpart of the *foustani* or *kavadi* in the Greek version of the Amalia costume), a long dress of striped silk, mostly of brocade, with a short waist to underline the bust. Its upper bodice was close-fitting, with a heart-shaped opening at the front and sleeves of 'normal length or even longer than the arm, with a fan-like ending and a slit on the inner side.'[69] The skirt of the dress was gathered in rich folds. The *fistan* was embroidered with gold threads or braids round the neck and on the edge of the sleeves and the skirt. Over the *fistan*, in the place of the Greek *kondogouni*, we have the Serbian *libade*, a tightly fitting bodice open at the bust, with golden embroidery (*terzides*' embroidery work) on the front parts, on the back and on the sleeves. The only difference between the two jackets is that the embroidery on the Greek *kondogouni* 'was executed in a much richer ornamentation than on the Serbian *libade.*'[70] Finally, the Serbian headwear was the same *fessi* as in the Greek version, of red felt, decorated with a tassel, made of a braid of silk, either with gold or with silver threads.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Amalia Costume was also established in Cyprus, where it survived until the first decades of the twentieth century in the form of a sleeveless dress with a one-piece, close-fitting bodice with a deep, rounded opening at the bust, and a long skirt with rich folds at the waistline. This dress was combined with the *sarka*, a type of short velvet or felt jacket with a deep opening at the bust and long sleeves, which commonly flared at the bottom. The *sarka* is the equivalent of the *kondogouni* in the Amalia Costume, made by tailors in Nicosia, with rich decoration of sewn-on gold cords. The outfit is completed by a local version of the *fessi*, a red cap, usually topped by a fixed tassel of black silk, and a second, dangling one.[71]

The costume in question, initially worn by urban women across island and mainland Greece,[72] 'served in Cyprus, which was under Turkish occupation until 1878, as the official costume of urban ladies.'[73] It was not long, however, before it was adopted by the island's rural areas. According to the folklorist Efrossini Rizopoulou-Igoumenidou, the Amalia influenced costume began to die out by the late nineteenth century 'in the urban centers [of Cyprus], where European dress was steadily gaining ground, especially after the beginning of British rule.' Still, the costume had spread throughout Cyprus and 'was preserved in rural areas even as late as the first decades' of the twentieth century, 'when it was used as a festive or bridal outfit.'[74]

Important factors in the dissemination, prevalence and survival of the Amalia Costume in countries other than Greece – in this particular case in Cyprus and Serbia – were: a) the ideological tendencies of that period, as well as b) the close ties developed between the Cypriots and Serbs, and the Greeks.[75] With regards to the Serbs, Antonijevic observes,

> For centuries Greeks and Serbs have been closely interrelated from the historic, demographic, economic, cultural and artistic point of view. The historical events that took place at the beginning of the 19th century, marked with the Serbian and Greek uprisings against the Turkish domination over the Balkans, are of particular importance for the subject we are dealing with in this paper. The emergence of new, independent states and the abolition of Turkish feudalism, have brought about great political and economic changes in these countries. The links existing between Serbs and Greeks have been stronger....[76]

Aside from historical, economic, political and ideological factors, yet another important factor in the dissemination and reception of the Amalia Costume in various areas within and outside of Greece was the fact that the dress system of those areas included, even before the advent of the costume in question, a garment, known as *foustani*. During a stage of transition,

from one scheme to another, this garment was presumably adapted and incorporated into the imported costume (the Amalia Costume), either as a dress (with or without sleeves) with a bodice, accompanied by a jacket, or as a skirt with a sleeved jacket. In Cyprus, for example, in inventories of family property that include entries of garments with their local names, there are references to a *foustani* that predates its counterpart in the Amalia Costume. A complete Amalia Costume is listed in a Cypriot dowry contract from 1852.[77] This conclusion is further supported by the existence of the aforementioned modified Amalia Costume from Leonidio, held by the Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation.

***Image 11*:** Amalia Costume from Amaliapoli, nineteenth century, Athens © National History Museum (cat. No. 3183)

The Amalia Costume, however, did not function merely as a national costume that stood for a standardized image of the dress culture and visible symbol of a newly formed state. As well as its symbolic and national dimensions, it took on a purely regional character, since it was adopted as the local costume of the seaside town of Amaliapoli (Prefecture of Magnesia), which was built in 1831 under Queen Amalia's supervision and expense. Amaliapoli was mostly settled by refugees from the wider region of Macedonia, who named their town after the queen and used the ensemble she created as their official costume. A rare nineteenth-century example of this costume (Image 11), with a long, pleated dress of dark green silk moiré fabric and a tight bodice, survives in the collection of the National Historical Museum.[78]

5. The Amalia Costume Today

In our days, the Amalia Costume, in contrast to the *foustanella*, no longer functions as the visible symbol of the Greek nation. In the minds of modern Greeks, the *foustanella* is the garment that remains directly linked to the Greek revolution and the identity of the Greek

nation, as it forms – in its later developed short version – part of the uniform of the Presidential Guard.

Image 12: Little girls dressed in *vlachoules*, postcard of the early twentieth century, Nafplion © Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation

The Amalia Costume seems to have lost much of its symbolic content. Because the costume functioned as a symbol of national identity, it was extensively used, altered, and abused. As Papantoniou claims, the costume in question

> as a national costume was abused by many well-meaning mothers, across the country, when they copied it to dress their little girls in it on the 25th of March, the Greek national holiday. And this because, for quite a long time, our local costumes were not held in high esteem, especially by those who had just 'dropped' them, as they used to say.[79]

However, even to this day, on national holidays, Greek students, with their teachers' encouragement, parade in Amalia Costumes, dressed in non-historically accurate copies, with dresses made of synthetic lining and poorly-sewn *kondogounia*, adorned with shop-bought tassels. In essence, the Amalia Costume is used as a costume with a dress, commonly in light blue, combined with a red or blue *kondogouni*. In children's minds, this costume is linked to Greek tradition but also to Carnival, as both the Amalia Costume and the *foustanella* are used as fancy dress outfits.[80]

There was a time in the early twentieth century during which on national holidays, children all over Greece were dressed in a costume known as *vlachoules* (Image 12), instead of the Amalia Costume.[81] The *vlachoules* was a costume based on an adaptation of the bridal costume of Attica, which had inspired the creation of the dress of the Court of King George I of Greece (1863-1913), the second king of the new Greek state. It generally consisted of a long chemise and a tailored jacket (*tzakos*), followed by one or two short sleeveless overcoats in white known as *griza*, and a lavishly embroidered apron, while the head was covered by a long scarf, known as *bolia*.

Image 13: Fashion drawing, by Jean Dessès, inspired by the Amalia Costume, Athens, Museum of the History of the Greek Costume (Lykeion ton Hellinidon).

In the mid-1950s and even more so in the 1960s Greek popular art was a source of inspiration for Greek fashion. This led to the rise of the traditional fashion movement, around which developed a group of designers who set out to impress upon their creations the dialogue between the contemporary and the traditional. This 'new fashion was presented as a suggested means of re-creating the aesthetic codes of an idealized past and went down very well with the public, as it was a symbolic way of voicing the urban middle class nostalgia for the past.'[82] It was presumably in that context that the fashion designer Jean Dessès created his series of four fashion drawings of outfits inspired by the Amalia Costume, intended for Queen Frederica, Princesses Sophia and Eirini (members of the Greek royal family) and the Ladies-in-Waiting (Image 13).[83] Those drawings are now held by the Museum of the History of the Greek Costume (Lykeion ton Hellinidon). Papantoniou points out that

> There were, at times, attempts directed at the dress of the Amalia Costume, but no one could take it further. Because it won't go any further. I'd like to make a bridal Amalia, all in white. There was an attempt in Nafplion, by a local tailor. A good attempt. But there was no embroidery, no ermine on the jacket, which is what I'd like to see. But you cannot take that costume any further. It cannot evolve dynamically. You need to be extremely liberated. The Japanese have a different aesthetic. They have many layers of clothes and that leads to a number of things. The Greek [costumes] are also a bit quaint. Which is why every attempt that was made in the past has failed. Those who tried were dressmakers rather than designers. Although Evangelidis does stand out; he started from local costumes and took them a step further. And, perhaps, in my opinion at least, he is greater than Dessès, who is linked to 'drapé.'[84]

Indeed, in spite of the concerted efforts, the 'movement' inspired by tradition did not lead to the further recognition and development of Greek fashion. In the 1970s, Greek fashion designers' desperate determination to go back to their roots was translated into what one might

call a folkloristic approach, 'which finally concentrated for a long period on the printed kerchief and the incorporation of authentic components of traditional costumes into caftan-like dresses.'[85] The whole endeavour was short-lived, because, according to the Greek designer Tseklenis, 'you don't take tradition to make folklore, to exploit it and to sell it commercially just as it is, but to develop it in accordance with life.'[86] Or, more to the point, as Veblen put it, 'innovation cannot just be more beautiful or, perhaps more commonly, less degrading, than what it seeks to replace.'[87]

6. Conclusion

The Amalia Costume is a turning point in Greek costume history, as it demonstrates notable endurance and leads to the creation of a specific costume type, known as the Amalia Costume. Amalia created a romantic part-Greek, part-Viennese costume, a morphological type that functioned as a processed language of 'symbolic practice and communication,'[88] through which the Queen could approach, what for her, were the strangely dressed people of Greece. The creation of romantic national dress was widespread during that time in the states of Europe and reflects in visual terms the ideological trends of the nineteenth century, under the influence of which the symbolically and ideologically charged Greek national dress was born.

Notes

[1] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899) and Georg Simmel, 'Fashion', *International Quarterly* 10 (1904): 130-155.

[2] Gilles Lipovetsky makes an argument about fashion moving 'up' as well as 'down.' Gilles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002). Consider too the work of Ted Polhemus regarding: fashion 'bubbling' up. 'What to Wear in the Global Village?' in *Global Fashion, Local Tradition – On the Globalization of Fashion*, ed. Jan Brand and José Teunissen, (Utrecht: Terra, 2005), 83.

[3] Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commodization as Process,' in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94.

[4] The label 'national costume' implies, according to Linda Welters, 'that special clothing was worn to affiliate the wearer with a particular nation.' See Linda Welters, 'Ethnicity in Greek Dress,' in *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Space and Time*, ed. Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 54, as well as Joanne B. Eicher and Barbara Sumberg, 'World Fashion, Ethnic, and National Dress,' in *Dress and Ethnicity: Change Across Space and Time*, ed. Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 295-306.

[5] Welters, 54.

[6] Konstantina Bada, 'Η παράδοση στη διαδικασία της ιστορικής διαπραγμάτευσης της εθνικής και τοπικής ταυτότητας. Η περίπτωση της φουστανέλας' ['Tradition in the Process of Historical Negotiation of National and Local Identity: The Case of the Foustanella'], Ethnologika 4 (1995): 127-150. More recently, it has been studied by Michael Skafidas, who offers a new interpretation by bringing the *foustanella* into the postmodern era. Michael Skafidas, 'Fabricating Greekness: From Fustanella to the Glossy Page,' in *The Fabric of Cultures. Fashion, Identity, and Globalization*, ed. Eugenia Paulicelli and Hazel Clark (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 145-163. [Author's translations from Greek, throughout.]

[7] Ioanna Papantoniou, *Greek Regional Costumes* (Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 1996), 131.

[8] Ioanna Papantoniou, '...And We Donned Frankish Attire,' in the *Athenian Fashions at the Turn of the 19th Century*, ed. Dionyssis Fotopoulos (Athens: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, 1999), 48.
[9] Ioanna Papantoniou, *Η Ελληνική Ενδυμασία από την αρχαιότητα ως τις αρχές του 20ού αιώνα* [*The Greek Costume from Antiquity to the early 20th Century*] (Athens: Emporiki Bank of Greece, 2000), 391.
[10] Konstantina Bada, 'Πανεπιστημιακά Μουσεία και συλλογές του λαϊκού πολιτισμού: Το παράδειγμα του Πανεπιστημίου Ιωαννίνων' ['University Museums and Folk Culture Collections: The Example of the University of Ioannina'], E*thnografika* 12-13 (2003): 147-149, and Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things,'64-94.
[11] In 1834, Athens became the new capital of the newly formed Greek state.
[12] N.S. (New Style) refers to the Julian calendar and O.S. (Old Style) to the Gregorian.
[13] According to Gellner, 'two people belong to the same nation if, and only if, they share the same culture, where culture, in turn, means a system of ideas, symbols, associations and modes of behavior and communication. Two people belong to the same nation if, and only if, they recognize each other as members of the same nation.' See Ernest Gellner, *Έθνη και Εθνικισμός* [*Nations and Nationalism*], trans. Dora Lafazani (Athens: Alexandria Publications, 1992), 23.
[14] John Anthony Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece* 1833 -1843 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 158-192.
[15] Eric Hobsbawm, *National and Nationalism since 1780*: P*rogramme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 37-38.
[16] Konstantinos Tsoukalas, 'Παράδοση και εκσυγχρονισμός: μερικά γενικότερα ερωτήματα' ['Tradition and Modernization: Some General Questions"] in *Ελληνισμός, Ελληνικότητα: ιδεολογικοί και βιωματικοί άξονες της νεοελληνικής κοινωνίας* [*Hellenism, Greekness: Ideological and Experiential Axes of Modern Greek Society*], ed. Dimitris G. Tsaoussis (Athens, Estia: 1983), 42-43.
[17] See Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction,' in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1.
[18] Elli Skopetea, *Το 'Πρότυπο Βασίλειο' και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στη Ελλάδα* (1830-1880) [*The 'Model Kingdom' and the Grand Idea. Perspectives on the national problem in Greece (1830-1880)],* (Athens: Polytypo, 1988), 43.
[19] Skafidas, 'Fabricating Greekness,' 147.
[20] This particular occasion, when Amalia appears in national dress, was described by Amalia herself in a letter sent to her father on the 10th of April 1838. See Vana Bouse and Michael Bouse (μεταγραφή, εισαγωγή, μετάφραση, σημειώσεις) [transcription, introduction, translation, notes], *Ανέκδοτες επιστολές της βασίλισσας Αμαλίας στον πατέρα της*, 1836-1853 [*Queen Amalia's Unpublished Letters to her Father,* 1836-1853, vol. A] (Athens: Estia, 2011), 122.
[21] The 25th of March 1838, the 17th anniversary of the beginning of the Greek Revolution and the holiday of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, was the first occasion of a dual religious and national celebration. The 25th of March was instituted as a National Holiday in 1838, a few months after Otto's decision to remove his Bavarian associates from his ministerial council.
[22] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction,' 6.
[23] In the early twentieth century, India provided an excellent example of standardized costume language, through the use of the garment known as *Khadi* or *Khaddar* as a visual symbol of the Indian freedom from the yoke of colonialism, as 'a powerful visual tool in the creation of an imagined national community which for the first time incorporated the non-literate majority.' Mahatma Gandhi played an active role in elevating the *Khadi* to the status of a national cloth.

See Emma Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[24] Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland,' in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 15-41. See also, Naomi E. A. Tarrant, 'Why Don't the English Have a Folk Dress?' *Ethnografika* 4-5 (1983-1985): 7-10 and Robert Doyle, C. M., 'Masculine Dress. The Englishman's Suit versus The Scotsman's Kilt,' in *Endyesthai* (*To Dress*), ed. Ioanna Papantoniou (Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 2010), 87-93.

[25] Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition,' 16-17.

[26] Sotiria Aliberty, *Αμαλία, η Βασίλισσα της Ελλάδος* [*Amalia, the Queen of Greece*] (Athens: N. Tarousopoulou Publishing, 1896).

[27] Ibid., 32.

[28] It is more than likely that we will soon have an answer to this question, and to other similar ones, as a doctoral thesis on the Amalia type costume has been underway in the last two years at the University of Ioannina, in Greece, by Katerina Charpidou.

[29] Reinhold Baumstark, 'Όθωνας και Αμαλία: Η μοναρχική παρουσία' ['Otto and Amalia: The Monarchic Presence'] in *Athens – Munich: Art and Culture in the New Greece*, ed. Marilena Kasimati (Athens: National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, 2000), 514.

[30] Olga Fakatseli, 'Οι κυρίες της Αυλής' ['The Ladies of the Court'], in *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece*, ed. Marilena Kasimati (Athens: National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, 2000), 540-541.

[31] See Bouse, *Queen Amalia's Unpublished Letters*, 192.

[32] 'Biedermeier,' last modified 19 July 2012, viewed 19 June 2012, http://www.rupertcaven dish.co.uk/Biedermeier/WhatisBiedermeier/whatisbiedermeier.htm.

[33] Ioanna Papantoniou, 'Συμβολή στη μελέτη της γυναικείας ελληνικής παραδοσιακής φορεσιάς ['A First Attempt at an Introduction to Greek Traditional Costume (Women's)'], *Ethnografika* 1 (1978): 30.

[34] Konstantina Bada, *Η αθηναϊκή γυναικεία φορεσιά κατά την περίοδο 1687-1834: Ενδυματολογική Μελέτη* [*The Athenian Women's Costume during 1687-1834: A Study of Dress Culture*], (PhD diss., Ioannina University, 1983). During the third decade of the nineteenth century, the Athenian Costume, which influenced the development of the Amalia Costume, was characterized by a short waisted dress, the *kavadi*, with rich folds from the waistline down, a tight bodice and long, wide sleeves. It has a vertical slit at the front and fastens below the bust, with buttons of silver or gold-platted wire. The wide sleeves have slits on the sides, to reveal the adornment of the chemise sleeves See, Bada, *The Athenian Women's Costume*, 55.

[35] Angeliki Chatzimihali, *Η ελληνική λαϊκή φορεσιά*, τόμ. δεύτερος [*The Greek Folk Costume*, vol. I], (Athens: Benaki Museum – Melissa, 1983), 40.

[36] The *terzides* came mostly from the alpine areas of Greece – Macedonia, Epirus, Aitoloakarnania, etc. They traveled all over the country taking on gold-embroidery work on local costumes, carrying with them, naturally, not just the tools of their trade, but also the techniques and aesthetic principles that characterized their art. This explains the uniformity of style in garments adorned with the embroidery of the *terzides*, not just in Greece but across the Balkans, since Greek *terzides* also supplied the Balkans with their work. On the embroidery art of the *terzides*, see Angeliki Chatzimichali, 'Ραπτάδες–χρυσοράπτες και καποτάδες' ['Tailors-Gold-thread Embroiderers and *Kapotades*'], in the *Memory of Manolis Triantafyllidis* (Athens, 1960), 445-475, and Popi Zora, *Embroideries and Jewellery of Greek National Costume* (Athens: Museum of Greek Folk Art, 1981).

[37] Papantoniou, *The Greek Costume*, 271.

[38] Bada, *The Athenian Women's Costume*, 46.
[39] Angeliki Chatzimichali, *Ελληνικαί Εθνικαί Ενδυμασίαι* [*Greek National Costumes*] (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948), table 2.
[40] Papantoniou, *Η Ελληνική Ενδυμασία* [*The Greek Costume*], 48.
[41] Cornelia Stabenow, 'Ελληνική εθνική ενδυμασία της βασίλισσας' ['The Queen's Greek National Costume'], in *Athens-München*, ed. Georg Himmelheber (Munich: Museum of the City of Athens – Bavarian National Museum, 1980), 53.
[42] Ibid., 53.
[43] Penelope Papailiopoulou, 'Η Αμαλία ως αντιβασίλισσα' ['Amalia as Queen Regent'], *Efimeris ton Kirion* [Ladies' Newspaper] 739, 2 March 1903, 3.
[44] Papailiopoulou, 'Amalia as Queen,' 3.
[45] Edmond About, *Η Ελλάδα του Όθωνος. Η σύγχρονη Ελλάδα* 1854 [*Otto's Greece. Modern Greece* 1854], trans. A. Spiliou (Athens: Tolidi Publishing, n.d.), 243.
[46] The portrait belongs to the Wittelsbach family collection, in Munich (Index No. Bla 286). See in *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece*, ed. Marilena Kasimati (Athens: National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, 2000), 517, image 226.
[47] The portrait belongs to the City of Athens Museum collection (index No. 681). See in *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece*, 533, image 241.
[48] Bouse, *Queen Amalia's Unpublished Letters,* vol. A,106.
[49] Ulrike von Hase-Schmundt, 'Μια προσωπογραφία της Αμαλίας, βασίλισσας της Ελλάδος, με εθνική ενδυμασία (1849)' ['A Portrait of Amalia, Queen of Greece, in National Dress'] in *The Queen Amalia* 1818-1875, trans. Stelios Lydakis (Athens: Museum of the City of Athens, 2007), 267.
[50] Chatzimichali, *The Greek Folk Costume*, 38-42.
[51] See Marilena Kasimati, ed., *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece,* 521, image 230.
[52] Ibid, 521-522.
[53] See Ulrike Von Hase-Schmundt, 'Μια προσωπογραφία της Αμαλίας'['A Portrait of Amalia'], 266.
[54] Bouse, *Queen Amalia's Unpublished Letters,* vol. A,192.
[55] For Nikiforos Lytras' portrait, see Nina Athanasoglou, *Nikiforos Lytras*, (PhD diss., University of Athens, 1979), and Marilena Kasimati, ed., *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece,*519.
[56] See Kasimati, ed., *Athens – Munich*, 521.
[57] An important contribution to the social signification of objects and, by extension, clothes, is A. Appadurai's methodological approach, which identifies 'the social life of things.' See Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). In the same vein is the 'cultural biography of things,' a method proposed by I. Kopytoff, which focuses on their cultural meanings, as it approaches them as cultural constructs and as agents of cultural significance. See Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography,' 66- 68.
[58] On approaching objects as complex but flexible beings, see G. W. Stocking, ed., *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).
[59] On the language of clothing and its meanings, see indicatively Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher, *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, Oxford: Berg, 1992, Ruth Rubinstein, *Dress Codes. Meanings and Messages in American Culture* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), and Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in*

Colonial and Federal America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). On the same topic in Greek bibliography see Gregory Gizelis, *Η ρητορική του ενδύματος* [*The Rhetoric of Clothing*] (Athens: National Centre of Social Research, 1974), Konstantina Bada, 'Η "γλώσσα" του ρούχου και της ατομικής εμφάνισης στην παραδοσιακή κοινωνία'['The "Language" of Clothing and Personal Appearance in Traditional Society'], *Dodoni* 21 (1992): 181-199; Marina Vrelli-Zahou, 'Το ερωτικό, κοινωνικό και αισθητικό υπόβαθρο του ενδύματος' ['The Erotic, Social and Aesthetic Background of clothing'], in her book *Η ενδυμασία στη Ζάκυνθο μετά την Ένωση (1864-1910). Συμβολή στη μελέτη της ιστορικότητας και της κοινωνιολογίας του ενδύματος* [*Attire in Zakynthos after the Union (1864-1910). A Contribution in the Study of the Historicity and Sociology of Clothing*] (Athens: Angeliki Chatzimichali Foundation, 2003) 53-91, as well as Nadia Macha-Bizoumi, *Τα πτυχωτά "φουστάνια" της Χίου* (16ος αι. – αρχές 20ού). *Πολυτυπία και παραλλαγές. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της ιστορικότητας των ενδυματολογικών συστημάτων του Αιγαίου* [*The Pleated "Foustania" of Chios (16th – early 20th cent). Multiple Forms and Variations. A Contribution in the Study of the Historicity of the Dress Systems of the Aegean*], (PhD diss., Democritus University of Thrace, 2011), 11-12.

[60] See Hobsbawm, 'Introduction,' 1.

[61] Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion.*

[62] Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class.* Simmel, 'Fashion.'

[63] Nadia Macha-Bizoumi, 'Η γυναικεία σαμιακή φορεσιά. Ο μονόλογος της νεωτερικότητας στην αμφίεση μιας νησιωτικής κοινότητας (τέλη 19ου αιώνα – αρχές 20ού)' ['The Women's Costume of Samos. The Monologue of Modernity in the Attire of an Island Community (late 19th – early 20th century)'], *Samiakes Meletes* 7 (2005-2006): 609-682.

[64] Ibid., 628.

[65] Ibid., 630-632.

[66] Papantoniou Ioanna, interview with the author in Athens, on June 2012.

[67] Dragoslav Antonijevic, 'Common Elements in the Town Costume worn in Serbia and Greece in the 19th Century,' *Balkan Studies* 24 (1983): 343-353.

[68] Ibid., 345.

[69] Ibid., 343-344.

[70] Ibid., 344.

[71] Efrossini Rizopoulou-Igoumenidou, 'Η Κυπριακή ενδυμασία στα τέλη του 19ου αιώνα' ['Cypriot Costumes in the Late 19th Century'], in *Οι Κυπριακές Φορεσιές του Εθνικού Ιστορικού Μουσείου* [*Cypriot Costumes of the National Historical Museum*] (Athens: National Historical Museum – Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 1999), 82-83.

[72] See the example of the Amalia-fied costume in Symi (Dodecanese). Athena Tarsouli, *Δωδεκάνησα* [*Dodecanese*], vol. C (Athens: I.M. Ckaziki Publishing, 1950), 284.

[73] Ibid, 56.

[74] Ibid, 57.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Antonijevic, 'Common Elements', 345.

[77] Efrossini Rizopoulou-Igoumenidou, *Η αστική ενδυμασία της Κύπρου κατά τον 18ο και τον 19ο αιώνα* [*The urban costumes of Cyprus during the 18th and 19th centuries]* (Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 1996), 107.

[78] Olga Fakatseli, 'Amalia Costume,' in *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece*, ed. Marilena Kasimati (Athens: National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, 2000), 527-534, photograph 240.

[79] Papantoniou, *The Greek Costume*, 274.

[80] Skafidas, 'Fabricating Greekness,' 150.

[81] Papantoniou, *The Greek Costume*, 261.
[82] Nadia Macha-Bizoumi, 'The Shepherd, the Sarakatsan Woman and the Shepherd's Cape in Greek Fashion. Greek Local Costume on the Catwalk (1960-1970),' in *Endyesthai* (*To Dress*), ed. Ioanna Papantoniou (Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 2010), 99.
[83] 'Greek Royal Family,' last modified 20 July 2012, viewed 20 July 2012, http://www.greekroyalfamily.gr/royal-family.html.
[84] Papantoniou Ioanna, interview with the author in Athens, on June 2012.
[85] Ioanna Papantoniou, ed., *Endyesthai* (*To Dress*) (Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 2010), 25.
[86] Yiannis Tseklenis, 'Ελληνική "βιομηχανία" μόδας' ['The Greek Fashion "Industry"'], *Endymatologika* 1 (2000): 14.
[87] Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 174.
[88] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction,' 14.

Bibliography

About, Edmond. *Η Ελλάδα του Όθωνος. Η σύγχρονη Ελλάδα* 1854 [*Otto's Greece. Modern Greece* 1854]. Translated by A. Spiliou. Athens: Tolidi Publishing, n.d.

Aliberty, Sotiria. *Αμαλία, η Βασίλισσα της Ελλάδος* [*Amalia, the Queen of Greece*]. Athens, Tarousopoulou Publishing, 1896.

Antonijevic, Dragoslav. 'Common Elements in the Town Costume Worn in Serbia and Greece in the 19th Century.' *Balkan Studies* 24 (1983): 343-353.

Appadurai, Arjun, ed. *The Social Life of Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Athanasoglou, Nina. *Nikiforos Lytras.* PhD diss., University of Athens, 1979.

Bada, Konstantina. *Η αθηναϊκή γυναικεία φορεσιά κατά την περίοδο 1687-1834. Ενδυματολογική Μελέτη* [*The Athenian Women's Costume during 1687-1834. A Study of Dress Culture*]. PhD diss., Ioannina University, 1983.

———. 'Η "γλώσσα" του ρούχου και της ατομικής εμφάνισης στην παραδοσιακή κοινωνία' ['The "Language" of Clothing and Personal Appearance in Traditional Society']. *Dodoni*, 21 (1992): 181-199.

———. 'Η παράδοση στη διαδικασία της ιστορικής διαπραγμάτευσης της εθνικής και τοπικής ταυτότητας. Η περίπτωση της φουστανέλας' ['Tradition in the Process of Historical Negotiation of National and Local Identity: The Case of the Foustanella']. *Ethnologia* 4 (1995): 127-150.

———. 'Πανεπιστημιακά Μουσεία και συλλογές του λαϊκού πολιτισμού: Το παράδειγμα του Πανεπιστημίου Ιωαννίνων' ['University Museums and Folk Culture Collections: The Example of the University of Ioannina']. *Ethnografika* 12-13 (2003): 147-149.

Barnes, Ruth, and Joanne B. Eicher. *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*. Oxford: Berg, 1992.

Baumgarten, Linda. *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Baumstark, Reinhold. Όθωνας και Αμαλία: Η μοναρχική παρουσία' ['Otto and Amalia: The Monarchic Presence']. In *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece*, edited by Marilena Kasimati, 514-516. Athens: National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, 2000.

Bouse, Vana and Michael Bouse. μεταγραφή, εισαγωγή, μετάφραση, σημειώσεις [transcription, introduction, translation, notes]. *Ανέκδοτες επιστολές της βασίλισσας Αμαλίας στον πατέρα της*, 1836-1853, τόμ. Α΄ [*Queen Amalia's Unpublished Letters to her Father,* 1836-1853, vol. A]. Athens: Estia, 2011.

Chatzimichali Angeliki, *Ελληνικαί Εθνικαί Ενδυμασίαι* [*Greek National Costumes*]. Athens: Benaki Museum, 1948, table 2.

———. 'Ραπτάδες–χρυσοράπτες και καποτάδες' ['Tailors-Gold-Thread Embroiderers and *Kapotades*']. In the *Memory of Manolis Triantafyllidis*. Athens, 1960, 445-475.

———. *Η ελληνική λαϊκή φορεσιά*, τόμ. δεύτερος [*The Greek Folk Costume*, vol. I]. Athens: Benaki Museum – Melissa, 1983.

Christodoulou, Despina. 'Ελληνορράπται και Biedermeier: Η φουστανέλα του Όθωνα και η στολή της Αμαλίας' ['Greek Tailors and Biedermeier: Otto's Fustanella and Amalia's Costume']. *Archaiologia* 84 (2002): 34.

Doyle, Robert. 'Masculine Dress: The Englishman's Suit versus The Scotsman's Kilt.' In *Endyesthai* (*To Dress*), edited by Ioanna Papantoniou, 87-93. Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 2010.

Eicher, Joanne B. and Barbara Sumberg. 'World Fashion, Ethnic, and National Dress.' In *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Space and Time*, edited by Joanne B. Eicher, 295-306. Oxford: Berg, 1995.

Fakatseli, Olga. 'Οι κυρίες της Αυλής' ['The Ladies of the Court']. In *Athens – Munich. Art and Culture in the New Greece*, edited by Marilena Kasimati, 537-538, 540-548. Athens: National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, 2000.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Translated by Dora Lafazani. Athens: Alexandria Publications, 1992.

Gizelis, Gregory. *Η ρητορική του ενδύματος* [*The Rhetoric of Clothing*]. Athens: National Centre of Social Research, 1974.

Hase-Schmundt, Ulrike von. 'Μια προσωπογραφία της Αμαλίας, βασίλισσας της Ελλάδος, με εθνική ενδυμασία (1849)'['A Portrait of Amalia, Queen of Greece, in National Dress (1849)']. In *The Queen Amalia* 1818-1875, 257-268. Translated by Stelios Lydakis. Athens: Museum of the City of Athens, 2007.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *National and Nationalism since 1780*: *Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

———. 'Introduction' to *The Invention of Tradition*, by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, 1-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Kasimati, Marilena, ed. *Athens – Munich*. Athens: National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, 2000.

Kopytoff, Igor. 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commodization as Process.' In *The Social Life of Things*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64-94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Lipovetsky, Gilles. *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Lurie, Alison. *The Language of Clothes*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.

Macha-Bizoumi, Nadia. 'Η γυναικεία σαμιακή φορεσιά. Ο μονόλογος της νεωτερικότητας στην αμφίεση μιας νησιωτικής κοινότητας (τέλη 19ου αιώνα – αρχές 20ού)' ['The Women's Costume of Samos. The Monologue of Modernity in the Attire of an Island Community (late 19th – early 20th century)']. *Samiakes Meletes* 7 (2005-2006): 609-682.

———. 'The Shepherd, the Sarakatsan Woman and the Shepherd's Cape in Greek Fashion: Greek Local Costume on the Catwalk (1960-1970).' In *Endyesthai* (*To Dress*), edited by Ioanna Papantoniou, 99-107. Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 2010.

———.Τα *πτυχωτά 'φουστάνια' της Χίου (16ος αι. – αρχές 20ού). Πολυτυπία και παραλλαγές. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της ιστορικότητας των ενδυματολογικών συστημάτων του Αιγαίου*. [*The Pleated 'Foustania' of Chios (16th - early 20th cent). Multiple Forms and Variations: A Contribution in the Study of the Historicity of the Dress Systems of the Aegean*]. PhD diss., Democritus University of Thrace, 2011.

Papailiopoulou, Penelope. 'Η Αμαλία ως αντιβασίλισσα' ['Amalia as Queen Regent']. *Efimeris ton Kirion* [Ladies' Newspaper] 739, 2 March 1903, 2-4.

Papantoniou, Ioanna. 'Συμβολή στη μελέτη της γυναικείας ελληνικής παραδοσιακής φορεσιάς' ['A First Attempt at an Introduction to Greek Traditional Costume (Women's)']. E*thnografika* 1 (1978): 5-92.

———. *Greek Regional Costumes*. Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 1996.

———. '...And We Donned Frankish Attire.' In the *Athenian Fashions at the Turn of the 19th Century*, edited by Dionyssis Fotopoulos, 47-52. Athens: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, 1999.

———. *Η Ελληνική Ενδυμασία από την αρχαιότητα ως τις αρχές του 20ού αιώνα* [*The Greek Costume from Antiquity to the Early 20th Century*]. Athens: Emboriki Bank of Greece, 2000.

———. ed. *Endyesthai* (*To Dress*), 15-27. Nafplion: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, 2010.

Petropoulos, John Anthony. *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece 1833-1843*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Polhemus, Ted. 'What to Wear in the Global Village?' In *Global Fashion, Local Tradition – On the Globalization of Fashion*, edited by Jan Brand and José Teunissen, 83-95. Utrecht: Terra, 2005.

Rizopoulou-Igoumenidou, Efrossini. *Η αστική ενδυμασία της Κύπρου κατά τον 18ο και τον 19ο αιώνα* [*The Urban Costumes of Cyprus during the 18th and 19th Century]*. Λευκωσία: Πολιτιστικό Ίδρυμα Τραπέζης Κύπρου [Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation], 1996.

———. 'Η Κυπριακή ενδυμασία στα τέλη του 19ου αιώνα' ['Cypriot Costumes in the Late 19th century']. In the *Οι Κυπριακές Φορεσιές του Εθνικού Ιστορικού Μουσείου* [*Cypriot Costumes of the National Historical Museum],* 50-79. Athens: National Historical Museum – Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 1999.

Rubinstein, Ruth. *Dress Codes: Meanings and Messages in American Culture.* Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995.

Simmel, Georg. 'Fashion.' *International Quarterly* 10 (1904): 130-155.

Skafidas, Michael. 'Fabricating Greekness: From Fustanella to the Glossy Page.' In *The Fabric of Cultures: Fashion, Identity, and Globalization*, edited by Eugenia Paulicelli and Hazel Clark, 145-163. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.

Skopetea, Elli. *Το 'Πρότυπο Βασίλειο' και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στη Ελλάδα* (1830-1880) [*The 'Model Kingdom' and the Grand Idea. Perspectives on the National Problem in Greece* (1830-1880)]. Athens: Polytypo, 1988.

Stabenow, Cornelia. 'Ελληνική εθνική ενδυμασία της βασίλισσας' ['The Queen's Greek National Costume']. In *Athens-München*, edited by Georg Himmelheber, 52-57. Munich: Museum of the City of Athens – Bavarian National Museum, 1980.

Stocking, G. W., ed. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Tarlo, Emma. *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Tarrant, Naomi E. A. 'Why Don't the English have a Folk Dress?' *Ethnografika* 4-5 (1983-1985): 7-10.

Tarsouli, Athena. *Δωδεκάνησα* [*Dodecanese*], vol. C, 284. Athens: I.M. Ckaziki Publishing, 1950.

Trevor-Roper, Hugh. 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland.' In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, 15-41. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Tseklenis, Yiannis. 'Ελληνική 'βιομηχανία' μόδας' ['The Greek Fashion "Industry"']. *Endymatologika* 1 (2000): 11-16.

Tsoukalas, Konstantinos. 'Παράδοση και εκσυγχρονισμός: μερικά γενικότερα ερωτήματα' ['Tradition and Modernization: Some General Questions']. In *Ελληνισμός, Ελληνικότητα: ιδεολογικοί και βιωματικοί άξονες της νεοελληνικής κοινωνίας* [*Hellenism, Greekness: Ideological and Experiential Axes of Modern Greek Society*], edited by Dimitris G. Tsaoussis. Athens, Estia: 1983.

Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899.

Vrelli-Zahou, Marina. 'Το ερωτικό, κοινωνικό και αισθητικό υπόβαθρο του ενδύματος' ['The Erotic, Social and Aesthetic Background of Clothing']. In *Η ενδυμασία στη Ζάκυνθο μετά την Ένωση (1864-1910). Συμβολή στη μελέτη της ιστορικότητας και της κοινωνιολογίας του ενδύματος* [*Attire in Zakynthos after the Union (1864-1910). A Contribution in the Study of the Historicity and Sociology of Clothing*]. Athens: Angeliki Chatzimichali Foundation, 2003.

Welters, Linda. 'Ethnicity in Greek Dress.' In *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Space and Time*, edited by Joanne B. Eicher, 53-77. Oxford: Berg, 1995.

Zora, Popi. *Embroideries and Jewellery of Greek National Costume*. Athens: Museum of Greek Folk Art, 1981.

Interview

Papantoniou, Ioanna (2012), interview with the author, Athens, Greece, June.

Nadia Macha-Bizoumi, PhD, read History and Archaeology at Ioannina University and was awarded a doctorate in Folklore Studies at the Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece (2011). In 2006 she completed a course in Museum Science at the Hellenic American Educational Foundation. She has taken part in research projects related to the recording, documenting and digitizing of museum-type costume collections and acted as a costume consultant/contributor for many exhibitions in Greece. She is a member of the Board of the Hellenic Costume Society, and a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and of the Greek Folklore Society.

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. 91-99 (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

Vampirical Stick Pins, Deleuzian Folds, Noir Pastiches and other Wearability Conundrums: *Fashion in Film*

Michael A. Langkjær

Andy Warhol claimed 'It's the movies that have really been running things in America….They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to *look* how you feel about it.'[1] Professor of English at Stony Brook University Adrienne Munich, the editor of the 2011 *Fashion in Film* (Indiana University Press, 360 pages, $27.95, ISBN 978-0-253-22299-2), has in the spirit of Warhol's maxim gathered fourteen distinguished scholars, all of whom consider movie costumes as interacting with the viewer (Image 1). What they share is a material cultural approach, the notion that every material object is linked to its cultural context and that every object is a cultural actor with its own identity. And they examine fashion in film on several levels, whether it be costume design and designers/stylists, film-as-fashion (including gendered and age-conscious fashion), or the interchangeable materiality and originally shared 'filmmaker – tailor' sense of purpose, to which common usages such as 'fabric,' 'cutting,' 'fitting' and 'stitching together' still bear witness. Finally there is the nexus of film, fashion and textiles, with respect to time. *Fashion in Film* has been a good read, is erudite without overusing jargon, and it should appeal to both the fashion student and the savvy cineaste. The black and white illustrations – often stills from the films being discussed – are an instructive supplement to each contribution. The films that have figured as primary sources are listed in filmographies following each chapter.

In 'Wanting to Wear Seeing: Gilbert Adrian at MGM,' the author of the sixth chapter of *Fashion in Film,* Jane M. Gaines, who is Professor of Film Studies at Columbia University inquires: Why the separateness between the cinema costume-design world and the couture world? A possible explanation may already have been offered by Drake Stutesman, who teaches Costume Design in Film at New York University, in the first chapter in *Fashion in Film*, 'Costume Design, or, What Is Fashion in Film?' According to Stutesman, 'Clothes are what one sweats in (a life), fashion is the sweep of a Look (a lifestyle), and costume design is an industrial illusion of both (a desire for a life).'[2] As long as film provides a democratic medium of access to Looks, it involves the 'wearability conundrum,' e.g. should the modern woman wear a Look that is as extreme as the movie costumes of Adrian?

With her interrogatory statement, Stutesman is alluding to Adrian Adolph Greenberg (1903-1959), whose screen-credited 'Gowns by Adrian' were worn in over 250 films and who today is perhaps best remembered for those he designed for the 1939 movie classic *The Wizard of Oz*. Adrian is also noted for having outfitted Joan Crawford with her trademark large shoulder pads, which in the recollection of this reviewer were considered wearable, however extreme, when reprised back in the 1980s! I would imagine the wearability conundrum as somehow rooted in what the historian Jim Cullen has characterized as 'a shimmering new American Dream,' the Hollywood 'Dream of the Good Life.'[3]

A theme running through *Fashion in Film* is that of the relatively obscure costume designer. It was a surprise for me to learn that the Oscar-winning couturier-artist Eiko Ishioka, of the wondrous costumes in Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), is to be accounted obscure.[4] Even so, these so-called obscure designers are hardly unrecognized in their own circles; as Professor of Psychology at the City University of New York, Diana Diamond notes in 'Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*: Costumes, Girl Power, and Feminism,' of the 2006 released film's Italian costume designer Milena Canonero, some in that occupational group do

Image 1: Courtesy of Indiana University Press

win academy awards. Stutesman has set the stage for an alternative fashion history complete with its own heroes, the Hollywood costume designers who played a crucial role in fashioning American identity in an on-going struggle for fashion primacy between Paris and New York.

Mary Ann Caws, Distinguished Professor of English, French, and Comparative Literature at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, reveals an unadulterated relish for the blood-enjoying act in vampire films that is infectious. In her chapter 'What to Wear in a Vampire Film,' she observes that vampires are always specially dressed for their blood sucking acts, and wear a stick pin as 'a very good touch.'[5] Special mention should also be made of Caws' fascinating remark that the long black cloak of the vampire 'is a glamorous version of the cape, which was common in the Europe of the Middle Ages and then returned to fashion in the nineteenth century, so the cape-turned-cloak reminds us of Count Dracula's fabled long life as well as his fashion appeal.'[6] On the other hand, what beats me is how she can rank the very recent (1997-2003) American television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s mini-skirted, high-booted costume with the sublime spectacle of Lugosi's triumphantly elegant white-tie and cape as being equally 'the ur-figures of the vampire film'[7] (Image 2).

According to Ula Lukszo, a doctoral student in the English Department of Stony Brook University,[8] noir, with its iconic fedora and trench coat, has become a hyper-genre and style convention, more or less superficially recalled, that is to say a Jamesonian pastiche.[9] In her chapter, 'Noir Fashion and Noir *as* Fashion,' Lukszo has used 'pastiche' retrospectively in order to characterize the film noir genre as such. Let us for the moment assume that this appraisal of discrete elements of costume as being conducive toward creating pastiche noir films is an accurate one. What would it mean for presumably similar qualities of the costumes of Sofia Coppola's counterfeit Versailles drama *Marie Antoinette* described by Diamond? In both cases, nostalgia and fascination seem to be the driving factors; so, if the noir film genre, however diffuse and incoherent, according to Lukszo, has continued to be highly influential in popular media, advertising and couture, why is it that the craze for the 'Marie Antoinette' brand must inevitably be a passing one? Could it be that in the recognition of noir as a genre with its

own ambient associations (and – recalling Drake Stutesman's comment concerning Adrian, above – some definitely wearable goods), there is something with which historic costume films such as *Marie Antoinette* cannot in the long run compete?

Image 2: Bela Lugosi, cloaked, in 'Dracula' (1931),
courtesy of John Kobal Foundation/Getty Images

When discussing the artistic work of the Hong Kong filmmaker and auteur Kar-wai in her chapter 'Surface, Fabric, Weave: The Fashioned World of Wong Kar-wai,' Professor of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University, Giuliana Bruno makes a synthesis of temporal motion, textile materiality and film etymology: '[In the cinema of Wong Kar-wai] time itself moves in folds, as if it were cloth, suspended between pleats of narrative fabric.'[10] Such an emphasis on the phenomenon of 'the fold' as propounded in the philosophy of Deleuze,[11] would have made for an interesting wrinkle if Bruno had been encouraged to engage with Caws on the flowing cloak of the vampire. The vampire's cloak unfolding is a reification of the time, memory and experience which figure in the vampire's process of *becoming* through his striving for release from the curse-of-the-undead, just as when the vampire envelops himself within the cloak he returns to being a time-encapsulated mummy. Considering Diamond's discussion of Coppola's collapsing of Marie Antoinette's past into her present, and her connecting the eighteenth century with current obsessions in *Marie Antoinette*, notably those of (post)feminist empowerment as being expressible through choice of apparel, a similar exercise would be applicable there too.

Yet another spin on fashion signs and images in time is that which Caroline Evans, Professor of Fashion History and Theory at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, discusses in 'The Walkies: Early French Fashion Shows as a Cinema of Attractions,' her chapter about fashion shows. Evans' chapter portrays the early twentieth-century French fashion designer Paul Poiret as an impresario of attractions, whose *bonmenteur* made

'Goddesses from the Machine' of fashion models.[12] Here Evans points out that fashion shows had much in common with the earliest film conventions, where he who showed the film could call the shots as to speed, musical accompaniment and commentary.

The impression of the 1950s is that of an irremediably conformist decade of men in grey flannels and so forth. There is no question that this is a gross generalization. Professor of Film and Television Studies at Warwick University Stella Bruzzi has in her chapter '"It Will be a Magnificent Obsession": Femininity, Desire, and the New Look in 1950s Hollywood Melodrama' contributed towards shading the Fifties' narrative by observing that the Dior New Look, as co-adapted by Hollywood, is at once a mark of conformity and a sign of female discontent with an imposed identity. As an historian, I find this quite an intriguing observation, seeing that women had in late 1940's America previously shown some discontent with the New Look. Along with the cost of having to invest in entire new wardrobes and the annoyance at being seen as dupes of fashion hype, the 'loudest complaints were,' according to historian William Manchester, 'over skirt lengths, because girls were accustomed [during the War with its concomitant rationing] to showing more leg.'[13] LBK ('Little Below the Knee') clubs were springing up and 'demanding freedom from French tyrants.'[14] That is, until Easter (April 6, 1947) when 'feminine resistance suddenly vanished...no middle class woman...was willing to look like a frump that Sunday.'[15] Another indicator of the 1950s' having been full of contradictions is that the New Look in cinema confused illicit desire with outward decorum. Moreover, it would appear that such a duality of attitude was not the province of Fifties cinema alone. Adrienne Munich notes in 'The Stars and Stripes in Fashion Films' that 'As is true with most Hollywood fashion films, the conflicting messages about fashion indicate deep ambivalence about its allure.'[16]

In her chapter 'Adornment in the Afterlife of Victorian Fashion,' Maura Spiegel, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and Barnard College, has investigated filmic revisions of the fundamental Victorian 'virtue of plainness' which have exposed such plain virtue as mere ideology, rendered in the films as being no less a performance than fashionableness. This brings me back to Diana Diamond's observations. While also pointing out that clothes are ideas, Diamond recalls the eighteenth-century credo of *utile dulci* ('the useful with the pleasurable') and sees in Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* a nice blend of historical knowledge, appeal to the teenage feel for frivolous consumption, and admixture of girl power attitudes of third wave feminism. In this film, it is through modifications of her couture that Marie Antoinette defines and empowers herself socially and politically, though I remain sceptical as to whether haute couture was so much Marie Antoinette's invention as is claimed by Diamond (who is citing Caroline Weber's benchmark study on Marie Antoinette as literally speaking 'Queen of Fashion').[17] Should not the Empress Eugenie retain this distinction as the employer of Worth, who after all, is widely recognized as the first haute couturier in any meaningfully modern sense?

In her chapter 'Slave to Fashion: Masculinity, Suits, and the *Maciste* Films of Italian Silent Cinema,' Jacqueline Reich, Associate Professor of Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at Stony Brook University introduces us to Maciste, the 'Strong Man' of Italian silent cinema. Several actors played this character in Italian silent movies from 1915 through 1926. Seeing Maciste as 'a paradigm,'[18] Reich traces the metamorphosis of the Strong Man from bare-chested, loin-clothed protagonist of ancient classical film epics into an impeccably suited paragon of modern Italian masculinity. According to Reich, dressing muscle-bound full-size Maciste in full-size fashionable suits gave this 'model Italian [and] national hero'[19] an integral role in the fashioning of Italian modern bourgeois identity. Interwoven into the film, fashion and national identity warp of Reich's chapter are wefts of race, ideology, social classes, classical and Italian etymology and literary traditions, as well as of film history, making for an

engrossing, albeit rather intricate account. There is one curious paradox in Reich's chapter, when, after an excursus on suits in Italy and elsewhere, she observes that Maciste's particular variety of masculine ideal had connections with the strongly anti-bourgeois – and anti-suit – Futurist cultural movement. With its glorification of speed, force, strength and violence, Futurism would – in part owing to such views being propounded and acted out by the 'literary dandy, nationalist superman, war hero...and political leader' Gabriele D'Annunzio – end up coalescing with fascism.[20] Once fascism took over, Maciste shed his 'middle-class uniform' in favour of the muscled torso – of Mussolini.[21] When seen in this light, it would have been interesting if Reich had reflected on whether Mussolini, an avid movie fan who saw in the cinema 'the most powerful weapon,'[22] was influenced by the Maciste films in his branding of himself as the protean superman-Duce – adding up to a solipsistic inverse looping of history and cinematic myth.

We will devote a few more lines to the physical and persona, i.e., role- or character-producing aspects of dress. 'Dress,' as Kristin Hole, a doctoral student in the Department of Literary and Cultural Studies at Stony Brook University,[23] claims in her chapter 'Does Dress Tell the Nation's Story? Fashion, History, and Nation in the Films of Fassbinder,' 'can never "replace" the body for Fassbinder's characters…the body and its interconnected psyche remains, threatening to undermine the fantasies expressed by their fashion choices.'[24] Hole thus puts in a thought-provoking qualifier to certain 'givens' of material culture studies. According to Hole, while the characters in Fassbinder's films may not be what they wear, what they wear is often an expression of who they wish they could be. How might this relate to the fashion portrayal of the maturation of Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*, or any latent 'Drang nach Fascismus' of the Maciste films?

In 'Subversive Habits: Minority Women in Mani Ratnam's *Roja* ['Rose,'1992] and *Dil Se* ['From the Heart,'1998],' Sarah Berry, who teaches film and media studies at Portland State University, investigates Indian film costumes as identifiers of modern against traditional, Indian against ethnic, and Hindu against Moslem. Her argument is a bit difficult to follow. Perhaps it has something to do with the mixes and/or bifurcations of narratives of romance, of conflicts of identity, and/or of religious and ethnic politics, highlighted with colour-coordinated musical numbers and not least with multifarious culturally coded Hindu, Muslim and Western costumes of the films described by Berry. Certainly it is also because the perspective of Tamil Indian filmmaker Mani Ratnam on 'a transcendent, multicultural nationalism' and 'Indian assimilationism' is itself 'deeply ambivalent,' having shifted from 'a clear Hindu-centrist bias' in his early films, to becoming 'more critical of Indian majoritarian culture.'[25] The split sensibility of the female protagonists – striking out for their human rights as women or members of oppressed minorities, yet drawn by loyalty to cultural tradition – are poignantly symptomatic of an overall state of Indian affairs. A 'costume' example of this split given by Berry is that of the *bindi* (a part of the ceremonial jewellery of a Hindu bride) placed on the forehead of the chief female character in *Dil Se* as mirrored by a green cloth headband belonging to the same character of a type worn by female insurgent fighters and suicide bombers.[26] Such chronic ambivalence on Ratnam's part may also be the point Berry herself is trying to make: The lack of clarified purpose in Ratnam's dealing in his films with current problems and on-going conflicts of ethnic identity in India reflect back on the intractability thereof. As Berry sees it, these problematic aspects without any definite resolution are what also are reflected in his film costuming.

Image 3: Fred Astaire, aged 57, with Audrey Hepburn, aged 27, on the set of 'Funny Face,' Paris, 1957, courtesy of Roger Viollet/Getty Images

Film fashion, which preserves in the collective memory the white dress which Grace Kelly wore in *To Catch a Thief* (1955) and that signifies 'Grace Kelly,' is at the same time an oppressive cult of youth and beauty which cruelly marginalizes the older female actress and her cinematic wardrobe possibilities – a topic which Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at Stony Brook University E. Ann Kaplan treats sensitively and sensibly in the volume's keynote piece 'Un-Fashionable Age: Clothing and Unclothing the Older Woman's Body on Screen.' The older female is simply a crone, and while the constellation of old man/young woman is 'titillating,'[27] and at any rate was once thought acceptable (Image 3). Think of Audrey Hepburn's (born 1929) casting in ingénue roles opposite the likes of the decades older Cary Grant (born 1904), Fred Astaire (born 1899), Rex Harrison (born 1908), and Humphrey Bogart (born 1899). It raises eyebrows if the constellation is reversed. Although the two films remarked on by Kaplan, *The Mother* (2003) and *Cet Amour-là* (2001) did demonstrate a change in attitude and film-styling possibilities, they do not of themselves make a revolution, and so Kaplan must conclude that 'as the boomer generation ages, one could hope that Hollywood will change.'[28] One might opine that it is bound to, now that fifty is the new twenty-five and sixty is the new thirty with seniors skin- and skydiving, mountain climbing, as well as reprising themselves as astronauts – and let us not forget the *Rolling Stones*, who had at the time of finishing this review just rounded their fiftieth anniversary as a still-going-strong 'teenage' rock band. Kaplan's remarking that 'Older male stars do not need to masquerade in order to have plentiful roles,'[29] is apposite in the context of her argument. While the ideal of beauty in fashion journals is ever more wrinkle-free and even childlike, defying practices and stereotypes usually connected with age is something we can expect to see more of as the boomer generation reaches final maturity.[30]

As I touched on previously, it might have lent some further perspective to already interesting discussions if the authors had engaged with the relevant insights of their fellow contributors to *Fashion in Film*. The target readership is academics interested in culture studies,

especially the interrelationship between film, costume styling and its psychological, gendered and social contexts.

Notes

[1] Andy Warhol, *Style, Style, Style* (New York: Bulfinch, 1997), 55, cited in Jane M. Gaines, 'Wanting to Wear Seeing: Gilbert Adrian at MGM,' in *Fashion in Film*, ed. Adrienne Munich (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 149.
[2] Drake Stutesman, 'Costume Design, or, What Is Fashion in Film?' in *Fashion in Film*, 20-21.
[3] Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 159-184.
[4] Stutesman, 'Costume Design,' 28.
[5] Mary Ann Caws, 'What to Wear in a Vampire Film,' in *Fashion in Film*, 46.
[6] Ibid., 41-43.
[7] Ibid., 43.
[8] At the time of publication of *Fashion in Film*.
[9] See Ingeborg Hoesterey, *Pastiche: Cultural Memory in Art, Film, Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 1-15, 45-52.
[10] Giuliana Bruno, 'Surface, Fabric, Weave: The Fashioned World of Wong Kar-Wai,' in *Fashion in Film*, 84.
[11] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: The Athlone Press, 1993). See an excellent exposition of Deleuze's philosophy of the fold in Else Marie Bukdal's chapter 'Reflections of the Baroque in Contemporary Art and Aesthetics,' in Else Marie Bukdal, *The Baroque: A Recurrent Inspiration* (Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, 1998), 37-82.
[12] Caroline Evans, 'The Walkies: Early French Fashion Shows as a Cinema of Attractions,' in *Fashion in Film*, 121.
[13] William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972* (London: Michael Joseph, 1975), 422-423.
[14] Ibid., 423.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Adrienne Munich, 'The Stars and Stripes in Fashion Films,' in *Fashion in Film*, 271.
[17] Diana Diamond, 'Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*: Costumes, Girl Power, and Feminism,' in *Fashion in Film*, 227. For her view of Marie Antoinette as a fashion trendsetter, Diamond refers to Caroline Weber, *Queen of Fashion: What Marie Antoinette Wore to the Revolution* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2006).
[18] Jacqueline Reich, 'Slave to Fashion: Masculinity, Suits and the *Maciste* Films of Italian Silent Cinema', in *Fashion in Film*, 238.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 242.
[21] Ibid., 254.
[22] Louis Pizzitola, *Hearst Over Hollywood: Power, Passion, and Propaganda in the Movies* (New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2002), 264-265; Peter Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 24.
[23] At the time of publication of *Fashion in Film*.
[24] Kristin Hole, 'Does Dress Tell the Nation's Story? Fashion, History, and Nation in the Films of Fassbinder,' in *Fashion in Film*, 286-287.

[25] Sarah Berry, 'Subversive Habits: Minority Women in Mani Ratnam's *Roja* and *Dil Se*,' in *Fashion in Film*, 302.
[26] Berry, 'Subversive Habits,' 315.
[27] E. Ann Kaplan, 'Un-Fashionable Age: Clothing and Unclothing the Older Woman's Body on Screen,' in *Fashion in Film*, 325.
[28] Kaplan, 'Un-Fashionable Age,' 328.
[29] Ibid., 325.
[30] Ibid., 326. Kaplan notes that 'at least in the West, the older woman's body is considered sexless, and without any possibility of being fashionable,' which occasions me to make brief mention of an exhibition 4 – 27 May, 2007 in Copenhagen with the title '86/77/96' (vital stats in centimeters of the average octogenarian female) of photographs by Søren Rønholt of the conceptual clothes designs – elegant 'little black' evening dresses where wrinkles, folds and loose skin are emphasized, framed and incorporated in the design – by the award-winning Danish designer Karoline Kjeldtoft; see Karoline Kjeldtoft, *86-77-96* (Copenhagen: Øksnehallen, 2007).

Bibliography

Bondanella, Peter. *A History of Italian Cinema*. New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009.

Bukdal, Else Marie. *The Baroque: A Recurrent Inspiration*. Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, 1998.

Cullen, Jim. *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Deleuze, Gilles. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, forward and translation by Tom Conley. London: The Athlone Press, 1993.

Hoesterey, Ingeborg. *Pastiche: Cultural Memory in Art, Film, Literature*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Kjeldtoft, Karoline. *86-77-96*. Copenhagen: Øksnehallen 2007.

Manchester, William. *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972*. London: Michael Joseph, 1975.

Munich, Adrienne, ed. *Fashion in Film.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.

Pizzitola, Louis. *Hearst over Hollywood: Power, Passion, and Propaganda in the Movies*. New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Warhol, Andy. *Style, Style, Style*. New York: Bulfinch, 1997.

Weber, Caroline. *Queen of Fashion: What Marie Antoinette Wore to the Revolution*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2006.

Michael A. Langkjær, PhD, of the Saxo Institute, History Section, University of Copenhagen, is an historian specializing in Anglo-American popular culture and fashion with a focus on 'rock military style' and is Reviews Editor of *Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style*.

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. 101-116 (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

Exhibition Reviews

La Suite Elle Décoration par Jean-Paul Gaultier

Palais de Chaillot, Paris, France, May 5, 2010 - October, 30 2011

When standing in front of Paris' Palais de Chaillot, with some of the city's most iconic monuments in plain view, one cannot help but be struck by a sense of the past. Built for the 1937 Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques dans la Vie Moderne but in actuality a major renovation of the old Palais du Trocadéro (which itself was constructed to inaugurate the 1878 Exposition Universelle), the architecturally monumental Palais de Chaillot currently houses the Théâtre National de Chaillot, the Musée de l'Homme, the Musée de la Marine, and the Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine. Given this excess of signifiers of history and established if not official culture, it is perhaps surprising that it is also the site of an interior design installation created by one of the fashion world's most controversial and avant-garde couturiers, Jean-Paul Gaultier.

The French interior design magazine *Elle Décoration*, in collaboration with the Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, asked Jean-Paul Gaultier to transpose his fashion codes into an installation for the original top-floor apartment of Jacques Carlu, the primary architect of the 1937 renovation of the Palais de Chaillot. In point of fact, this marked the third time that *Elle Décoration* pursued such an endeavour. In 2008, Christian Lacroix redesigned the apartment in a boldly coloured neo-baroque aesthetic of contrasting patterns, materials, and textures, additionally showcasing in its furnishings the work of contemporary artists as well as including vintage pieces and personal objects of the designer. In 2009, Martin Margiela recreated a very different type of living space, dominated by white and silver, mirrors, and *trompe-l'oeil* effects, all meant to give the impression that a party had just taken place in the apartment. Jean-Paul Gaultier's version of this exercise, carried out in four separate rooms, contrasts just as markedly with his predecessors.

In the press release for the installation, Gaultier, indicating with a touch of ironic modesty that all he knows how to do is to make clothes, refers to his ultimate design of the apartment as his attempt to 'dress' the space according to various 'notes' that have inhabited his previous collections. The corresponding notes that he ascribed to the four differentiated spaces of the apartment are the 'nautical' note for the entry salon, the 'green' note for the conservatory-like room that sits at the base of the apartment's staircase, the 'flesh' note for the bedroom, and the 'reflection' note for the apartment's terrace.

The first room of Gaultier's apartment makeover, perhaps predictable, but nonetheless exceedingly striking, is a salon dominated by horizontal navy stripes on an ivory background, a mainstay pattern in the designer's fashion career. However, the pattern in question, in an otherwise minimalist room in terms of its few pieces of ultra-modern furniture, engulfs the space in an expected way. The trademark stripes run along the carpet, the walls, and even across the furniture. In an amusing press photo of the room, Gaultier, wearing a similarly striped sweater, sits in one of the chairs, the horizontal navy stripes of his sweater coordinated with those of the chair. In the second room of the apartment, a conservatory space, Gaultier introduces an explicitly natural element (as he did in colour, form, and conception with his Spring/Summer 2010 collection) in the form of numerous live plants, but it is hardly an urbanite's fantasy of a quaint and peaceful country garden. Here, in Gaultier's version of an urban jungle, the vegetation invades the space as plants of all sorts and green moss cover the staircase, grow up the walls, and envelope the outdoor furniture in multiple green shades of

foliage. For the bedroom, the designer chose a fleshy-pink satin as the dominant fabric that covers the walls, the ceiling, the floor, the bed, and the numerous pillows. On the floor, designs in black lace, reminiscent of the patterns of Chantilly lace found in the pieces of his 2003/2004 Fall/Winter collection, not only visually break up the colour scheme, but also give the impression of the lower half of a woman's body with legs clothed in lace stockings. The highlight of the room is a large doll that sits in the centre of the bed. The doll's torso wears a corset, a garment that has punctuated the Gaultier's idiom since the 1980s, however the dress that emerges from it, in the same pink satin fabric, extends out in all direction to become the bed's quilted comforter. Finally, in the least 'decorated' space of the apartment, the terrace, whose impressive view includes the Eiffel Tower in close proximity just across the Seine, has a series of diamond-shaped pieces of mirror arranged along the walls and on the floor in constructed groupings, reflecting in bits and pieces the famous surroundings.

As this brief description of each of the rooms suggests, the styles, colours, and overall look that Gaultier has chosen for each space seems, at first glance, exceedingly diverse. The geometrical regularity, bichromatic colour palette, and spatial minimalism of the entry salon contrasts sharply with the multiple shades of green and the apparently overgrown and natural disorder of the conservatory. In a similar way, the curves, stuffed forms, and femininely eroticized lines of the bedroom stand at seeming aesthetic odds with the angularity of the mirror constructions of the terrace. The viewer of the designed apartment is thus challenged to identify points of commonality from room to room which, despite these stylistic divergences, nonetheless can be integrated into an on-going statement or narrative. Just as one makes sense of a designer's collections from one season and runway show to another, so too must the viewer of Gaultier's apartment installation look beyond the literality of its elements to locate a coherent and perhaps even a retrospective statement in the rearticulated notes taken from his past collections.

From a design perspective, particularly in terms of elements like furniture, accessorized objects, and so forth, Gaultier's apartment can best be described somewhat paradoxically as minimalist in its approach. Each of the differentiated spaces is dominated by a particular colour and concept. The entry salon and the terrace, most clearly articulated along these lines, are respectively dominated by the stripe and mirror motifs. The bedroom, although including two different colours and textures/fabrics in its use of the fleshy pink satin and the black lace, nonetheless visually separates the two with the satin covering all vertical elements (the ceiling, the walls, the bed, the piles of pillows) while the lace patterns are relegated to the horizontal plane of the floor. Even in the conservatory, wherein the foliage provides the most visually differentiated use of objects and colour tonality, the number and disposition of the plants across the space conveys a repetition of elements as well as a unity of aesthetic conception.

On a more abstract level, despite the literal differences in the articulation of the design of each room as it interprets the nautical, the natural, the human, and the reflective, one can provisionally conclude that the aesthetic coherence of the apartment as a whole lies in its conceptualization of the dominating (and perhaps for some: overwhelming) use of colour, texture, and pattern in each instance. The terrace, at first glance, seems to resist this notion, but as the space of reflection (understood here in both a literal and figurative way), it is particularly telling. It is interesting to note that Gaultier's apartment makeover would include a space devoted to reflection at a time when his career in fashion has been deemed noteworthy enough to justify a major museum retrospective in the form of the travelling exhibition, 'The Fashion World of Jean-Paul Gaultier: From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk' that opened at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in June, 2011. In actuality, the visual effect that the diamond-shaped mirrored constructions of the terrace perform, depending on the viewer's spatial perspective, is an ever changing fragmentation and dismantling of the images of reality that they reflect,

particularly the well-known one of the Eiffel Tower. In this way, the terrace seemingly makes a meta-critical statement on not only the creator's relationship to reality, but also on the role of the artist in imaginatively mediating between the real and the abstracted and fragmented re-articulation of it in the world of fashion. Here, Gaultier is making the argument that, however detached from literal reality and utilitarian practicality his work may seem to be, it nonetheless derives directly from the world of the real. Moreover, Gaultier's ultimate aesthetic statement in this apartment self-reflexively privileges the preeminent creative force of the designer's imagination and conception in the process of the transformation of the raw material of the real into the art of fashion.

In the last decade, the unprecedented popularity of the realms of high fashion and interior design in mainstream Western culture has led to exchanges and crossovers that challenge the traditional limits of one medium or another. The recent launch of Missoni's clothing and home furnishing lines for the North American retailer Target, which was so popular with customers that the department store's website crashed on the first day, is a good example of the augmented cultural capital that high fashion has with the everyday consumer. However, despite Gaultier's comments in interviews indicating that he would like to continue working in interior design in the future, his apartment installation certainly does not give the impression that it is part of a larger plan to expand commercially the Gaultier brand in that direction. Gaultier's re-creation of characteristic themes of his sartorial idiom in the spatial context of an apartment, at once precocious, playful, and visually striking, underscores the wider applicability of high fashion's codes, but also furthers the contention that the designer in the contemporary world is something more than a 'mere' creator of clothes. Reminiscent of the work of great modernist figures in the French tradition like Jean Cocteau and Ferdinand Léger whose creativity resonated in multiple artistic media, Jean-Paul Gaultier's apartment installation confirms his status as an aesthetic visionary challenging the traditional boundaries of artistic creation and remaking the world according to the dictates and movements of his prodigious imagination.

Leonard R. Koos, PhD, is an Associate Professor of French at the University of Mary Washington, Virginia, USA.

Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty

The Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
May 4 - August 7, 2011, curated by Andrew Bolton
Catalogue: ***Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty***
Andrew Bolton, Susannah Frankel and Tim Blanks;
Photography by Sølve Sundsbø. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art,
2011, 240 pages, $50.00
ISBN 978-0-300-16978-2

The retrospective of late British fashion designer Alexander McQueen mounted by the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York provided an opportunity to not only reflect on the life and work of the conceptually provocative, technologically innovative, and technically sophisticated designer, but also to contemplate more broadly the connections among beauty, difference, and imagination in contemporary design practice. McQueen's death in 2010 cut short nearly two decades of ground-breaking work that often exceeded the category 'fashion' and pushed conventional boundaries of beauty through inventive runway spectacles.

Image 1: Title Image, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, Gallery Views, courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

On view beginning May 4, 2011, and held over through the first week in August, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* (Image 1) drew staggering attendance numbers for the

Costume Institute: an estimated 650,000 visitors saw the show over its thirteen-and-one-half week run, 15,000 alone on the last Saturday when, in an unprecedented turn, the museum extended viewing hours for the final weekend until midnight.[1] Indeed, the spectacle of waiting in line garnered nearly as much media attention as the exhibition itself. The retrospective became one of the top ten shows ever staged by the Met, signalling the arrival of fashion as art, as well as the broad celebrity of McQueen, himself. While museum members were able to bypass the queue that was frequently several hours long, the traffic forced visitors, in an unexpected twist, to collectively move through the space and experience it together: lurching and surging forward they moved together through the fantastical and immersive worlds, at once terrifying and beautiful. Centralizing the visceral reactions to and inspirations for the late designer's work, Costume Institute Curator Andrew Bolton organized the exhibition around the twin themes of beauty and emotion, positioning McQueen as an anachronistic hero-artist who sought to 'reconstitute the Romantic past into the Postmodern present.'[2] The show invited deeper consideration of the transformative qualities of non-normative forms of beauty that approach the Sublime: the kinds of beauty that draw transfixed stares of curiosity, wonder, and awe, rather than the easy relief of instant legibility. As the title of the show suggests, Bolton's objective was to show that 'savage beauty' – at once aggressive, perverse, animalistic, and exotic – best explains McQueen's creativity, innovation, and enduring legacy. 'I don't want to do a cocktail party,' McQueen is quoted as saying in the curator's preface. 'I'd rather people left my shows and vomited. I prefer extreme reactions.'[3]

Sarah Burton, McQueen's long time design assistant and the current creative director of his house, explains in an interview with the fashion journalist Tim Blanks, included in the exhibition catalogue, that McQueen imagined these types of visual confrontations at the beginning of the design process: '[E]very collection began with a show. To start work on designing the collection, he'd have to visualize how it would be seen.'[4] Sam Gainsbury and Joseph Bennett, the creative director and the production designer of the exhibition and former McQueen runway collaborators, succeeded in bringing this joint design/runway sensibility to the installation. Rotating mannequins, ambient soundscapes, mirrored platforms, and multi-screen video projections amplified the visual density of the approximately one hundred ensembles and seventy accessories on view, spanning McQueen's 1996 MA graduation collection *Jack the Ripper Stalks His Victims* to the posthumously presented Fall 2010/Winter 2011 *Angels and Demons*. The pair adeptly positioned the fashion pieces as more than just material objects, presenting them as dynamic subjects in elaborately staged narratives.

Gainsbury and Bennett also evoked the sensibility of the runway in six collection-specific groupings and video footage from more than a dozen shows. They restaged iconic moments, like the box within a box finale reveal from the 2001 *VOSS* collection, as well as the ephemeral hologram of Kate Moss inside a glass pyramid from 2006's *Widows of Culloden*. A subtler nod to the importance of the runway in thinking about the designer's legacy was the choice of cover image for the exhibition catalogue. The lenticular portrait that shifts between McQueen and a metallic skull, the designer's signature image, was first used as an invitation for the Spring/Summer 2009 show *NATURAL DIS-TINCTION UN-NATURAL SELECTION*. Haunting given his recent death, the portrait underscores the importance of not only spectacle but also provocation in understanding McQueen's work and process.

Image 2: Romantic Mind, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty,* Gallery Views, courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Bolton ordered the six main galleries – The Romantic Mind (Image 2), Romantic Gothic (Image 3), Romantic Nationalism, Romantic Exoticism, Romantic Primitivism, and Romantic Naturalism – as a progression from Culture (with a capital C) to Nature (in its idealized state), with Otherness as a necessary conduit between the two. The ensembles displayed in the first half of the show referenced Western traditions ranging from Savile Row, where McQueen first apprenticed, to courtly dress and Victorian funerary garb, highlighting the themes of death, history, and tradition, all of which were central motifs in his work. The final three galleries drew on more distant references: Asia, Africa, and the natural world. These sources of inspiration found expression both abstractly in floral, aquatic, and animal-inspired prints, and literally, with actual mud, hair, flowers, shells, horns, and antique kimono fabrics integrated into the designs themselves. A seventh gallery, an addendum to the Romantic Gothic room, aptly named Cabinet of Curiosities, mediated between the two halves of the exhibition (Image 4). Drawing on the Victorian technique of domesticating and displaying difference within a Western frame, the hall showcased dramatic artefacts from McQueen's frequent collaborations with accessory designers like milliners Philip Treacy and Dai Rees and jewellery designers Shaun Leane, Sarah Harmanee and Erik Halley. Housed in custom wood shelves, headpieces made of butterflies, porcupine quills, and silver-plated coins were displayed next to coiled metal necklaces and corsets. Moulded leather bodices with dented navels and protruding nipples were repeated in several iterations alongside silver-plated armour, shoes carved out of wood and bone, and garments engineered out of balsa wood with punched patterns at once airy and stiff. Bolton's organization of the galleries emphasized the connections between McQueen and the Romantics.

Image 3: Romantic Gothic, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty,* Gallery Views, courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

All of the galleries featured quotes from McQueen that Bolton culled from press books at the designer's studio in London. These *bon mots* offered insight into McQueen's design process and aesthetic motivations, riffing on sources of beauty and inspiration, as well as the designer's responses to critics. The quotes also provided an alternative way of reading the retrospective. For example, several quotes in both the gallery and catalogue insisted that McQueen's design practice was about engaging the humanity and dignity of non-normative bodies in fashion, yet the curatorial framing of these same bodies as 'curiosities,' 'exotics,' 'primitives,' and 'noble savages,' spatially and conceptually distanced them from the deeply personal and intimate historical references in the galleries dealing with 'nation,' 'mind,' and 'gothic' sentiment. Indeed, what comes through in the organization of the show is the division not only between the West and the Rest, but also McQueen and many of the spectacles he created. This seems at odds with the deeply personal ways in which he is represented speaking about his work. Furthermore, despite references in the audio tour and gallery labels to his deep, long-standing collaborations that were central to his design process, the framing of the exhibition around the theme of the hero-artist served to reinforce his singularity and individual genius. This can also be seen in the catalogue. Apart from the narrow filmstrips of runway stills that border the fashion writer Susannah Frankel's introduction, the only faced images that appear in the volume are portraits of McQueen. Even the live models that the London-based Norwegian fashion photographer Sølve Sundsbø shot the collections on have been rendered as faceless and often headless mannequins, secondary to the designs and the designer. The three short expository pieces included in the catalogue – the curator's preface, Frankel's biographical sketch, and Burton's interview – likewise focus on biographical details of the designer as the primary way to appreciate and understand his work, rather than a broader social or historical context.

Image 4: Cabinet of Curiosities, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty,* Gallery Views, courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

While Bolton's use of Romantic hero-artist as stand-in for McQueen resonated with critics and the record number of attendees, as an anthropologist, I found myself seeking traces of the late designer's conflicting and evolving relationship with not just beauty, imagination, and difference, but fashion and politics more broadly, and reading Bolton's exquisite presentation against the grain.

Notes

[1] Diane Cardwell, 'Waiting Hours for a Show in a Line Like a Runway,' *New York Times*, 8 August 2011, A14.
[2] Andrew Bolton, Susannah Frankel, Tim Blanks and Sølve Sundsbø, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 13.
[3] Ibid., 12.
[4] Ibid., 226.

Bibliography

Bolton, Andrew, with Susannah Frankel, Tim Blanks and Sølve Sundsbø. *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011.

Cardwell, Diane. 'Waiting Hours for a Show in a Line like a Runway.' *New York Times*, 8 August, 2011, A14.

Stephanie Sadre-Orafai, PhD, of the Department of Anthropology, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, is a socio-cultural anthropologist whose research focuses on transformations in contemporary racial thinking and visual culture in the US, most recently in the New York fashion industry.

►▼◄

Corinne Day: THE FACE

Gimpel Fils Ltd, 30 Davies Street,
London W1K 4NB,
September 2 - October 1, 2011

From September 2 to October 1, 2011, the walls of the Gimpel Fils gallery were decorated with twenty photos taken by the fashion and documentary photographer Corinne Day (1962-2010). Most of them were published in *The Face* magazine between 1991 and 1993. Also on display, are a later portrait of the model Kate Moss and a few photos from series that did not go into print, but have been chosen from the archives.

Corinne Day's photos have long been seen as providing an alternative aesthetic and a wry comment on the fashion industry. Day, herself, is often described as an eccentric photographer who found her way to British *Vogue*, in June 1993, through her ground-breaking series 'Under Exposure,' featuring Kate Moss. That particular editorial quickly became associated with the fashion-photographic trend of 'heroin chic.'

I enter the white interior of the Gimpel Fils gallery. It's a cool place, and, a modernist by sentiment, I feel at home. As it turned out, it was not easy to dissociate the experience of the pictures from the experience of the installation as such. Some of the images from *Corinne Day: THE FACE* particularly caught my attention: on the ground floor, a photo of a sunset and a young man, and a photo of a young woman wearing a 'Spiderweb Top' (Image 1); then, downstairs, two out of a series of four photos of the members of the band *Red Hot Chili Peppers*.

The first of these photos, 'England's Dreaming (George Sunset) August 1993,' is placed to the right of the gallery entrance. George, a young man lying with his back to the camera and his face towards a glowing, golden sunset in a northern romantic landscape – is possibly Day's salute to the nineteenth-century German Romantic landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich. Thus, longing and dreaming opens up the exhibition. The slim figure of the youth, stripped to the waist, fills the traditional and luxurious landscape with relaxed freedom. With his bare feet in shoes with trampled-down heels, he could have come right out of his tent at a rock festival to watch the sunset. The effect is at once simple and natural. The use of a certain bucolic-romantic type of landscape is on the one hand a well-known visual narrative and on the other hand often used to naturalize specific social and cultural norms and systems. The half-naked young man in

Day's photo is both nature and culture. He is metaphorical 'nature' as raw matter ready to be transformed by the artist or the observer. He is metaphorical 'culture' as an example of the meditating human alone in nature or so-called nature.

Image 1: *Rosemary Spiderweb Top 1991*, from *Corinne Day: THE FACE* at Gimpel Fils, courtesy of Gimpel Fils

Whereas the romantic longing for the simple or natural could be connected with Day's own idea of portraying the real, the woman in the 'Spiderweb Top' is one of the rather wry beauties of Day's early photography who did not fit in with ideals of the fashion industry of that time and therefore might have had a shocking effect. In this image, located on the end wall of the gallery's ground floor, the young female model Rosemary is wearing a pair of ordinary jeans and the top that gives the photo its name: 'Rosemary Spiderweb Top 1991' (Image 1). This is no plain white top decorated with the motif of a spiderweb, but simply the web, threads organized into the pattern of a classic spiderweb. This means that the model is almost naked. Her skin is bare, except that her nipples are covered. In contradistinction to much fashion photography both of the time and later, the atmosphere of the photo is not sexualized. The model's pose is twisted – in perhaps an ironic hint to ordinary fashion photography; her right hip is lifted, her left shoulder is turned a bit forward and her head is tilted a bit towards the right. But again, the image is without the aggressive sexualized body language of, say, the photographer Helmut Newton. The model's left hand, with slightly bended fingers, touches her leg as if to scratch it. The entire pose seems to indicate communication with someone or something outside the photographic situation and definitely not with the fashion audience. The model seems self-absorbed, not fully present in the studio photo.

Once downstairs, just across from the staircase, is the series of four pictures, whose bright, sunny, joie du vivre is a striking counterpoint to one's recollection of the spare minimalism of the 'Spiderweb Top' image. There is an air of unmixed joy about the photos of *Red Hot Chili Peppers* – a contradiction to a band that is close to being the archetypical idea of a rock'n'roll band and to the culture surrounding it: male-dominated, with songs about their hedonistic lifestyle. I especially fastened on to two of the four photos. In one of them, 'Red Hot

Chili Peppers (Jumping in to [sic] the Pool) August 1992,' the four rock'n'rollers are suspended above the swimming pool and in the next photo, 'Red Hot Chili Peppers (Big Splash) August 1992,' there is no one present – save for the spray on the pool's surface. We take it that the four band members are now underwater. The whole scene is filled with the joy and the fun that was part of Corinne Day's photographic and rebellious credo. At the same time, this joy is also traditional, a stereotyped, indeed, ritualized part of male popular culture.

How do a spiderweb and young men disappearing underwater correspond with the Romantic notes sounded by the image of a youth in the sunset? It is precisely the meticulous staging of Day's fashion editorials that mark her out as an artist with a capital 'A,' that is, as an artist in the Romantic spirit.

Besides images such as these, the exhibition also includes photographs from Day's magazine work. One such is 'Borneo' (published in the August 1991 edition of *The Face*), in which Kate Moss is photographed in bathing costumes and other summer clothes on the shore and in the streets of a coastal town. In one of the photos, local kids, obviously poor, flock around the future supermodel. In other photos from the feature, elements of the town appear in corners of the picture. The uncomplicated spirit of the series is not the result of coincidental photo-taking. It is in a long Western tradition of constructing the less privileged as the site of longing for 'the simple life.' In this way 'Borneo' becomes a mediator for the model, for the photographer, and for the observer, who all go through the act of being formed, educated or transformed by their touristic visit.

It may well be that Corinne Day was rebellious, but in the Romantic manner, where the sensitive soul played together with a refined talent for staging. The exhibition at Gimpel Fils does not remove the joy and rebellion from the visual legacy of Day, yet when seen as a whole – as an installation – it underscores the less appreciated Romantic aspect of Corinne Day's oeuvre.

Ingeborg Thaanum Carlsen holds an MA in Literature and Linguistics from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and is presently working on themes of the snapshot aesthetics in photography.

Daphne Guinness

The Museum at FIT, New York,
September 16, 2011 - January 7, 2012,
Co-curated by Daphne Guinness and Valerie Steele
Catalogue: *Daphne Guinness*
Valerie Steele and Daphne Guinness
New Haven: Yale University Press,
2011, 124 pages, $45
ISBN: 978-0-300-17663-6

If there is a certain fear in the act of dressing, it is that excesses of sartorial display seem out of place for the everyday. If diamonds and exotic prints, sequins, silk and ruffles, feathers and fitted waistcoats indicate the elements of a costume fit for a stage or some rare and grand event, then the Honourable Daphne Guinness' life is one long and fabulous dinner party, a masquerade ball with no end. That is precisely one of her rules for dressing, 'I don't do event dressing,' she explains, 'because every day is an event.'[1]

Within the past couple of years, those with an eye on the fashion world have become quite familiar with the brewery heiress and socialite, whose creative endeavours are built upon her passion for history, literature, decorative arts, and, in particular, her own self-decoration. As noted by Valerie Steele, Director and Chief Curator of The Museum at FIT, Guinness' distinct look is a result of her lack of fear when it comes to wearing extreme fashions.

It is this fearlessness that attracts our curiosity, wherein we attempt to examine the elements of Guinness' appearance and to fathom her incredible stamina for ornament. The wearing of fashion, she has admitted, is akin to performance. Fittingly, Guinness dresses every day for the world as a stage. In May of 2011, passers-by on Madison Avenue in New York City and viewers online could find her dressing in the window of Barney's department store in preparation for the annual Costume Institute Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Guinness is adamant that beauty should be shared, and in her most recent collaboration, a first with The Museum at FIT in New York City, the fashion icon co-curated along with Steele over 100 garments and accessories for her own museum exhibition, *Daphne Guinness*.

Illuminating the casually used term of 'fashion icon,' the exhibition aims to show Guinness as a notable example, comparing her to women such as Grace Kelly, Tina Chow and Nan Kempner, who inspired designers with their seemingly effortless ability to bring fashion to life and to create a signature look. The show firmly places Guinness in this stylish set as it displays singular pieces and ensembles that bring her style to life, colouring the blank canvas of pale fibreglass mannequins.

A rounded cavernous space precedes the main exhibition hall where several mirrored recesses display freakish footwear curiosities: heel-less platforms from Noritaka Tatehana, Nina Ricci and Alexander McQueen (Image 1). A pair of modified Nina Ricci shoes by Hogan McLaughlin covered in silver bugle beads and petals of flattened silver spikes are a pleasing assault to the eyes, thrice reflected in the surrounding mirrors. Additionally, a heel-less set of Tatehana platforms covered in red crystals and soled with gold cleats, makes the six-inch Christian Louboutin silk jacquard heels nearby look casual by comparison. The reds, silvers and golds of these accessories lit up the dark room, as did several monitors screening editorial images of Guinness, shot by Steven Klein, Bryan Adams and David LaChapelle. Guinness' own

work was also on display. *The Phenomenology of the Body*, a short film she directed in 2008, played in its entirety in the gallery. In the midst of the media and fancy footwear, a single likeness of Guinness stands on a pedestal, arms outstretched, in a beaded Alexander McQueen catsuit and digitally printed iridescent cape.

Image 1: Boots by Alexander McQueen, Photograph by Eileen Costa, courtesy of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York

Smoke screens and mirrors, holographic projections and films fill the main gallery, whose design by Ken Nintzel feels like a combination of funhouse and opulent jewellery box. Inspired by Guinness' New York apartment, the space is divided into six sections, with a long centralized walkway reminiscent of the mirrored corridor Guinness is so often filmed and photographed roaming in her home. Though based on her private space, the show's reflective surfaces around every corner repeatedly reference identity, leaving viewers to wonder about their own fashioned sensibilities.

In *Daphne Guinness,* the illusions and reflections inherent in the exhibition space also compliment the extraordinary reality of her clothes. The six sections of the show reflect six themes that are an integral part of Guinness' personal affinity with fashion: 'Dandyism,' 'Armor,' 'Chic,' 'Evening Chic,' 'Exoticism,' and 'Sparkle.' As a whole, these categories illustrate her philosophies about dress and fittingly display her aim to collect garments as one would collect art.

In 'Dandyism,' exquisitely tailored coats, jackets and classic white shirts from Chanel, Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, H. Huntsman & Sons Ltd. and Azzedine Alaïa in the front of the gallery place Guinness' signature silhouette in the mind's eye, setting a timeless precedent for the looks ahead (Image 2). Paired with various unidentified skirts and trousers, save for a couple of looks, the section focuses on a menswear aesthetic as a source of inspiration for Guinness. A purple silk satin Christian Lacroix evening gown, paired with a black silk taffeta Alexander McQueen jacket with metal eagle epaulettes, displays a fitting example of how Guinness might cleverly combine the masculine and feminine into one look.

That Daphne Guinness was a close friend and faithful patron of the late Alexander McQueen is strongly evident in the show's content, which includes over two dozen of the designer's pieces, never before displayed. His works permeate every section of the show; his gowns, trousers, jackets, and shoes are all a significant part of Guinness' collection. It is fitting that she considered McQueen primarily an artist, rather than simply a designer, as the exhibition's introductory wall text suggests that Guinness sees beautiful garments in the same way. Says Guinness, 'what draws me to fashion is art…and certainly not fashion as status symbol.'

A great many wearable pieces of objets d'art in the 'Armor' section sit alongside sculpted McQueen dresses, covered in metal sequins and iridescent grey paillettes. The work of younger designers such as Gareth Pugh is on display, too; his sliced silver metallic dress and hooded coat are otherworldly examples of Guinness' love of armour. Pugh's patchwork sewn leathers, slashed metallic foils and embedded nails in garments display more light catching surface textures than shaped metal to skin, the traditional image of armour. The pieces on display, give a sense of protection by repelling human touch, perfect examples of Guinness' fearless attraction to discomforting adornments.

In the sections titled 'Chic' and 'Evening Chic,' a mix of classical elegance and futuristic silhouettes display the subject's ability to look back and ahead. The former is the more traditional of the two, displaying little black and white dresses, and jacket and skirt suits that nod to style influences from Guinness' mother and grandmother. A lack of styling in this section, save for some large, jewelled necklaces dotting the mannequins, makes the pieces seem out of place in the exhibition as a whole. Ladylike examples from Valentino, Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel, and a subversively innocent white eyelet Alaïa dress with matching leather belt are certainly a study in classic and demi-couture, but the parts of the collection with both structure and 'a bit of chaos' more successfully channel the Daphne Guinness spirit.

Image 2: Jacket by Chanel, Photograph by Eileen Costa, courtesy of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York

In 'Evening Chic,' this spirit finds its voice in the subtle sexiness of an ivory silk faille Chanel jacket with embroidered stone trim, paired with fuchsia-sequinned Alexander McQueen leggings. Nearby, a pair of ivory Rick Owens trousers is displayed alongside a pale pink silk charmeuse Dior gown and an empire-style McQueen dress with a bodice full of jewels, pieces that look as if they were made decades ago with the lavish embellishments and wistful drape of a bygone era.

As if every sequin, bead, feather, metallic thread and shimmer of silk could speak, the rear of the gallery containing the sections 'Exoticism' and 'Sparkle' is a sensual delight, echoing past the screens and mirrors, the darkened walls and overhead lights to best display what makes Daphne Guinness a subject of intrigue, a study of fearless fashion, a lover of fashion as art. Only here do all the of the mannequins model Guinness' signature updo, platinum locks streaked with black, small details pointing to perhaps her current most recognizable feature. These fully realized looks, from French twist to heel-less platform, allow the garments to better represent the collector.

The sunset coloured dragon kimono that Guinness was wearing when she first met Alexander McQueen comes to life on a mannequin wearing a pair of chopines. In addition, here the exhibition's most dramatic acts also display its most dramatic materials. Die-cut skulls in black wool felt hang like shag on a Jun Takahashi for Undercover coat, a black Balmain mini-dress shimmers with what seems like thousands of paillettes, and a trio of jackets in ivory and black from Valentino, Lagerfeld for Chanel and McQueen, tipped in feathers and sheared fur, underscore the eccentric sophistication of the collection. A bronze beaded catsuit by McQueen, topped with a floor-length black feathered cape, beautifully punctuates the exhibition.

As does the Yale University Press catalogue, *Daphne Guinness*, published in conjunction with the exhibition. The book displays, in words and pictures, Guinness' colourful history and the source of her affinity with fashion in its many incarnations. It contains a foreword by co-curator Valerie Steele, and in short sections with titles such as 'On Being a Gypsy,' 'On Salvador Dali,' and 'On Biba,' the tome is primarily composed of Daphne Guinness' own words on a variety of important subjects related to her sense of style and sense of self. Without solely displaying museum images of Guinness' garments on mannequins, the book includes personal photos and event snapshots, more wholly illustrating the life that animates the clothes. Missing from the exhibition itself is imagery of this sort, of our curious subject fearlessly wearing haute couture and nine-inch platforms to events and dinners, on the street and off the runway. These non-editorial images draw a clearer picture of Guinness as defined by Steele: 'no mere clotheshorse,' but an 'image of rarefied personal style.'[2]

The exhibition allows us a glimpse into the personal collection of a living style-maker, still considering her place in world, changing, evolving, being inspired by creativity and in turn creating and inspiring others. As a result, the show leaves one with a longing for more, anticipating what is next from the multifaceted aesthete's discerning eye and deep wallet. The exhibited pieces encapsulate Guinness' belief that fashion can have many masks, whether traditional, avant-garde, or sublime or subdued, and that beauty and carefully considered craftsmanship in dress places it in the same category as art. As her collection personifies her and is given a stage, *Daphne Guinness* proves that exhibitions of fashion can also pay homage to living paragons of fashion who, much like Guinness' jewels, which she prefers to wear rather than put in storage, should be on view for others to enjoy.

Notes

[1] Daphne Guinness and Valerie Steele, *Daphne Guinness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 110.
[2] Ibid., 1-2.

Bibliography

Guinness, Daphne, and Valerie Steele. *Daphne Guinness.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

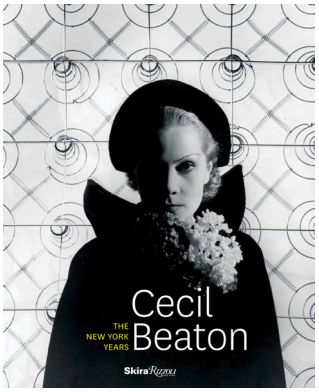
Ericka Basile is a visual artist and fashion scholar living and working in Brooklyn, New York. She holds an MA in Visual Culture: Costume Studies from New York University's Department of Art & Art Professions.

Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style, volume 1, no. 1, pp. 117-131 (2012) Inter-Disciplinary Press
ISSN: 2045-2349

Book Reviews

Cecil Beaton: The New York Years

Donald Albrecht. The Museum of the City of New York
New York: Skira Rizzoli,
2011, 240 pages, $65
ISBN-10: 0847835650
ISBN-13: 978-0847835652



Courtesy of Skira Rizzoli
©2011

In this beautiful and lavishly illustrated volume which accompanied the exhibition of the same name,[1] Donald Albrecht, Curator of Architecture and Design at The Museum of the City of New York, recalls Cecil Beaton's (1904-1980) New York years with a strong emphasis on his important role in the rise of twentieth-century photography. *Cecil Beaton: The New York Years* includes over 220 images of costumes, set designs, photographs, drawings and letters, many heretofore unpublished. Presented as 'the definitive portfolio,'[2] chronicling Beaton's stunning career in fashion, portraiture, and the performing arts, it also documents the privileged relationships Beaton enjoyed with stars like Greta Garbo and Andy Warhol.

Along with Edward J. Steichen (1879-1973), Beaton was one of the first photographers to have his work accepted in art institutions. The book takes as its starting point the 1969 exhibition *600 Faces by Beaton*, at the Museum of the City of New York, which was followed up with Beaton's ground-breaking exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London. This was an exceptional institutional consecration for a photographer and fashion illustrator, at a time when photography was not yet considered to have a real artistic value. Still, photography is the key to Beaton's success and it is well explained in the text how, 'The social world in which Beaton operated provided the source for subjects as well as inspiration for his work, which in turn shaped his social world in a complex reciprocal relationship.'[3] All is said in this sentence. The emulation and interaction Beaton managed to create in his world of images was like a self-feeding automat, continuously producing and reproducing its own self-reflection.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first chapter 'Scene & Be Seen,' relates the fructuous and sustained relationship Beaton established with the high society fashion magazine *Vogue* and its editor Condé Nast, in the 1930s. Included are intimate portraits of Beaton's close friends Greta Garbo, Mona von Bismarck and The Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Theatre and film set designs, interior decoration, society portraits and fashion photography – Beaton mastered them all.

How could this man always be in the right place at the right time? Although he died in 1980 at the age of 76, Beaton seems to have embraced an entire century. Beaton was close to the most influential art movements such as surrealism and pop art and to some of its most stellar personalities, including Man Ray, Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol. Beaton was a master of self-invention – and reinvention, as was Warhol, and Albrecht recounts how the younger artist was both impressed and inspired by the older man who had long since anticipated the conflation of commercial photography and art. Indeed, when Beaton caught the eye of Warhol, he had already been on the fashion scene for some forty years; a star from the past, he nonetheless fit

like a glove around the neo-Victorian-gothic splendour of the Velvet Underground – all in black and leather.

As remarked in the text, portrait photography was glamorous and could become an entrance ticket to high society and the pages of fashion magazines. Many of Beaton's society portraits were shot for *Vogue*, and the collaboration between *Vogue* and Beaton is well described. The pictures have become iconic, and it would have been interesting to get more insider information about the shootings, and the nature and size of the collected prints and drawings of these portraits. These are the kind of curatorial and historical details the historian of art and photography craves. However, the reader can enjoy the great variety of documents published in the volume; these include letters, drawings, cover art, magazine spreads, and even a rare contact sheet showing Greta Garbo in Beaton's suite at the Plaza Hotel, New York, in 1946.

From a technical point of view, Beaton did not introduce any revolutions. While mastering the best studio photographic techniques at the time of the 1920s, with large cameras, strong lighting, theatrical settings and static frontal poses, he also learned how to use lights in a cinematographic manner to create the dramatic mood. He knew how to make skin glow and eyes flicker. Beaton followed in the steps of great masters of photography like Edward J. Steichen and Adolf de Meyer, who had created the sophisticated *Vogue* style. Beaton's glittery 1928 portrait of the society beauty Paula Gellibrand recalls de Meyer's slightly earlier famous 1925/26 portrait of Josephine Baker, now in the MET collection. The photographs published in *Cecil Beaton: The New York Years* clearly illustrate this stylistic emulation, which became a characteristic of Beaton's photography.

The stage was Beaton's playing field and he made a smart use of props such as mirrors and fragments of sculpture to create a classical mood and sometimes used more artistic decorum to create an uncanny atmosphere, so much in vogue in the 1930s, when the fame of Salvador Dali became immanent in Hollywood. Dali's collaboration with Schiaparelli and with the surrealist exhibition in MOMA in 1936 brought the Freudian uncanny into the glamorous spectrum of Hollywood as well as into the eclectic art world of New York City. This is reflected in Beaton's cover art for the catalogue for Salvador Dali´s exhibition 'Metamorphoses of Narcissus,' at the Julian Levy Gallery, New York City in 1937.

Indeed, Beaton's modernity lies in this mixing of genres and in his clever way of communicating, flowing between the centres of the worlds of art, fashion, high society, theatre and film. In his 1975 book *The Magic Image*: *The Genius of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day* Beaton shows how conscious he is of the power of the medium of photography in the new society of spectacle.[4] He became a living medium between the glamorous world of the happy few and the dream world consumed vicariously by the readers of popular magazines. Surprisingly Beaton was the only British photographer to be exhibited in the important Film und Foto exhibition in Stuttgart in 1929, an interesting detail brought up in the text, but the author does not go into deep analyses of these inter-contextual relationships among art, media and fashion, between the wars.

'Only you can give the super-duper quality and make the choices,'[5] wrote Diana Vreeland, the fashion guru and the Editor-in-Chief of American *Vogue*, to Beaton in spring 1965. Of course she was right, for, to further quote Vreeland: 'Only personality counts … ravishing personalities are the most riveting things in the world.'[6] There is definitely a visual style called 'Beaton.' It is theatrical, racy, glamorous and cool. It is a perpetual inspiration for today's pop stars and fashion photographers; let's just name Madonna.

New York was the city which turned Beaton into a star. *Cecil Beaton: The New York Years* marks a continuation of an on-going love affair between New York and the style of Cecil

Beaton. When all is said and done, this is a beautiful and informative volume, which the reader will want to open and re-open.

Notes

[1] *Cecil Beaton: The New York Years*, Museum of the City of New York, October 25, 2011-April 22, 2012.
[2] Donald Albrecht, The Museum of the City of New York. *Cecil Beaton: The New York Years*. (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2011).
[3] Ibid., 11.
[4] Cecil Beaton and Gail Buckland, *The Magic Image: The Genius of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975).
[5] Ibid., 66.
[6] Ibid.

Bibliography

Albrecht, Donald. The Museum of the City of New York. *Cecil Beaton: The New York Years***.** New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2011.

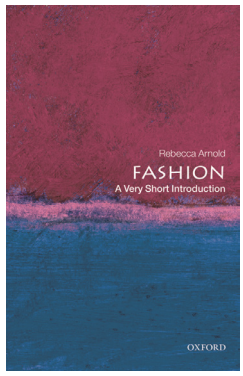
Beaton, Cecil and Gail Buckland. *The Magic Image*: *The Genius of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975.

Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir, DEA, is an art historian. She studied fashion history at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, and is currently working as Associate Professor of Art History and Art Theory at the University of Iceland, Reykjavik.

►▼◄

Fashion: A Very Short Introduction

Rebecca Arnold
Oxford: Oxford University Press,
2009, 146 pages, $11.95
ISBN 978-0-19-954790-6



By Permission of Oxford University Press

This book is precisely what the title indicates: a brief introduction to several aspects of fashion. Although its target readership is for fashion novices, the book is stimulating and accessible for anyone that wants to know fashion as a business, as a creative force and as a means of communication. In addition, it provides a good review for all readers interested in the hows and whats of the fashion industry.

Arnold's intention is to briefly discuss several facets of fashion. Two strong components of the book are the references and further reading suggestions that are organized by chapter. These validate Arnold's research and give the reader viable routes for more in-depth discovery. The book has been divided into six chapters: designers, art, industry, shopping, ethics and globalization. An introduction and conclusion complement the overall effectiveness of the work.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the fashion industry by discussing the creative role of the fashion designer. Titled 'Designers,' the chapter begins with a full description of Chanel's 2008 spring couture catwalk venue, which used a 75-foot replica of a Chanel signature cardigan jacket, placed on a revolving platform as the backdrop for the runway show.[1] A brief history of the house of Chanel follows, along with a description of the reinvention of the Chanel line by Karl Lagerfeld after the death of Coco Chanel. Arnold mentions the historical importance of London's fashionable Savile Row and the relationships that developed between the aristocracy and the tailors and dressmakers that were responsible for their wardrobes. She then discusses the transference in thinking of fashion as a collaborative production of several people to the skills and vision of a single designer. The discussion begins with Rose Bertin, continues through the development of the haute couture business of Charles Frederick Worth and concludes with Lagerfeld at Chanel. Every major English and French designer is named. Chapter one concludes with a discussion of the evolution of the ready-to-wear designer and the corresponding impact on the fashion industry.

Fashion as an art form and its connection with various other art expressions are topics of chapter two. An exploration of fashion in portraiture, photography, magazine advertisements and visual culture follows. Arnold describes the collaboration of fashion designers with media and art venues not only to express their ideas and visions, but also to create a marketing platform. She uses examples of courtiers that range from Poiret's photographed 'One Thousand and Second Night' fancy dress ball[2] to Miuccia Prada's 2006 exhibition *Waist Down: Miuccia Prada, Art and Creativity*[3] to argue the point that there is a connection between the practice of fine arts and haute couture.

An historical narrative of the evolution of the fashion industry, from the mid-fourteenth century to the twentieth century, is presented in chapter three. Technological advancements, cross-cultural exchanges, wars and trade routes that spread across the Western world and enhanced the development and improvement of fabrication, dyes and printing are addressed. Each century is discussed using specific examples of events that promoted advancements in the fashion industry. For example, the discussion of the seventeenth century includes the 'growing recognition and consolidation of rich fabrics in Lyons, luxury trades in Paris, and tailoring in London, that in turn led to 'early attempts to make readymade clothes and ultimately, in its [the fashion industry's] status as a major international economic and cultural force.'[4] Chapter three concludes with an introduction to the advertising and media industries and the effects of these businesses on the successes or failures of fashion designers. The history of fashion publications, broadcast and on-line media advertisements, fashion shows and fashion weeks is presented. In addition, Arnold shows how the effect of fashion plates, fashion photography, and window displays increased apparel consumption on the part of the consumer.

Chapter four begins with a description of Comme des Garçons's new 'guerrilla store' that opened in Warsaw in 2007. This is the introduction that Arnold uses to discuss the history of fashion shopping and retailing. She delineates the contrast between the purposeful interior disarray of the 2007 guerrilla store, a Renaissance market, and the abundance of a Victorian lace and fabric shop. Arnold furthers the discussion with the introduction of department store retailing in 1838. Originally aimed at female customers who had the responsibility to clothe their families and decorate their homes, department stores developed unique characteristics and

enticements, using architecture and visual presentation. Shopping changed from a search for clothing essentials to a social event with the store as a destination. Department stores recognized competition and responded to new consumer demands by incorporating special sale days, bargains and in-store events as methods of luring shoppers. Arnold states that 'these developments not only changed the ways in which people could buy fabrics and clothing; it simultaneously shaped ideas about how to behave and how to dress.'[5] The store, through the use of advertising and other marketing techniques, set standards for taste and a fashion identity, and thereby promoted class differentiation based upon the purchase of apparel.

Arnold proceeds to discuss how fine tailors and couturiers were compelled to create an exclusive and luxurious image different from mass produced garments found in department stores. The development of an international market for ready-to-wear versus one-of-a-kind designs created confusion for the consumer. She concludes with the current practice of consumers 'mixing vintage, designer, and cheap high-street and markets finds together'[6] to create an individual fashion statement. The chapter on fashion ethics covers every aspect of the range of moral tensions that are inherent in the fashion industry. For example, a complete discussion between the production of fur-based apparel and animal welfare demonstrates the juxtaposition of a luxurious appearance versus the methods involved in acquiring the pelts. Arnold further exposes the underside of fashion by discussing how women are exploited as sex objects by fashion photography and marketing in order to sell clothing and the lifestyle that is associated with a particular line of apparel or designer. Returning to her previous approach of historical narrative, she points out the discriminatory manipulation of fashion towards women, their bodies, 'clothing, gestures, etiquette and deportment.'[7] Arnold argues that fashion has traditionally been used to create identities and class structure. Throughout history, morals have been associated with correct fashion, even to the detriment, either physically or financially, of the wearer. She discusses the Macaronis of the eighteenth century and their impact on masculinity ideals. In recent history, youth cultures have used fashion statements, condemned by traditionalists as 'tasteless, for their unselfconscious flaunting of obvious branding and disregard for middle-class ideals of style'[8] to disrupt social codes of behaviour, redefine femininity, and expose class prejudice. Arnold also examines the overt discrimination of minorities in advertisements and on the runway.

A discussion in the book about attempts to regulate production and consumption of fashion includes sumptuary laws that were imposed from the Renaissance through the seventeenth century in an effort to maintain class distinctions. Arnold also discusses other restrictions caused by wartime rationing and political sanctions that were imposed in communist and totalitarian counties as means of controlling consumptions and promoting uniformity of image. Another discussion of fashion ethics deals with the use of child labour by mass market fashion producers whose business is the production of inexpensive clothing. Counterfeiting of apparel and accessories is also addressed, as designs are frequently pirated and consumers enticed to associate with status symbols that they could otherwise not afford.

Arnold notes that globalization of fashion has developed alongside technological advances in communications and transport. Before the increase in globalization, cultures were able to maintain distinct dress. Global sourcing has erased the boundaries of countries and trans-national designs are the result. The spread of fashion weeks, well beyond the original Paris venue, marks a lingering effort to preserve local fashion and provide stages for regional designers. Since the late twentieth century all aspects of the fashion industry have been increasingly tied to a globalized system.

This book certainly educates the reader. It is well-organized topically and uses historic narratives to give the reader a brief background of each topic that the author discusses. Her focus is Western fashion, but she also evaluates the dominance of other fashion aspects and

areas in the upcoming decades. She connects how fashion is linked to design, production, and retailing, and its effects and linkages to our social and cultural lives. For a brief introduction to the fashion industry, its history and its future, this book is a must read for every enthusiast.

Notes

[1] The complete Chanel-Spring/Summer Haute Couture 2008/2009 runway show, featuring the 75-foot replica Chanel signature jacket can be watched at http://www.youtube.com/watch.
[2] Harold Koda and Andrew Bolton, *Poiret* (New York: Yale University Press, 2007), 21.
[3] Cathy Horn, 'Whirling and Twirling, Prada Shows Its Skirts,' *New York Times*, April 13, 2006. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/13/fashion/thursdaystyles/13PRADA.html, accessed June 30, 2012.
[4] Rebecca Arnold, *Fashion: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52.
[5] Ibid., 75.
[6] Ibid., 83.
[7] Ibid., 92.
[8] Ibid., 6.

Bibliography

Arnold, Rebecca. *Fashion: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Horn, Cathy. 'Whirling and Twirling, Prada Shows Its Skirts.' *New York Times*, April 13, 2006. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/13/fashion/thursdaystyles/13PRADA.html, accessed June 30, 2012.

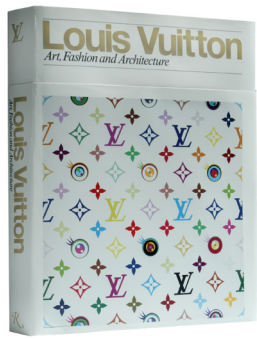
Koda, Harold and Andrew Bolton. *Poiret*. New York: Yale University Press, 2007.

M. Lynn Barnes, PhD, of Division of Design & Merchandising, Davis College, West Virginia University, is a dress historian with a research and academic emphasis on Gilded Age fashions and textiles, 1870-1920.

►▼◄

Louis Vuitton: Art, Fashion and Architecture

Jill Gasparina, Taro Igarashi, Olivier Saillard,
Ian Luna and Valerie Steele
New York: Rizzoli,
2009, 404 pages, $85.00
ISBN 978-0-8478-3338-2



Courtesy of Rizzoli ©2009

In the history of fashion, there are a handful of designs so striking, innovative, and influential in their inception that they quickly transcend the context of their creation and initial circulation. When we think of immediately recognizable designs like Chanel's little black dress, the Louis Vuitton monogram canvas, or Dior's New Look dresses and suits, despite their ground-breaking inventiveness, the label of 'classic' follows without hesitation in due course. The challenge for a designer or a company, upon which this label is bestowed, of course, is to remain relevant in the ever changing world of fashion. This spirit of the reinvention and the redefinition of a classic brand is the point of departure and the basic premise of the recent collaborative volume *Louis Vuitton: Art, Fashion and Architecture*.

The organizational structure of *Louis Vuitton* itself seems to derive from the world of art and can best be described as collage-like, with suggestive juxtapositions of written texts of differing sorts and a profusion of illustrative photographs. The three essays in the volume – Taro Igarashi's 'Learning from Louis Vuitton,' Jill Gasparina's '33 Colors,' and Olivier Saillard's 'The Empire of Signs' – articulate the historical and theoretical points for the consideration of the evolution of the Louis Vuitton brand from the mid-twentieth century onwards as it sought collaborations and crossovers with figures in the disciplines of architecture, art, and fashion respectively. Following these essays is an extensive alphabetized series of commentaries by specialized critics and scholars on the many architects, artists, photographers, and fashion designers who have worked to varying degrees with the Louis Vuitton Company. These commentaries typically provide detailed biographies of the subjects in question as well as an outline of the nature of their collaborative work with Louis Vuitton. Finally, the numerous photographic illustrations complement the written portions of the volume, but also provide in an autonomous way a striking visual narrative of the remarkable evolution of Louis Vuitton in the last fifty years.

In the volume's first essay, architecture critic Taro Igarashi examines the question of the architectural design of Louis Vuitton luxury boutiques, flagship stores, and corporate headquarters in the past decade, taking as his primary examples those built in Japan like the Nagoya store which was designed by Jun Aoki and opened in 1999. The author begins by evoking concepts in contemporary architectural theory like the notion of 'Superflat' construction conceptualized by Takashi Murakami and those of the 'Duck' and the 'Decorated shed' articulated by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour in their immensely influential work *Learning from Las Vegas*. Igarashi sees in the architectural design of recent Louis Vuitton buildings in Japan a similar distortion of structure in its particular foregrounding of surface, incidentally reminiscent of the promotional pavilions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century World's Fairs, but also, perhaps more interestingly, a mimicking the perspectival dimensions of Louis Vuitton's trademark Damier logo canvas. In curator and art critic Jill Gasparina's critical essay, the focus of Louis Vuitton's collaborations shifts to the world of art and artists as it considers a motivated strategy present in both commercial and creative dimensions of the company. On the one hand, Gasparina examines the progressive

tendency in Louis Vuitton since the 1980s to engage important contemporary artists in the creation of new LV designs, as with the 1988 commission of notable artists including Arman, Sol LeWitt and James Rosenquist on a limited edition series of silk scarves. Such commissions, in the creation of commercial designs or unique artistic pieces, would accelerate and became commonplace over the next two decades. On the other hand, the progressive association of Louis Vuitton with the world of art has also occurred in the form of exhibitions in the commercial spaces of selected flagship stores, particularly in the recently renovated store on the Champs-Elysées in Paris. This dimension of Louis Vuitton is so pronounced that that their website includes a section on contemporary world art and the cultural space in the Paris store devoted to it that shoppers for Louis Vuitton products are invited to visit when in the store. Gasparina sees in these varying strategies of collaboration and appropriation on the part of Louis Vuitton a process of what she calls 'aesthetic capitalism' which seeks to construct a popular culture of luxury. In the final critical essay of the volume, fashion historian and critic Olivier Saillard begins by detailing the history of Louis Vuitton in the nineteenth century as a company created at the time of the emergence of the modern fashion system in Second Empire France. However, unlike many other companies in the world of fashion, Louis Vuitton, as a maker of luxury goods, has demonstrated itself to be particularly resistant to and even unaffected by the economic fluctuations of Western and global societies in the interim. Moreover, as Saillard contends, within that context, Louis Vuitton has created a supplementary, valorising dimension of referentiality with the regular engagement of artists and fashion designers using LV designs as their point of reference and inspiration for the recreation of existing designs or the inception of new ones.

When the reader of *Louis Vuitton: Art, Fashion and Architecture* considers the subsequent glossary of architects, artists, photographers, and fashion designers who have worked in an on-going way with or who have been commissioned in a unique instance by Louis Vuitton, particularly in the last twenty years, it is surprising and impressive just how coherent the ensuing narrative of the continuation of a traditional brand in the midst of the process of reinvention has been, given such diverse creative minds and forces in play. In this respect, as the volume has occasion to note multiple times, the activities surrounding the centennial celebration of the monogram canvas design in 1996 and the naming of Marc Jacobs as creative director of Louis Vuitton in 1997 were particularly pivotal and meaningful events. Regarding the 1996 centennial celebration of the world-famous trademark LV monogram canvas, the company commissioned seven leading fashion designers (Azzedine Alaia, Manolo Blahnik, Romeo Gigli, Helmut Lang, Isaac Mizrahi, Sybilla Sorondo and Vivienne Westwood) to reinterpret its designs in a limited edition series of bags, thus articulating a collaborative and aesthetic statement on the centrality of Louis Vuitton in the world of fashion signifiers. A year later, the naming of Marc Jacobs as creative director of Louis Vuitton facilitated and intensified this approach in the coming decade. As the extensive entry on the designer written by Valerie Steele contends, the collaborative strategy of creative exchange between figures in different disciplines over which Jacobs has presided at Louis Vuitton has not only minimized the monolithic influence of one designer or another, but also opened up the possibility of the refashioning of traditional designs in renewed networks of contemporary cultural reference.

As with many publications on the world of fashion, *Louis Vuitton: Art, Fashion and Architecture* is a visually sumptuous volume with high quality images and a book design that is aesthetically innovative; its written portions are equally engaging, offering a theoretically sophisticated framework and a valuable informational resource for understanding the dramatic evolution and reinvention of a brand that has remained a constant for a century and a half in the often nebulous niche of fashion accessories. As this volume effectively demonstrates, through the aesthetic strategies employed for the reimagining of existing or traditional designs and the

business model of culturally enhancing those products in architecturally striking luxury boutiques and flagship stores around the world, the progressive engagement of Louis Vuitton with the realms of fashion, art, and architecture has successfully repositioned and redefined this leading luxury goods maker at the forefront of fashion aesthetics and high culture in the early twenty-first century.

Bibliography

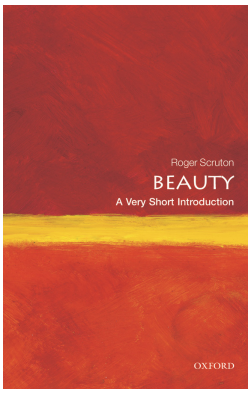
Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972.

Leonard R. Koos, PhD, is an Associate Professor of French at the University of Mary Washington, USA.

►▼◄

Beauty: A Very Short Introduction

Roger Scruton
Oxford: Oxford University Press,
2011,186 pages, $11.95
ISBN 978-0-19-922975-8



By Permission of Oxford University Press

Roger Scruton's *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* is an essential, stimulating and accessible exploration of the author's philosophy of beauty. First published in 2009, the book has been re-published in 2011 as one of the series of 'Very Short Introductions' to a range of subjects from Autism to Statistics. The 'Very Short' volumes have been published in over 25 languages since 1995. The list, itself, offers an interesting range of subjects to whet the knowledge appetite.

It is important to be aware that Scruton, as a philosopher, brings his own philosophical interpretation of Plato, Plotinus, Aquinas, Hegel, Kant, and other writers who have pondered the subject of beauty, but still gives the reader an opportunity to be introduced to these thinkers, but with a critical awareness.

From the opening paragraphs of the preface where Scruton states that a person who is indifferent to beauty has not perceived it, the book argues for objective judgements of beauty, dismissing the postmodern argument that beauty is purely subjective. It is his view that the concept of an educated 'criticism' is essential in all fields of study, including that of beauty. Scruton also expresses personal opinions of what he perceives as beautiful, but to be fair, such assessments are always matters of taste. The taste of this reviewer, whose background is in Contemporary Art and Fashion, is different from that of Scruton. It would indeed raise some

interesting arguments: this reviewer cannot always agree with Scruton's determining what constitutes the beautiful as being a matter of educated – Enlightened, as it were – taste. Although Scruton's argument is consistent with his claim, it is nonetheless problematic, seeing as an 'educated taste,' at least to the mind of this reviewer, bears with it inevitable connotations of elitism. That aside, Scruton's writings take the reader through many different ways of thinking about Beauty, provoking thought, his intention.

The book has small black and white illustrations throughout, from Saint Paul's Cathedral, London, to a selection of stills from Ingmar Bergman's film 'Wild Strawberries.' These images emphasise the observation that beauty is contextual, and exists in a range of settings, reinforcing and demonstrating arguments made in the text.

The eight chapters organise the discussion of Beauty under distinct headings: Judging Beauty, Human Beauty, Natural Beauty, Everyday Beauty, Artistic Beauty, Taste and Order, Art and Eros, The Flight from Beauty, with concluding thoughts, excellent notes and further readings. Together, these give a short, comprehensive introduction to beauty, starting with Plato and Plotinus, and concepts of truth, goodness and beauty, moving to postmodern arguments. The list of names and index allow quick reference to any philosopher, author or topic.

Scruton has been criticised for his stance as an 'Enlightenment Rationalist'; the Enlightenment, a cultural movement in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, praised science and intellectual exchange, positivism, and opposed superstition. He is praised by other critics as a modern philosopher who gives meaning to traditional ways of looking for and at beauty. Either view adds to the value of questioning beauty which is an encouragement to read this small book.

Gabrielle Simpson is a sculptor, creative arts educator and student of fashion, beauty and celebrity; she is taking a Master's in Design (Honours) at the Centre of Fine Art, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

►▼◄

A Spirited Butterfly: A History of Fashion in Trinidad and Tobago

Rosemary Stone
Coconut Creek, Florida: Caribbean Studies Press,
2011, 284 pages, $60.00
ISBN 978-1584327172

The reality show 'Project Runway,' a contest for emerging clothing designers with a prize of $100,000 to start a new clothing line, ended its most recent season with a winner from the island republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Anya Ayoung-Chee. Ayoung-Chee's win coincides with two more recent events in Trinidad and Tobago that have served to increase the nation's fashion profile. The establishment of Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Week in 2008 is one and the publication of Rosemary Stone's *A Spirited Butterfly* is the other.

Stone attributes her expertise in the fashion of her birth nation not only to her twenty-six years as the fashion editor for the *Trinidad Express*, or her training in fashion design in London, but also to her lifelong attraction to performative displays of dress throughout Trinidadian cultural history. As an island possibly most well-known for its elaborate costumes during its yearly Carnival celebrations, Trinidadian performance and dress have often gone hand in hand. Stone's book, however, attempts to shift the conversation about Trinidad dress from a focus on costumes to one on ready-to-wear and high fashion. She provides a history of the nation's fashion that is most detailed when she discusses clothing factories that thrived during the middle of the twentieth century and the more recent establishment of Fashion Week, which she was instrumental in developing.

Aside from being the first book of its kind, *A Spirited Butterfly* is also important because of its remarkable collection of images of dress throughout Trinidadian history. Stone includes images from the beginning of the twentieth century up to and through the contemporary moment, and also documents the cultural diversity that resulted from indentured servant populations from South and East Asia mixing with post-slavery African populations and European colonial populations. The influence of all of these cultures is evident in the more contemporary images of clothing by Trinidadian designers. *A Spirited Butterfly* includes images of turn-of-the-century weddings, family photos and school photos, as well as contemporary images of runway shows and the fashions from local designers such as Heather Jones, Meiling, Robert Young, Claudia Pegus, and Zadd and Eastman.

Another important strength of Stone's text is its examination of the struggle of Trinidad's fashion industry after the introduction of American free trade to the area. In a lengthy chapter entitled 'The Business of Fashion' Stone recounts how the garment industry was able to grow through the creation of the Negative List, a collection of duty-free concessions, tax exemptions and tariff protections that allowed captains of the garment industry such as Matthew Gonsalves, founder of the Elite Ltd. shirt manufacturing company, to flourish. The industry continued to grow under CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market) which allows free trade between all of the member islands in the Caribbean area. But with the repealing of the Negative List and the increased interest in foreign goods, the Trinidadian garment industry began to falter. Stone's discussion clearly indicates a desire to recapture and eventually increase the garment industry's presence, but with the recent cancellation of Fashion Week due to a lack of funding, it appears that the struggle for Trinidad's fashion independence continues.

In spite of its value, Stone's book does possess several weaknesses that cannot pass without comment. For a text with so many images, names, and historical facts, it woefully lacks an index, making it extremely difficult for researchers to navigate. As a result, it feels more like a very detailed coffee-table book rather than a scholarly resource. Its bibliography is also quite brief and several citations are incomplete making it difficult for scholars to use as a source for further study.

In terms of content, the book fails to provide an objective view of the fashion industry in Trinidad as it focuses almost exclusively on the European, Indian and Syrian populations that make up the majority of the wealthier classes in Trinidad. The major contributions of a predominantly Afro-Trinidadian and working-class group to Trinidad's fashion history is under-examined. The Drag Brothers, well-known throughout Trinidad for their production of handmade leather goods that are owned by much of the island's population, and for the production of Carnival boots worn with the elaborate costumes produced yearly, only receive one sentence of discussion in a book of nearly three hundred pages. The ubiquitous presence of these artisans in Trinidadian culture deserves at least a chapter of analysis.

The overall value of Stone's book is the way in which it draws attention to the importance of fashion and dress from a national perspective that is clearly marginalized in the global fashion industry. While New York, Milan, Paris and London may be fashion capitals, the strength of these cities also comes from the influence of spaces like the Caribbean that provide both cultural inspiration and, with the introduction of Anya Ayoung-Chee, designers that allow the industry to continue to remake itself. Stone's book will hopefully provide inspiration for other scholars to continue investigating these important global connections.

Alisa K. Braithwaite, PhD, has taught literature at MIT and Milton Academy. Her areas of expertise are global literature, science fiction and fashion.

►▼◄

Hussein Chalayan

Robert Violette, ed.
New York: Rizzoli,
2011, 276 pages, $85
ISBN 13-978-0-8478-3386-3

Courtesy of Rizzoli ©2011

Influenced by personal history, the world of science, body image and modernist discourse, Hussein Chalayan has explored the boundaries between design and fashion for more than two decades. In her recent essay on 'conceptual fashion,' Hazel Clark, Research Chair of Fashion at Parsons New School for Design, describes Chalayan as a designer who has abandoned the garment.[1] In the light of his recent exhibitions at the Design Museum, London (2009), the Lisson Gallery, London (2010) and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris (2011), one might be persuaded to agree with the statement. But Robert Violette's new edited anthology *Hussein Chalayan* offers a very different definition of Chalayan's approach to fashion design. The central focus of the anthology is on the relationship between the image and the garment and on Chalayan's somewhat unique role within the fashion industry. What is apparent when looking at this collection of essays is that we are faced with a designer who in some ways resists definition. Not simply an exploration of Chalayan's work and its context, the volume offers something a bit more complex, more intricate: a designer, consultant, artist, citizen, performer, filmmaker, traveller, inventor and thinker, whose work breaks away from the paradigm of the fashion system, while at the same time we are reminded that his work is still firmly placed within the industry.

A book about Chalayan's work, as well as the individual behind it, needs to take an experimental slant. And this is already made visible on the book's cover in the slightly off-centre placement of Richard Avedon's black and white photograph of two young women wearing one of Chalayan's designs. But when flicking through the pages it becomes clear that

this text takes on the vast task of opening up the world of a designer who has been defined as an artist who happens to express himself through the cycle of fashion. In the first part of the volume, one is offered an intimate portrait of the designer by those who followed and commented on his career from its beginnings, such as the fashion editor Susanne Frankel in her chapter 'Border Crossing,' the fashion journalist Sarah Mower in her 'Looking Back on Hussein Chalayan,' and, at the very end of the book, *Elle*'s fashion editor Rebecca Lowthorpe, in 'The Art of Balance.'

Frankel and Mower take a personal approach in establishing a biographical context around Chalayan as a product of his own cultural and fragmented personal history. They both take the view that personal history and the art school environment at Central Saint Martins in London form the basis from which Chalayan had originally begun and then established his work. What becomes clear is that neither author aims to comment on Chalayan's designs in any real detail. Instead, both chapters dwell – admiringly – on the past struggle of the industry to define Chalayan as a designer. Although Mower does comment on the fact that Chalayan has remained somewhat impenetrable within the commercial framework of the fashion system, it is clear that both Frankel and Mower retain a rather romantic notion of Chalayan as an artist as well as in their interpretation of his role as 'the radical fashion designer.'

This personal, biographical approach is mirrored once more at the end of the book by Rebecca Lowthorpe, in her chapter 'The Art of Balance,' but from a slightly different angle. If the beginning of the book was about the way the industry has responded to Chalayan's work, the final chapter is about Chalayan's impact on mainstream fashion brands. Thus, we learn about his work as a designer and consultant for the American cashmere and knitwear label TSE: New York and the UK based luxury brand Asprey, as well as his work as creative director for Puma. By this choice of framing work and subject through the eyes of the fashion industry, the book clearly defines Chalayan as being a *fashion* designer, not an *artist* designer, thereby placing his work firmly within the fashion industry and its commercial system.

The anthology makes a very important argument; we should not simply see Chalayan as a 'conceptual' designer, linking his work with conceptual art practice, which is routed within early twentieth century avant-garde tradition and mid 1960s art movements. Such an approach would imply that Chalayan's work favours complex ideas, self-reflection and innovation over appearance. But if we simply define him in this way we would misinterpret the blurring of disciplinary boundaries between art and fashion, which are evidently crucial to his approach. In the final chapter Lowthorpe makes clear that Chalayan himself is not entirely comfortable with being described as a 'conceptual' designer.[2] This is mirrored again in other parts of the book, most importantly, in the way the reader is repeatedly brought back to the idea of narrative and design. This collection of essays has made a recurring theme of 'the narrative' and 'narrativity' and implies that the concepts can be defined in various ways: *Narrative* consists of personal recollections, but is also established through the narrative of images, the narrative of professional relationships, the narrative of particular seasons and shows, the narrative of a single garment or the narrative of concepts and ideas – hence, *narrativity*.

At the heart of the anthology lies Judith Clark's contribution, or rather, contributions. I find this to be in some ways the most noteworthy part of the *Chalayan* volume and will therefore deal with it in some more detail. The reflections of Clark, who is Reader in the Field of Fashion and Museology at the London College of Fashion, cannot be described as chapters per se, as they have no page numbers, while still shaping the overall structure of the book. Each of her seven sections is introduced by the same cover page which lists titles, such as 'Transcendence,' 'Speed and Motion,' 'Metamorphosis,' 'Blind Spots,' 'Disembodiment,' 'New Anthropology' or 'Migration.'[3] Clark's musings establish but also reference themes within Chalayan's work. Instead of page numbers the sections are grouped through symbols,

which create their own structure. Each symbol relates to one of the themes she has chosen and each contribution relates directly to specific collections, fashion films or exhibitions that follow in the subsequent sections. The visual sources of designs, editorials, stills from catwalk shows, sketches, stills from fashion films or invitations, illustrate Clark's ideas while they also represent the history of Chalayan's work and progress. Pamela Golbin, Chief Curator at the *Musée de la Mode et Textile* at the Louvre in Paris and curator of its recent Chalayan exhibition, also comments on many of the visual materials. This unusual structure creates seven layers of texts and images, which contribute towards constructing and contextualizing Chalayan's world. It seems no coincidence, then, that the book itself is structured in layers not unlike a garment and with each theme appears yet another layer.

In light of our discussion of Clark's approach, it is appropriate to mention the monograph *Hussein Chalayan* (2005) with a contribution from the fashion historian Caroline Evans.[4] There, Evans examined the idea of migration and multiple lives of the garment in relation to Chalayan's work and the importance of his personal experience. In some ways Clark's approach follows a similar score, but she approaches the subject of multiplicity by breaking her contributions into the aforementioned sections. What is different, however, is that Clark's approach seems much more like a dialogue – an exchange in which her own ideas morph with the subject. Here Chalayan's work and Clark's contribution seem to become one and we find, on these slightly off-kilter double pages without page numbers, something quite unusual: lyrical reflection. As, indeed, Clark writes: 'In Chalayan's hands dresses can enact the fashion system itself, with its mutating hemlines and quickly morphing silhouettes....'[5]

The detail as well as the approach in which Chalayan's work is documented through images, is also significant in Violette's anthology. The strong focus on visual reproduction makes us reflect on the idea of fashion as image. In this sense the fashion image is not simply a photograph or a sketch, documenting past events and designs but tells a story. In the present context the narrative does not begin with the sketch and end with an editorial – again, a reliance on linear structure would not do the aim of this book justice – but instead breaks with the convention of chronological process. The anthology makes clear that for Chalayan the process itself is central – even if it is not so much about the process of making or designing fashion, as about that of thinking, associating and correlating, which brings each story, each theme and each image to life. What is important here is that the anthology neither attempts to establish an overarching meaning of Chalayan's work nor makes any distinction between the actual garment and its representation. In this sense the collection of essays is unusual due to the fact that Clark, as well as Golbin, break with the convention of chronology.

Chalayan's designs construct and contextualize fashion. The pages morph, and we find endless examples of how ideas evolve into hemlines and silhouettes turn into iconic moments in the fashion cycle. However abstract, the anthology instils us with the notion that Chalayan has a firm place within the folds of the fashion industry, and herein lies the volume's biggest achievement: On the one hand, the book is a mere lyrical reflection on ideas and dreams put into practice, but on the other it is an account of a designer who has challenged a commercial industry, which still relies on innovation and courage.

Notes

[1] Hazel Clark, 'Conceptual Fashion,' in *Fashion and Art*, ed. Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas (London: Berg, 2012), 67-75.

[2] Rebecca Lowthorpe, 'The Art of Balance,' in *Hussein Chalayan*, ed. Robert Violette (New York: Rizzoli, 2011), 259-269.

[3] Judith Clark, in Ibid., 'Transcendence,' 49-52, 'Speed and Motion,' 87-89, 'Metamorphosis,' 125-127, 'Blind Spots,' 153-155, 'Disembodiment,' 171-173, 'New Anthropology,' 195-197, 'Migration,' 231-233.
[4] Caroline Evans, 'No Man's Land,' in Caroline Evans, Suzy Menkes, Ted Polhemus and Bradley Quinn, *Hussein Chalayan* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers and Groninger Museum), 2005, 5-8. Exhibition curated by Mark Wilson and Sue-an van der Zijpp, Groninger Museum, Netherlands, April 17- September 4, 2005.
[5] Clark, 'Transcendence,' 49-51.

Bibliography

Evans, Caroline, and Suzy Menkes, Ted Polhemus and Bradley Quinn. *Hussein Chalayan*. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers and Groninger Museum, 2005.

Geczy, Adam and Vicki Karaminas, eds. *Fashion and Art*. London: Berg, 2012.

Violette, Robert, ed. *Hussein Chalayan*. With contributions by Hussein Chalayan, Judith Clark, Susannah Frankel, Pamela Golbin, Emily King and Rebecca Lowthorpe. New York: Rizzoli, 2011.

Nathalie Khan, PGDip and MRes, teaches fashion history and theory at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design and London College of Fashion (University of the Arts London). She is an independent curator and media consultant.