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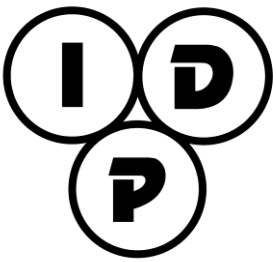

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Letter from the Editor

Fashion is a powerful mode of expression and in this issue of *Catwalk*, the intersection of fashion and art emerged as a dominant theme, joining together what might look like disparate topics. Art's influence on fashion, and fashion's influence on art are featured in articles focused on ballet, musical theatre, cinema, architecture, and an art project where weapons experts blast away at designer clothing and bags.

The first article, 'Made for Love? Femininity in George Balanchine's Ballets and Haute Couture Eveningwear c. 1927-1933,' was written by Katerina Pantelides of the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. Pantelides is co-founder of the Fashion Research Network, and her starting point is Coco Chanel's maxim that woman should 'be a caterpillar by day and a butterfly by night.' She examines the intentionally feminine modes of embodiment in George Balanchine's choreography and in Parisian haute couture eveningwear of the time, and finds striking parallels exhibited by ballet dancers and fashion models that unsettle narratives of purely objectified femininity.

Victoria Jackson, of the University of Bristol in England, and Bregt Lameris, of the University of St Andrews in Scotland, are working on a Leverhulme Trust funded project focused on the history of colour in cinema. Their article, 'Phantom Colours: Alice Blue and Phantom Red; Changing Meanings of Two Fashionable Colours, 1905-1930,' examines the shifting meanings of colour when the rise of consumer culture brought new moralities and a revolution in women's fashion. Using Barthesian semiotic theories of unstable connotations, their historical analysis discusses how old meanings of colour were tamed by musical theatre and films; cosmetics, fashion, and advertising enterprises; and newspapers and movie fan magazines. The authors focus on two fashionable colours of the 1920s, Alice Blue and Phantom Red, the popularity of which was enhanced by the emergence of Technicolor II, the latest innovation that permitted filming in natural colours. Phantom Red was named after the red cape, filmed in Technicolor II and worn by the Phantom in the film *Phantom of the Opera* (1925). Alice Blue was named for and made popular in 1905 by Alice Roosevelt, the style icon daughter of the United States President Theodore Roosevelt; further popularised in 1919 by the song 'Alice Blue Gown' from the musical *Irene*; and was featured in the 1926 film version of *Irene*, in a Technicolor II finale starring the actor Colleen Moore in an Alice Blue gown.

'The Unique Standard: Fordist and Post-Fordist Production Dynamics in Fashion and Architecture' was written by Clara Olóriz Sanjuán, a research and practicing architect, who teaches at the University of Navarra in Spain and works for Groundlab, the London-based design firm specialising in landscape urbanism. Sanjuán uses fascinating illustrations to trace and compare the development of standardised sizing in both clothing and building and shows how 'off-the-peg' and contemporary 'mass-customisation' phenomena are intrinsically related. 'The Unique Standard' traces the historic shift whereby architecture crossed its disciplinary boundaries, fusing art, design, and industrial manufacturing techniques during the post-World War II period, to make use of fashion's terms and production strategies for prêt-à-porter clothing to satisfy people's demands for 'mass tailored' buildings. She shows how the 1970s critique of the lack of individualisation that came with 'ready-made' building and clothing initiated the current mass-customisation trend and the invention of what she knowingly terms the 'unique standard,' which is hardly 'one-off' at all.

Joan Kron, who is on the Advisory Board of *Catwalk* and is Contributing Editor-at-Large at *Allure* magazine, introduced me to the fine arts photographer Cynthia Vaiden Guest, the lively, captivating subject of 'They Shoot Prada, Don't They? Fashion "Shoot" with Cynthia Vaiden Guest.' I wrote this article after interviewing Guest over a three year period about her

SHOOTMYSHIT project, where weapons experts use guns to customise luxe fashion products and ordinary white T-shirts with bullet holes and powder burns. While Guest has created her own tongue-in-cheek 'brand' of 'shot fashion,' her design work provides a critical awareness of deconstructionist fashion techniques that restructure and re-semantify conventional aesthetics. A culture-jamming political contrarian, Guest opposes consumerism, logos, and the 'sheep-like following of brands,' and uses firearms as 'art tools.' She discusses her mentors, including Andy Warhol and his companion the filmmaker/interior designer Jed Johnson, and their influence on her art practice, and provides candid insight into her understanding of gun culture and how this is an important conceptual underpinning to her work. Paradoxically, Guest operates within the same framework of the luxe fashion brands she shoots by replacing them with an anti-brand or 'cooler' brand, a fact of which she is humorously aware.

Our Reviews section is devoted to recent exhibitions and books. Ericka Basile visited the new Anna Wintour Costume Center at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on its opening day, 5 May 2014, to view the exquisite gowns and engineering feats of *Charles James: Beyond Fashion*. I was present that day as well and marvelled not only at the three rooms showcasing the designer's work but the gigantic dress form made of thousands of flowers in the lobby of The Met. This issue of *Catwalk* features two exhibitions that took place at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Jennifer Anyan assesses *The Glamour of Italian Fashion 1945-2014*, and Catherine Glover reviews *Club to Catwalk: London Fashion in the 1980s*. Leonard R. Koos visited FOAM, in Amsterdam, to take in the photography of William Klein. Following the exhibitions section are two book reviews. Michael A. Langkjær considers *Antonio Lopez: Fashion, Art, Sex, & Disco*, by Roger Padilha and Mauricio Padilha, and Kristen E. Stewart reviews *Fashion and Art*, an essay collection edited by Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas. Our Reviews section also highlights Current and Forthcoming Exhibitions and Briefly Noted Books.

A deepest 'thank you' to Elizabeth Kaino Hopper for helping us put this issue of *Catwalk* together. I would also like to thank Leonard R. Koos, Desiree Smal, Michael A. Langkjær, and Lisa Howard.

Enjoy!

Jacque Lynn Foltyn, PhD
Chief Editor, *Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style*

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'Made for Love?' Femininity in George Balanchine's Ballets and Haute Couture Eveningwear c. 1927-1933

Katerina Pantelides

Abstract

This article examines the consciously feminine modes of embodiment in George Balanchine's choreography and in Parisian haute couture evening-wear from 1927-1933. Taking Coco Chanel's maxim that woman should 'be a caterpillar by day and a butterfly by night' because 'nothing could be more comfortable than a caterpillar and nothing more made for love than a butterfly,'[1] as a starting point, the article will consider how and why Balanchine and Parisian couturiers sought to imbue their protégés with the appearance of being 'made for love.' Did this amatory aesthetic wholly pander to patriarchal culture's expectations that woman should be placed on a pedestal and adapt her appearance to please the male spectator? In many respects, the retrogressive feminine characters embodied in ballet and fashion during this period positioned woman as an enigmatic creature who was man's opposite. Or were there subversions to gender norms inherent within these feminised presentations of the body? The unparalleled ease of movement, appeal to the emotions, and technical and dramatic versatility exhibited by ballet dancers and fashion models unsettles narratives of purely objectified femininity. In seeking to address these concerns, this article will examine Balanchine's ballets *La Chatte* (1927), *Apollo* (1928), *Prodigal Son* (1929) and *Cotillion* (1932), alongside relevant examples from Parisian couture.

Key Words

Ballet, evening-wear, embodiment, modelling, Vionnet, George Balanchine, Naum Gabo, Coco Chanel, Neo-Classical, Neo-Romantic, muse, retrospective, natural body.

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1. Introduction

The couturier Coco Chanel (1883-1971) declared that 'fashion is at once both a caterpillar and a butterfly.' She advised women to 'be a caterpillar by day and a butterfly by night. Nothing could be more comfortable than a caterpillar and nothing more made for love than a butterfly.'[2] This article examines how the dancers who performed in the Russian émigré choreographer George Balanchine's (1904-1983) ballets and the idealised women of Parisian haute couture eveningwear in the late 1920s and early 1930s embodied the butterfly's seductive elusiveness. The phrase 'made for love' imbues stereotypical notions of feminine pleasing and guile. However, as this article will show, the type and subject of love within Balanchine's and haute couture's butterfly mode were fluid, ambiguous and reflected contemporary concerns with regard to femininity.

The dress historian Rebecca Arnold has noted how 'as gender roles altered under the impact of the First World War' in the workplace and social life, 'women needed to renegotiate their relationship to public spaces.'[3] Sartorial and corporeal alterations accompanied the change in women's activities. The 'caterpillar' mode was evident in the mid-1920s daywear of Chanel and her peers, and typically utilised masculine fabrics and the simplified cuts of sportswear to accommodate the ease of movement required by women's increasingly active

metropolitan lifestyles. The utilitarian caterpillar appearance extended to women’s bodily comportment. In 1921, a French *Vogue* article noted how an androgynous ‘brusquerie’ characterised middle class women’s quotidian gestures as they adopted traditionally male habits including smoking and playing competitive sports.[4]

Just as in nature there is a fundamental relation between the caterpillar and butterfly stages, in 1920s fashion the daytime caterpillar’s unselfconscious ease and agility infiltrated the evening butterfly’s appearance. Mid-1920s eveningwear, which was often ornately embellished and made from lightweight, lustrous fabrics, revealed the back and limbs, areas of the body which had been concealed by antebellum clothing and therefore became new erogenous zones. Evening garments also created wing-like dimensions around the wearer’s body when she engaged in social dancing, one of the decade’s most popular pastimes. Indeed, a 1923 French *Vogue* article declared that ‘*la danse est devenue le thème...dominateur, impérieux d’une existence mondaine, ses variations s’offrent infinies et infinitésimales aux agites des deux sexes*’ (‘dance has become the dominant theme of worldly existence and its variations offer infinite and infinitesimal solutions to the restlessness of both sexes’).[5] Although the steps of modern jazz dances such as the Charleston were largely gender neutral, women’s filmy night clothes, which contrasted with men’s sober-coloured sleek suits, exaggerated gender difference and rendered women spectacular entities. As the cultural historian Liz Conor has identified, in the 1920s women’s bodies were exposed on stage and in the media to an unprecedented degree. According to Conor the flapper, a coquette who drew attention to her body with short skirts, a rhythmical walk, and modern mannerisms, courted a ‘specifically’ male gaze in asserting ‘her modernity as a sexual subject by paradoxically constituting herself as an object within the new conditions of feminine visibility.’[6] Combining the new woman’s masculine agency with the coquette’s attention-seeking exterior, the flapper rendered herself a seducing object.

Plural manifestations of femininity also infiltrated the Ballets Russes in the 1920s. Sergei de Diaghilev aligned his company’s aesthetic to modernity, and from 1920 onwards sought Chanel’s advice in costuming his female dancers.[7] The dancers subsequently cultivated a streamlined silhouette both on and off stage. In ballets such as *Le Train bleu* (1924), choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska and designed by Chanel, dancers of both sexes wore knitted bathing suits and replicated fashionable gestures including beach lounging and manipulating long chains of pearls. However, as ballet dancers and Russian émigrés, Diaghilev’s women equally embodied multiple ‘othering’ qualities. As the artist Edgar Degas (1834-1917) summarised, ballerinas were perceived as ‘Queens...made of distance and greasepaint,’ in other words, supremely feminine creatures who moved in an ethereal, non-pedestrian manner and inhabited a shadowy theatrical realm.[8] In nineteenth-century Russia and France, ballet dancers attracted overtly amatory attentions from the ballet’s middle-class patrons, owing to the provocative knee-length corolla-shaped tutus that exposed their legs during a period when most women wore full-length skirts. By the mid-1920s the Ballets Russes dancers’ professionalism had to some extent redressed stereotypes that equated female dancers with courtesans. However, as a result of their dualistic identities which comprised public and private elements, an aura of sexual provocation still surrounded female stage performers. Moreover, Russian ballet dancers possessed additional layers of difference because they were expatriates who had been severed from their native Russia and its Imperial ballet tradition after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. This difference was exacerbated by their numerous costumed guises in Diaghilev’s iconoclastic productions. Although they could imitate the appearance of fashionable Western women, these ethnically displaced performers’ ambiguity procured notions of enigmatic femininity.

In 1927, Chanel's conception of the feminine butterfly came into greater prominence both in the Ballets Russes and in Paris fashion. That year, Balanchine, who had emigrated from Bolshevik Russia in 1924 and had subsequently proven his choreographic talent to Diaghilev, became the company's dominant choreographer. From the outset of his choreographic career, Balanchine found his greatest inspiration in female dancers. According to Yuri Slonimsky, Balanchine's peer at the State Academic Theatre in Petrograd, the young choreographer 'searched tirelessly for a girl with talent who would inspire him in turn to affirm the beauty of a dance created in honour of his love and in admiration of her gifts.'[9] This emphasis on admiration, or love from a distance, indicated Balanchine's interest in incorporating a dancer's particular talent into his scheme of idealised beauty. However, as the writer and dance historian Elizabeth Kendall has observed, Balanchine remained unseduced by the 'fairy trappings,' the frou-frou costumes that defined nineteenth century ballerinas, and preferred to focus on exposing and enhancing a dancer's embodied talent with brief, simple costumes, and provocative Neo-Classical choreography.[10] The dancer's gendered enchantment emanated from her body in movement. This article will show how a focus on exposing and enhancing the female body in motion was also a key preoccupation of contemporary Parisian couturiers. For example, Lucien Lelong (1889-1958) promoted the kinetic silhouette and Madeleine Vionnet (1876-1975) revealed the natural body's shape in her application of the bias cut to women's outerwear.

This article examines how choreography, costume and what the anthropologist Marcel Mauss termed 'techniques of the body,' or the culturally acquired methods of bodily comportment, procured a modern image of amatory femininity.[11] The artistic, ontological, and emotional impact of Balanchine's ballets *La Chatte* (1927), *Apollo* (1928), *Prodigal Son* (1929) and *Cotillion* (1932) will be addressed alongside that of contemporary Parisian couture eveningwear.

2. *La Chatte*: The Enigma

La Chatte was a 1927 ballet based on Aesop's fable about a cat that is transformed into a woman when a young man wishes for it, and then resumes her feline form when tempted by a passing mouse.[12] *La Chatte's* eponymous protagonist embodied a distant, mercurial model of femininity by becoming an elemental construct of light and movement in the Russian Constructivist designer Naum Gabo's (1890-1977) set. Gabo's set, which explored the 'dynamic potential of form in space,' featured mobile constructions made from transparent plastics against a black background.[13] The geometric costumes, including the cat's mica two-horned headdress and cone-shaped overskirt which 'were contrived as moving entities so that when the dancers performed their steps, the light would catch the edge of the plastic or cause reflections to shimmer on its surface,' contributed to the luminous, kinetic set.[14] Balanchine's choreography was 'full of invention, particularly as regards its poses, which were highly sculptural' because they emphasised the body's three-dimensionality.[15] Alice Nikitina (1907/9-1978), who danced the cat in the ballet's Paris premiere, found that Balanchine's choreography and Henri Sauget's (1901-1989) music 'inspired me remarkably and I was in such harmony with the fairylike background of transparent, colourless creations.'[16] Nikitina's costumed integration into the dance destabilised her body's boundaries and thereby emphasised the cat's chimerical character. While the appearance of her body disrupted notions of fixed femininity, its combined intangibility and feline coyness was gendered and evoked the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) conception of the feminine 'riddle.'[17] Freud, who acknowledged the patriarchal psychoanalytic discipline's limited knowledge of femininity, hypothesised that women's sexuality was largely narcissistic, owing to 'the effect of penis-envy' whereby females attempted to compensate for 'their original sexual inferiority'

by accentuating their physical charms.[18] Freud’s added emphasis on feminine mystery and narcissism promoted a generalised conception of woman that objectified her and exaggerated her difference from man. Here, the cat’s mystery and self-absorption perhaps implied that her sexuality was largely self-directed and that she projected her appeal in spite of her admirer rather than as a result of his presence. Moreover, the French word *chatte* is gendered and refers specifically to a female cat. It is also a colloquial term for the female genitalia. Thus, on one level, the cat’s inconsistency represents that of the female sex as a whole.

In 1927, after a period of perceived creative stagnation, Parisian couturiers began to develop a new silhouette based upon cinematic movement and feminine seductiveness.[19] A 1927 article by Lelong for the periodical *L’Officiel de la couture et la mode* described how *la ligne kinétique* was designed to promote transparency and sculptural movement. Lelong wrote that ‘*la ligne est kinétique et l’effet optique s’obtient par le traitement des differents parties de la silhouette* (‘the line is kinetic and the effect is obtained by treatment of different parts of the silhouette’).[20] Though evening dress designs increasingly featured gatherings, cascades, and panels that permitted a temporary fullness in motion, the overall effect was ‘simple in appearance, but concealing a complex and logical cut.’[21] The dresses’ supple metamorphic nature directly referenced a dancer’s fluid transformations. Indeed, in 1928 *L’Officiel* described one printed Chanel chiffon dress with a triple flounced skirt and free-floating panels of irregular length as ‘an immaterial thing, fairylike and extremely simple, but studied in such a way that the line of the woman who wears it, is made the best of.’[22] Paradoxically revealing and illusionist, in the manner of *La Chatte’s* transparent yet intricately constructed costumes, the immaterial garment oscillated between exposing and etherealising the body through its complex network of panels. It thus diverted attention away from the wearer’s natural body and onto her stylised dressed body, which demonstrated the couturier’s craft and implied the woman’s consciously discerning self-presentation. Moreover, the wearer’s body would appear different as she moved and posed from varying angles, thus rendering her a dancing sculpture, like Nikitina in *La Chatte*, who transgressed static corporeal boundaries. This aesthetic conceived of a woman who was paradoxically as simple and direct as light, and yet a composite of illusionistic devices. The dancer-like female body, and perhaps by extension the woman inside it, in the manner of *La Chatte’s* hybrid cat, was portrayed as multiple and enigmatic.

3. *Apollo*: The Chosen One

La Chatte’s explicit femininity was further developed in Balanchine’s 1928 ballet *Apollo* and in Vionnet’s bias-cut dresses. Both pursued a vision of the body that married classical sculpture’s enduring laws of corporeal perfection and the individual body’s movement. Balanchine’s and Vionnet’s innovations were conceived in a period when artists and architects, including Le Corbusier (1887-1965), began to question how Classicism’s unifying principles and focus on the body could redefine modern experience. European interwar Classicism had multiple applications. Whereas Fascist politicians in Italy and Germany exploited the classical aesthetic to promote their national superiority, the Neo-Classical proponents discussed here attempted to enhance their practice through a vested interest in Attic architecture from around 500 BC and the Classical Greek notion of bodily improvement. Arnold argues that Classicism in relation to dress ‘presents a facade of effortlessness’ and ‘is revered within Western culture as an emblem of simple, natural truths, the beauty of geometric forms draped upon supple flesh, yet it takes considerable skill to create and wear.’[23] Her emphasis on the conscious artistry behind the Classical aesthetic’s apparent essentialism indicates that though women who aspired to a Galatea-like, sculpture-into-life ideal could appear impenetrable, their success relied upon careful adaptations to their

clothing, physique and grooming rituals. [24] The reference to Galatea, the sculpture who comes to life when Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, grants the sculptor Pygmalion's wish, is significant. After the mid-1920s fashion's overall promotion of androgyny and female emancipation, Neo-Classical fashion signalled a return to the sculpted lines of the body, which in turn exaggerated gender difference. The Neo-Classical ideal of essential womanhood was thus erotically invested.

Image 1: *Alice Nikitina as Terpsichore in 'Apollon Musagete.'*
Manuel Freres, Paris, 1928, © courtesy of Musée Nationale
de l'Opera de Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

This was pertinent with regard to Balanchine's *Apollo*, where the Muses of poetry (Calliope), mime (Polyhymnia), and dance (Terpsichore) competed for Apollo the Music god's favour through their embodied talents. Terpsichore's ability to present a persuasive classicising body image marked her chosen status.[25] The ballet's composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), viewed that Terpsichore's persuasion consisted of 'combining in herself both the rhythm of poetry and the eloquence of gesture,' and thereby 'reveal(ing) dancing to the world.'[26] This conscious exposition of dance, an art that welds the body's living solidity to choreography's intangibility, showcases a marriage between the dancer's imminent appeal and Classical art's universalising aesthetic. This was enhanced by the ballet's choreography, which featured frieze-like compositions in perpetual motion and thereby oscillated between Classical sculpture's poise and dance's movement.[27]

Balanchine, whose choreographic method involved collaborating with his dancers in ‘creat(ing) particular works for particular persons by drawing out what is in them,’ exploited the specific talents of his first Terpsichores, Nikitina and Alexandra Danilova (1903-1997).[28] Both dancers, who believed that Terpsichore’s choreography fit them like a ‘glove,’ revealed different notions of how a sculpted ideal should appear in backstage photographs.[29] Nikitina, who tended to prioritise form, was emotionally restrained, and embodied the challenging choreography in a fluid arabesque, while Danilova habitually turned her head towards the camera and engaged the spectator’s gaze as though to make them aware of her intrinsic stage presence and status as the favoured Muse (Images 1 & 2). Furthermore, the dancers’ different interpretations attest to Balanchine’s interest in the kinaesthetic immediacy of individual bodies, and the dancers’ own desires to emerge as distinctive artists within Classical ballet’s prescribed, idealised forms.

Indeed, the Muses’ ability to express a manner of movement and femininity that reflected their unadorned bodies was accentuated by a change of costume. Between 1928 and 1929 the protagonists underwent three costume changes. Stravinsky initially ‘dreamed’ that *Apollo* would be ‘a white ballet,’ where dancers wore full white tutus in the style of the Maryinsky classical ballets’ divertissements and perhaps performed analogous austerely ornamental choreography.[30] *Apollo’s* original costumes, designed by the ballet’s scenic artist Andre Bauchant (1873-1958), somewhat referenced Stravinsky’s conception in featuring a hybrid drop-waisted bodice, full knee-length Romantic tutu, and a brilliant floral skull-cap that covered the hair. This motley combination expressed both contemporary fashion and ballet tradition. However, Diaghilev felt this was overly eclectic for the choreography’s purist style, and commissioned Chanel to redesign the costumes for the ballet’s 1929 revival according to her own ideas of Classicism. Chanel replaced the head-cap with a feathery hair-piece and designed short white tunics, which featured a low ruched V-neck and triple ribbon ties at the waist. The new sleek costumes, with skirts that were shorter at the back, permitted a freer execution and revelation of the arabesque and simultaneously evoked the foundational chiton garment of Classical dress. On a further level, the elite couturier’s creation also referenced contemporary fashion because it displayed the natural body as an attraction in itself. In the new revealing costumes Terpsichore’s victory was simultaneously that of a superlative ballerina and a beautiful body in movement.

The tension between the living and idealised femininity manifested in Vionnet’s dual inspirations of ‘the beautifully clothed women depicted on (Greek vases), or even the noble lines of the vase itself’ and the agile, uncorseted female body.[31] Vionnet, who disdained fashion’s ephemerality, wanted haute couture to emulate Classical art’s allegedly timeless celebration of the well-proportioned natural body’s lines. As the curator Pamela Golbin has observed, Vionnet’s chief innovation to this end was to use the bias cut, which traditionally lined bodices, for the entire garment. This caused the fabric to alternately delineate and flow from the body’s contours, thus enabling it to gain elasticity and become a sort of ‘second skin around a body in motion.’[32] Like Balanchine’s glove-like choreography, which was specific to each dancer, Vionnet’s innovations with the bias cut enabled her to refine and flatter her clients’ individual bodies. Though Vionnet claimed that she had no ‘preconceived preferences in terms of overall silhouettes,’ used mannequins (live models) with different body types, and would create bespoke garments for particular clients, she worked out ‘mental’ conceptions of dresses from her half-scale mannequin dummy and entertained a notion of the ‘perfect’ youthful, slim, tall bodies that her figure-skimming gowns best suited.[33] Whereas the loose flapper fashions of the mid-1920s demanded shapely legs but concealed the torso’s shape, late 1920s and 1930s evening-wear brought the overall body’s silhouette into prominence. Vionnet viewed herself as ‘the doctor of the female form’ who ‘would have liked to require’ her clients

'to respect their bodies' through exercise and strict discipline, so that her gowns could be shown to best effect.[34]

Image 2: *Danilova as Terpsichore in 'Apollon Musagete.'* c.1928,
© courtesy of Ballet Society Inc.

Vionnet's favourite mannequin, the slender, small-boned five-foot-five-inch Sonia Kolmer, in many respects became the couturier's Galatea or Terpsichore, a purposefully selected figure who could best showcase her art. In George Hoyningen-Huene's (1900-1968) 1931 photograph for *Vogue* magazine, Kolmer, in Vionnet's silk crepe romain pyjamas, performs a natural dancer's movements with her contrapposto balance, extended arms and manipulation of a bow-shaped scarf.[35] The fabric clings to Kolmer's slim, gently curved limbs in the sea-soaked manner of the 390-380 BC Greek Nereid Monument's drapery and emphasises her contrapposto posture. In the double magazine spread which juxtaposes front and side views of the model, an impression of dancer-like lightness and dynamism is created through Kolmer's tiptoe balance against a purely black background, along with the silk scarf that zig-zags diagonally behind her body in the front view and forms a bow in the side view.[36] Additionally, the scarf, which Kolmer lightly supports in both front and side views, evokes the airborne manipulation of drapery prevalent in the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael's (1483-1520) clear, classicising compositions. Kolmer's transcendent appeal partially derives from her apparent ability to execute a complex, contrapposto balance effortlessly; as in Terpsichore's manner, her ingenuous exterior disguises her sophisticated emulation of Classical prototypes.

4. *Prodigal Son*: Fatal Attraction

A more carnal variant of amatory femininity manifested in ballet and couture through notions of entrapping animalism. In the Ballets Russes this was most directly imbued in the 1929 ballet *Prodigal Son's* Siren who tempts the eponymous protagonist to sin.[37] Balanchine instructed Felia Doubrovska (1896-1981), the dancer who played the Siren, to relinquish her humanity by becoming a 'snake' who hypnotises her prey and almost kills him.[38] Doubrovska related that 'everything was in my eyes and in showing myself' because her act's power lay in executing Balanchine's intricately geometric choreography of folding and unfolding legs with a steady stare.[39] She described how:

> because at that time I had lovely legs, Balanchine used that...he asked me to lie down on the floor on my back, just flat, and to bend my knees and then slowly kick, one leg straight, then the other.[40]

Balanchine further achieved the Siren's body image by exaggerating Doubrovska's five-foot six inch physique, which by contemporary standards was strikingly tall for a female dancer, through placing the latter on pointe and in 'a high hat to make her appear even taller.'[41] The character's serpentine otherness was heightened through heavy orientalised eye make-up and the Expressionist artist George Rouault's (1871-1958) slimming, tight wine-red velvet bodice with darkened side panels, and the web-patterned tights that accentuated her leg length.[42] There was an un-balletic emphasis on weight and multiplicity in Doubrovska's stylised body, which embodied Freud's conception of female vanity as compensation for original sexual inferiority, a notion tailored to the biblical parable's moral.

Doubrovska's provocative image, along with the slow, supine, coitally suggestive aspects of her choreography which jarred with the ballet's otherwise accelerated tempo, evoked seductresses in contemporary silent film. For example, a similar mode of femininity was apparent in *The Woman He Scorned* (1929), where the actress Pola Negri (1896-1987) played a demi-mondaine cabaret girl whose body was revealed in webbed stockings. In the manner of Doubrovska's Siren, Negri's portrayal pandered to bourgeois society's simultaneous fascination with and fear of female sexuality.[43] Still, the charisma of such stage and screen seductresses, whose imagery was accessible to all who encountered it in the theatre

or press, alongside a relaxation of sexual mores in the 1920s, meant that variations of their webbed costumes filtered into the evening wear and lingerie of middle class women. Under the umbrella of bourgeois consumption it became socially acceptable for women to portray elements of the femme fatale, albeit in a less overt manner than Doubrovska and Negri. This was often achieved through lattice-like fabrics that, in a similar manner to the elaborate panel-constructed dresses discussed above, embodied enigmatic femininity through their contrapuntal translucency and highly-worked, intricate surfaces.

A 1929 promotion of the Russian émigré fashion house Annek's airborne nightgowns trimmed with lace was titled 'Lingerie of Cobweb Texture.'[44] In its cobweb analogy the promotion evoked not only the garments' unparalleled lightness, but their ability to ensnare and captivate their intended victim. Like Doubrovska's slowly unfolding Siren, the woman in lacy trappings attempted to still time, by stopping the spectator in his tracks, inciting him to look at her and become suspended in her power. In the late 1920s when, as the cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer noted, the working day was increasingly regulated and society's very pastimes, music, and social dance appeared to mark time, corporeal seduction with its ability to disrupt quotidian chronologies, became a powerful distraction.[45] However, unlike the ballet, which showed seduction directly in the living body, the illustrated promotion images displayed the seductive garments held apart from the body as they swelled with an airborne feminine form. The cultural historian Jill Fields has argued that in such imagery 'the thrust of absent hips, the curve of hollow backsides, and the fullness of missing breasts infuse the empty garments with an erotic corporeality.'[46] Here, the notion of feminine seduction is conveyed wholly through the garments as the fair-haired woman holding them at arm's-length is almost a shadow with her tubular shape and lack of facial features, rendering her anonymous, impersonal, and seemingly innocent. These references to anonymity and ethereal dream-imagery sublimated the predatory aspect of seductive garments, as the unknowable riddle of feminine sexuality mediated through lightness and mystery in the manner of the contemporary chiffon panel dresses discussed above.

5. *Cotillion*: Retrospective Charm

Events in the second half of 1929 altered the course of ballet and fashion and exacerbated the late 1920s predilection for reinforcing gender difference. In August 1929 Diaghilev died suddenly, and when the Ballets Russes disbanded his dancers were left out of work. The global economic Depression, which began in the United States in October 1929 and began to affect Europe in the early 1930s, created a climate of uncertainty. This, in turn, fuelled a preference for nostalgia and escapism in art and fashion, and the trend for conscious femininity set in motion in 1920s ballet and eveningwear came to dominate contemporary ideals of womanhood. Thus, when Colonel Vassily de Basil (1888-1951) founded a new Russian émigré ballet company, The Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo in late 1931, he capitalised on the preference for recognisable femininity by selecting his company stars from the Paris studios of the former Russian Imperial Ballerinas, Olga Preobrajenska (1871-1962) and Mathilde Kchessinska (1872-1961). Balanchine, who was de Basil's first choreographer and accompanied him on these unofficial auditions, welcomed the opportunity to nurture well-trained teenagers because they were supple, unfinished, and apparently untainted by the theatrical mannerisms that characterised more established artists.

Cotillion, Balanchine's first ballet for his teenage protagonists, was set in an 1880s drawing-room soiree.[47] At first the atmosphere is jovial, but after the protagonist, the Daughter of the House, emerges as a fortune-teller who predicts doom, proceedings turn sinister and the ballet accelerates to a finish. The cotillion, which informed the ballet's structure, was a social dance that originated in eighteenth-century France. The dance's name is synecdochic and

derives from the French word for petticoat because the female dancer’s multi-layered underskirts were visible when she turned. The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo’s re-appropriation of this petticoat dance, whose character in many respects derived from displays of feminine coquetry, promoted the company’s young female dancers.

Balanchine’s collaborative, sometimes flirtatious interaction with the dancers was a crucial element in the ballet’s approach to identity and embodiment. Tamara Toumanova (1919-1996), Balanchine’s then favourite young dancer, considered that Balanchine:

> had a great sensibility in perceiving the personality of the different dancers he was working with...he showed the choreography, but it was up to the dancers to comprehend the movement and let it grow as an extension of themselves.[48]

The dancers responded to Balanchine’s relative youth and carefree attitude. Irina Baronova described how he was ‘a gay, young man’ who created an improvisatory, flirtatious ‘atmosphere’ in the studio by playing jazz tunes on the piano at rehearsals.[49] A relaxed, playful environment and the desire to impress Balanchine made the dancers more willing to engage with his innovative and sometimes unexpected choreography.

This charged interpersonal interaction between Balanchine and his dancers was evident in the latter’s on-stage coquetry. A *Dancing Times* review described a:

> whole series of variations danced maliciously by Tatiana Riabouchinska, archly by Lubov Rostova (the Hand of Fate)...and brilliantly by Tamara Toumanova (the Daughter of the House), who concludes the ‘Grand Rond’ of the cotillion with her specialty, a flutter of fouettés.[50]

Here, to some extent, the dancers’ qualities read like a catalogue of embodied feminine wiles, individualised stunts devised to capture the (male) spectator’s attention. However, the reviewer also praised the dancers’ technical abilities and dramatic versatility in portraying worldlier, less wholesome characters than their young selves. The dancers thus seemed aware that their re-constructions of c.1880s womanhood involved a degree of interpretive license, which could expose the contrived gendered mannerisms intrinsic to the cotillion dance.

Toumanova’s fouettés, performed at the ballet’s close when the music ‘winds into a fugue-like figure’ were, in the critic A.V. Coton’s words, ‘madder and swifter than any of the movement earlier in the work’ until the other guests reappeared on stage and ‘sweep into a circular formation around her’ and she slowed her spinning and rose onto pointe.[51] The fouettés’ erratic speeds evoked the Daughter of the House’s heightened emotions following her premonition of doom during a fortune-reading and a drunken guest’s fall and permanent disappearance behind a screen. The fugue-like musical figure, which signifies a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody is introduced by one instrument and taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts, analogically signifies an ecstatic psychosis akin to the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche’s (1844-1900) definition of Dionysiac ‘self-forgetting,’ where the self usurps its individual boundaries.[52] Yet in addition to evoking a Dionysiac blend of the self and the environment, Toumanova’s turns married the pirouette’s classic form of feminine coquetry and advanced technical control with the modern improvisatory time-scale of cinema and jazz music. Toumanova’s fouettés revealed her magical separateness as *Cotillion*’s clairvoyant and enable her to embody fate taking its course. However, her multiple turns also recalled those of Odile, the evil Swan double in *Swan Lake*, who seduces Prince Siegfried by overwhelming him with her beauty and physical prowess.[53] Thus, Toumanova

was able to imbue the ingénue innocence of her thirteen years and the storied sophistication of the nineteenth-century ballerinas who trained her and had danced in *Swan Lake* at the Imperial Theatre in St Petersburg. Moreover, her dancing's combination of superlative Russian technique and modern improvisatory jazz elements created a utopian, visionary ballet body upon which spectators could project their fantasies. A 1937 *Dancing Times* article on the psychological value of dance claimed that 'the ballet takes a firm hold on those who find their lives too often lacking in movement and colour, it expresses for them what they would wish to express themselves.[54] However, as Arnold has written, for young women in the interwar period, 'dancers, actresses and fashion models' who 'were the first to embrace the freedom of movement that avant-garde dance and innovative fashion suggested' embodied their future subjectivities.'[55] Young women's emulation of professional dancers in the construction of a modern identity enabled them to experiment with novel modes of embodiment before arriving at self-definition. Thus Toumanova's act in *Cotillion* did not only provide a means of vicarious experience for young, female spectators but could inspire them to copy her movements or dress as a means of self-development.

Cotillion's costumes, designed by Christian Bérard (1902-1949) and made by Barbara Karinska (1886-1983), contributed to the juxtaposition of youth with storied sophistication. The female dancers wore white, elbow-length gloves, cyclamen, lime, and lemon coloured velvet bodices, and multi-layered gauze or tulle star embellished tutus. The gloves and petticoat-like tutus were inanimate signifiers of antebellum femininity, recalling the full skirts of nineteenth-century women and Romantic ballerinas. One photograph of a c.1935 *Cotillion* revival by Alexey Brodovitch (1898-1971), shot from the stage wings in soft focus, shows how collectively the white-gloved hands alongside the multi-layered, star-embellished white Romantic tutus danced apart from the body in nebulous shafts of light (Image 3). This contributed to the ballet's occult atmosphere and self-consciousness regarding of the artifice of its feminine constructions. In her analysis of the vampire, the feminist theatre scholar Sue-Ellen Case writes that queer elements occur, 'not at the site of gender, but at the site of ontology, thus challenging the Platonic parameters of Being – the borders of life and death.'[56] In *Cotillion*, especially as it is represented in Brodovitch's image, the parameters of being are challenged at the levels of the animate and inanimate, the individual and the collective, as the women occupy a liminal status between subjectivity and the depersonalised attraction of feminised objects. This disembodiment and artifice leaves spectators with the uncanny sensation that they have entered a realm of desire inhabited by 'other-than-natural,' 'other-than-living' bodies.[57] They are unsettled by not knowing quite what has attracted them.

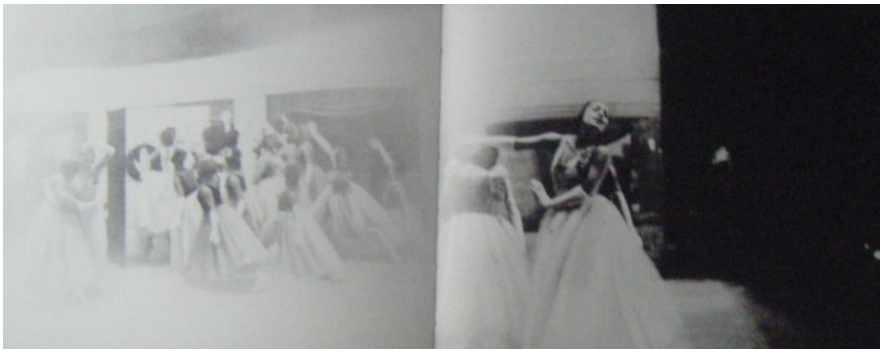

Image 3: *Cotillion*, © Alexey Brodovitch, c.1935, photographic print, courtesy Errata Editions[58]

The preoccupation with showcasing retrospective femininity within contemporary modes of embodiment was also prominent in 1930s eveningwear. In the early 1930s the caterpillar/butterfly distinction became exaggerated as alternative lengths and fits were deemed appropriate for different times of day. Features that encircled the wearer in a tutu-like manner, including full skirts, light-reflecting adornments, and airy fabrics such as tulle, became a prominent feature of haute-couture eveningwear from 1933 onwards. A similar combination of youth and sophistication, to *Cotillion*’s ‘baby’ ballerinas, was required to successfully wear a full-length evening gown. The 1930s British *Vogue* fashion editor Madge Garland noted that despite the youthful physique such dresses required, they ‘were no gift to the debutante for it needed considerable experience to manage successfully such sophisticated clothes and their multiple accessories.’[59] To some extent, such dresses’ period character was anthropomorphic (for they could have been designed with an historic heroine in mind) and required the wearer to replicate the bodily techniques of turn-of-the-century women accustomed to wearing voluminous skirts.[60] For Mauss, the bodily techniques imbued by a particular social demographic, in this case an aristocratic woman or trained dancer who could master the swan-like glide that made long skirts appear graceful, formed ‘a social idiosyncrasy’ and thereby reflected modes of education and imitation in a particular society.

Subsequently, the bodily techniques that the above 1921 article claimed were obsolete began to return. With the revival of retrospective femininity in the early 1930s, photographed mannequins began to display more decorative, non-utilitarian bodily techniques. As Caroline Evans’ analysis of early twentieth-century French mannequins has shown, ‘like the dancer, the mannequin had to have a particular sensitivity to bodily memory, cultivated through her transfer of the weight of the body in time and space.’[61] Fashion mannequins who adopted the 1930s Neo-Romantic mode expressed a studied femininity that drew upon similar techniques to contemporary ballet dancers in order to beguile rather than shock spectators. Correspondences with the Romantic mode in Russian ballet were apparent in mannequins’ gestural vocabulary, where a torsal S-bend and ornamental, curvilinear arms created frames for retrospective gowns. One March 1932 photograph of Doubrovska, taken by Hoyningen-Huene, shows the statuesque dancer executing asymmetric poses that emphasise the fluid, translucent nature of her bell-shaped tulle tutu.[62] Her arms are expansive, yet ornamental frames to her body’s quill-like bends and her fingertips curved and satin encased feet turned out and pointed to give an impression of finish. A later 1937 French *Vogue* feature of full-skirted Chanel ballgowns, photographed by Horst, showed three mannequins executing analogous gestures to Doubrovska.[63] They each stand beneath a wooden frame with fern-like fronds that recall eighteenth-century rococo chinoiserie and use its elaborate curves as a template for their arms. The middle mannequin’s arms even circle her head in an asymmetrical balletic couronne. Like Doubrovska, the mannequins arch their torsos and throw their dresses into relief. Their poses appear challenging to execute and hold, and give the impression that like ballet dancers, the youthful mannequins imbued storied knowledge of how former aristocratic bodies moved and behaved. In Horst’s photograph, the mannequins replicate and coquettishly emerge from their decorative setting. Yet, rather than being evocative of a particular period, the mannequins’ gestures are abstractedly ornamental, and seek to create an atmospheric frame for the clothes. As with *Cotillion*, Neo-Romantic couture’s combination of modern techniques and conceptions of the body’s movement with retrospective illusion, portrayed femininity as an active masquerade.

6. Conclusion

Woman’s position as enchantress and man’s opposite in ballet and haute couture in the late 1920s and early 1930s reflected contemporary society’s ambivalence towards female

emancipation and perhaps even modernity itself. On the one hand, the stereotypically balletic notion of woman as idealised and ethereal demonstrated patriarchal fears regarding modern woman's agency, which could potentially obliterate gender difference. Patriarchy seemed less threatened by bodies that appeared to court male attention by being distinctly feminine. However, the unparalleled focus on movement in Chanel's evening butterfly, both on the stage and in haute couture, rendered woman's essence fluid and protean. With the agency to adapt her appearance both in stasis and movement she was able remake herself, both in the image of retrospective figures 'made for love' and into a utopian vision of future subjectivity. The influence of Russian ballet, with its continually evolving modes of corporeal technique and expression was an aid to woman's transformations. Its variegated presentations of the female body indicated the different emotions inherent within it. When she inhabited the butterfly mode of embodiment enhanced by Russian ballet's techniques and aesthetic, woman did not merely imbue notions of romantic love, but flirtatious caprice, self-love, and the seduction of spectators. The femininity envisaged in late 1920s and early 1930s ballet and eveningwear was thus more related to fantasy icons or muses rather than domesticity. For contemporary women, she was an inspiration for a future self in addition to an escape from daily existence.

Notes

[1] Chanel, quoted in Andrew Bolton and Harold Koda, *Chanel* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), 73.
[2] Chanel, quoted in Bolton and Koda, *Chanel*, 73.
[3] Rebecca Arnold, 'Vionnet and Classicism,' in *Madeleine Vionnet, 15 Dresses from the Collection of Martin Kamer, Judith Clark Costume, 15 March – 26 April 2001*, ed. Judith Clark (London: Judith Clark Costume, 2001), 3.
[4] English translation: brusqueness. Unless otherwise specified all translations are by the author. 'La Nouvelle Mode fait naitre de nouveaux gestes,' *Vogue* (French), December 1921, n. p.
[5] English translation by author. 'De la Danse, le l'imitation et de la personnalité,' *Vogue* (French), November 1923, n. p.
[6] Liz Conor, *The Spectacular Modern Woman: Feminine Visibility in the 1920s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 252.
[7] The Ballets Russes' ballet master Sergei Grigoriev noted that Diaghilev was accused of pursuing what was as 'any moment fashionable in the arts' in ballets 'where the leading object was surprise.' Sergei Grigoriev, *The Diaghilev Ballet 1909-1929*, trans. Vera Bowen (London: Constable, 1953), 156.
[8] Edgar Degas, 'Sonnet V,' trans. Richard Kendall, in *Degas and the Dance*, ed. Richard Kendall and Jill de Vonyar (New York: Abrams, 2002), 157 [1899].
[9] Yuri Slonimsky, 'Balanchine: The Early Years,' trans. John Andrews, vol. 3 of *Ballet Review* (New York: Dance Research Foundation, 1975-6), 29.
[10] Elizabeth Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 140.
[11] Marcel Mauss, 'Techniques of the Body,' *Incorporations*, ed. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 455.
[12] The ballet *La Chatte* premiered on April 30, 1927. The choreography was by George Balanchine, the music by Henri Sauget and the set and costume design by Naum Gabo.
[13] Martin Hammer, *Constructing Modernity: The Art and Career of Naum Gabo* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 159.
[14] Ibid., 59.

[15] Grigoriev, *Diaghilev Ballet*, 235.
[16] Alice Nikitina, *Nikitina: By Herself* (London: Wingate, 1959), 59.
[17] Sigmund Freud, ‘On Femininity,’ *On Freud’s Femininity*, eds. Leticia Glocer Fiorini and Graciela Abelin-Sas Rose (London: Karnac Books, 2010), 128 [1933]. Freud sustained this view on female narcissism over 19 years. In his 1933 essay ‘On Femininity’ he refers readers back to his 1914 text ‘On Narcissism.’
[18] Ibid., 128.
[19] The couturier Premet said in an interview ‘If fashion stays the way it is, it will become a public menace. Clothes nowadays don’t vary enough from one season to the next.’ Premet interview with M. Winters in *Les Cahiers*, January 1927, trans. Jacqueline Demornex. Quoted in Jacqueline Demornex, *Lucien Lelong* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 56.
[20] English translation by author: ‘Lelong, ‘La Mode kinoptique,’ *L’Officiel*, n. p.
[21] Ibid.
[22] *L’Officiel de la Couture et la Mode de Paris*, May 1928, n. p.
[23] Arnold, ‘Vionnet and Classicism,’ 3.
[24] In Ovid’s myth of *Pygmalion and Galatea*, the sculptor Pygmalion crafts his vision of perfect female beauty in marble and falls in love with her. When Pygmalion makes an offering to Aphrodite, he comes home to kiss his sculpture and finds that it has come to life.
[25] Apollo was originally titled *Apollon Musagète* and premiered on April 27, 1928. It was choreographed by George Balanchine, designed and costumed by André Bauchant, with music by Stravinsky.
[26] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (London: Boyars, 1990), 134.
[27] Stephanie Jordan, *Stravinsky Dances: Re-Visions across a Century* (Alton, UK: Dance Books, 2007), 147.
[28] George Balanchine, quoted in Arnold Haskell, *Balletomania: The Story of an Obsession* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1934), 146.
[29] Alexandra Danilova, *Choura: The Memoirs of Alexandra Danilova* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 99; Nikitina, *Nikitina by Herself*, 89.
[30] Stravinsky, *Autobiography*, 134.
[31] Madeleine Vionnet, quoted in: Betty Kirke, *Madeleine Vionnet* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998), 27.
[32] Pamela Golbin, *Madeleine Vionnet* (New York: Rizzoli, 2009), 25.
[33] Quoted in Golbin, Ibid., 7. (Original reference: Biche, ‘La vie et le secret de Madeleine Vionnet,’ *Marie Claire* (Paris), 28 May 1937). Trans. Golbin.
[34] Ibid.
[35] George Hoyningen-Huene, *Vionnet’s Pale Pink Crepe Romain Pyjamas: From Hattie Carnegie*, ‘Fashion Bas- Relief by Vionnet,’ *Vogue* (American), November, 1931, n. p. See *Vogue* (American), Proquest online archive.
[36] The Nereid Monument (390-380 BC), displayed at the British Museum, was named after the Nereids, sea-nymphs whose statues were placed between the columns of this monumental tomb. It was built for Erbinna (Greek Arbinas), ruler of Lycian Xanthos, south-west Turkey.
[37] *The Prodigal Son* was choreographed by George Balanchine, designed by George Rouault with music by Sergei Prokofiev. It premiered on May 21, 1929.
[38] Felia Doubrovska quoted in Barbara Newman, *Striking a Balance: Dancers Talk about Dancing* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1982), 7.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Danilova, *Choura*, 78.

[42] Doubrovska, *Striking a Balance*, 7.
[43] *The Woman He Scorned*, directed by Paul Czinner (1929, United Kingdom).
[44] 'Lingerie of Cobweb Texture,' *Harper's Bazaar*, March, 1929, n. p.
[45] Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 66.
[46] Jill Fields, *An Intimate Affair: Women, Lingerie and Sexuality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 174.
[47] *Cotillion* was choreographed by Balanchine to music by Emmanuel Chabrier. Boris Kocho wrote the ballet's libretto and its decor was by Christian Bérard. The ballet premiered on April 12, 1932 at the Opera de Monte Carlo.
[48] Tamara Toumanova, 'Tamara Toumanova Interview with Paul Anastos,' *Ballet Review* (Winter 1984): 37.
[49] Dale Harris, *Interview with Irina Baronova*, 1977, New York. New York Public Library, Dance Oral History Project, n. p.
[50] Franc L. Scheuer, 'A Feast of Ballet in Paris: Success of the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo,' *Dancing Times*, August 1932, n. p.
[51] A.V. Coton, *A Prejudice for Ballet* (London: Methuen & Co, 1938), n. p. Fouettés are pirouettes or turns performed with a whipping movement of the leg raised to the side.
[52] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Spiers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 17.
[53] The ballet *Swan Lake* was choreographed by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov in 1895 and set to music by Tchaikovsky.
[54] Elizabeth Cross, 'The Psychological Value of Dancing,' *Dancing Times* (July 1937): n. p.
[55] Rebecca Arnold, 'Movement and Modernity: New York Sportswear, Dance and Exercise in the 1930s and 1940s,' *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 12, no. 3 (2008): 394.
[56] Sue Ellen Case, 'Tracking the Vampire,' *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies 3*, no. 2 (1991): 1-3.
[57] Ibid., 4.
[58] In *Ballet: 104 Photographs by Alexey Brodovitch* by Alexey Brodovitch (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1945), 137.
[59] Madge Garland, *The Indecisive Decade: The World of Fashion and Entertainment in the 1930s* (London: Macdonald, 1968), 73.
[60] Mauss, 'Techniques of the Body,' 455.
[61] Caroline Evans, *The Mechanical Smile: Modernism and the First Fashion Shows in France and America, 1900-1929* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 191.
[62] 'Quelques Attitudes de Felia Doubrovska,' *Vogue* (French), March 1932, n. p.
[63] Horst P. Horst, *Grâce de la taille fine*, c. 1937, photographic print. In *Vogue* (French), September 1937.

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Phantom Colours: Alice Blue and Phantom Red; Changing Meanings of Two Fashionable Colours (1905-1930)

Victoria Jackson and Bregt Lameris

Abstract

In Western culture, colour has long been perceived as powerful, emotional, and dangerous, despite its aesthetic qualities. During the 1920s in the United States, however, colour experienced a rehabilitation caused by the specific conditions of the decade. The rise of consumer culture brought with it new moralities and a revolution in women's fashions, including short skirts and bobbed hair. Within this new consumer society, colour became a useful tool for producers to stimulate more demand for their goods. In order to exploit colour, its old meanings had to be tamed, but at the same time its edgy, racy side is what made it commercially successful. In this article, we analyse the effects of these conditions on how colours were defined, perceived, and used in media such as newspapers, advertisements, fan magazines, posters, films, and musical songs. In order to provide a close reading of the changing meanings attached to colours and the ways in which they were used, we will focus on two case studies, Alice Blue and Phantom Red. Fashionable in the 1920s, these two shades functioned as tie-ins to popular culture such as cinema, musicals, fashion, and make-up. In addition, both were related to films in Technicolor II, the latest innovation that permitted filming in natural colours. The name Phantom Red was based on the film *Phantom of the Opera* (1925), which showed the Phantom's cloak in Technicolor II red. Alice Blue was the colour of a dress the actor Colleen Moore wore in the finale of the film *Irene* (1926), a fashion show in Technicolor II.[1] Each colour played unique roles in the history of fashion and was subject to different, changing connotations. We will provide a cultural historical analysis of both colours, studying the ways in which they appeared, were used, and were commented upon. We introduce Roland Barthes' semiotic theories on connotation and denotation into the domain of colour, to show that the flexibility of colour to adopt layers of meanings turns them into strong rhetorical tools. This study could not have been written without the digital availability of many sources such as newspapers and fan magazines. As a consequence, it is a good example of the changes that are occurring due to the digital revolution that has also found its way into the archives and libraries.

Key Words

Colour, consumerism, cinema, 1920s, standardisation, tie-in, Technicolor, red (colour), blue (colour), Alice Blue, Phantom Red, semiotics, Roland Barthes.

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1. Introduction

In 1905, a new fashion shade called Alice Blue appeared on the American market for silk, clothing, and accessories. It remained a well-known shade until the early 1930s and was a touchstone of popular culture. Fourteen years later, it was incorporated into the musical *Irene* (1919), the music for which was composed by Joseph McCarthy and Harry Tierney with the song 'Alice Blue Gown' (Image 1). In 1926, the musical was adapted into a silent film of the

same title, which included an Alice Blue gown in the film's Technicolor fashion sequence. A year earlier, in 1925, a competing fashion shade called Phantom Red was introduced. It was inspired by the film *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) and by the red cloak worn by the character of the Phantom, produced, again, in Technicolor. The new red colour also gave its name to Phantom Red cosmetics by Carlyle laboratories, which were also tied to the film.[2] Both colours, Alice Blue and Phantom Red, were inspired by celebrity and popular culture, and enjoyed commercial success at their introduction and through the 1920s. While Alice Blue has retained a presence, if at times small, in the textile industry up to the present day, Phantom Red had all but disappeared by the early 1930s.

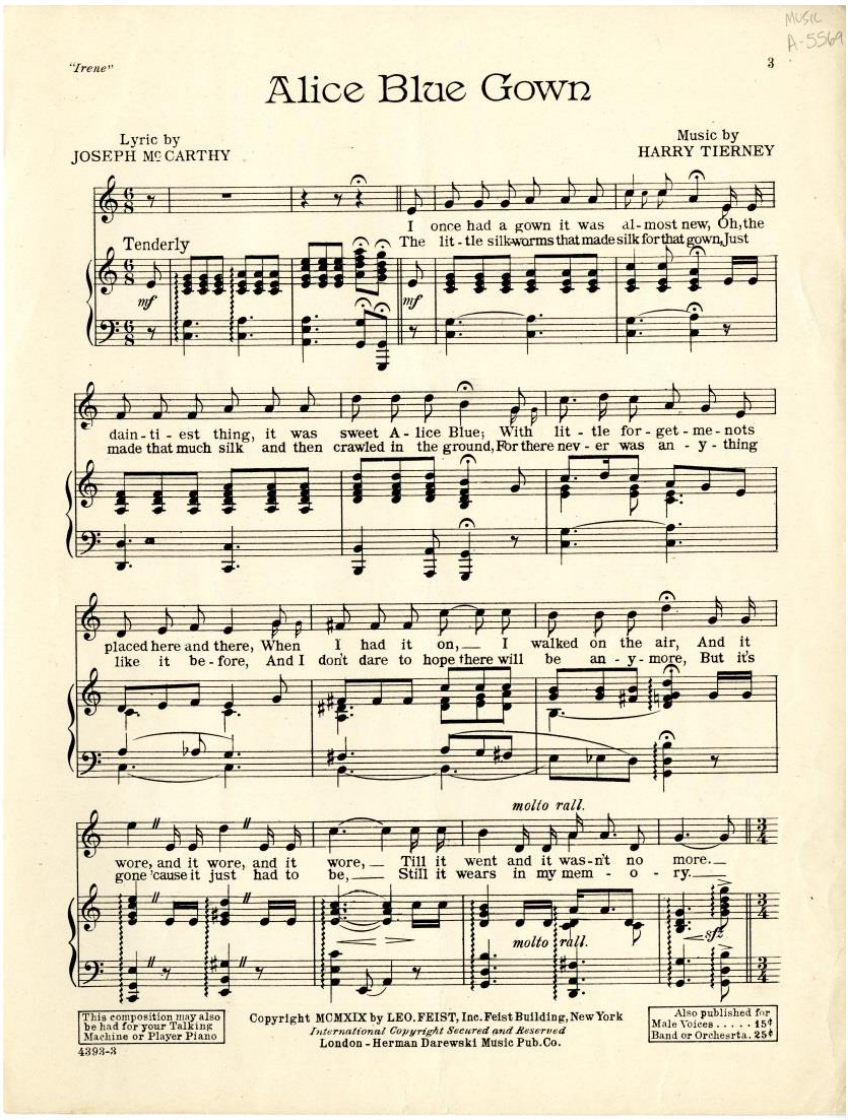

Image 1: Sheet music, 'Alice Blue Gown,' from the musical *Irene*, 1919. © David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

In this article we will consider how multiple and contradictory connotations were constructed around these two colours. Our case study proves how malleable colour meanings can be when positioned in the commercial marketplace. In this way, we will provide a better understanding of American consumer interaction with fashion colours in the early twentieth century.

The artist and social theorist David Batchelor argues that 'colour has been the object of extreme prejudice in Western Culture' and that there is a loathing of colour that 'masks a fear: a fear of contamination and corruption by something that is unknown or appears unknowable.' Colour has been linked to otherness, to the feminine, to the primitive, and has been trivialised, considered secondary to line and form.[3] This was no less the case at the beginning of the twentieth century than it is now, when colour was seen as capable of influencing weaker members of society.

By the end of the 1920s colour had become appropriated and commodified by the dye, fashion and silk industries, and was being rehabilitated. As the home economist Christine McGaffey Frederick wrote in 1929:

> It should be admitted here that a great color renaissance has come over the American woman in the past ten years or more. We were all brought up in the Puritan atmosphere with half-concealed fear of color as sinful or vulgar.… Strange how we were appallingly afraid of a little plain, honest color![4]

The reintegration of colour had begun earlier, in the nineteenth century as the development of artificial dyes made colour in industrial products increasingly available. In addition, colour was being studied by influential theorists such as the German writer and statesman Wolfgang von Goethe and the French chemist Michel-Eugène Chevreul. In 1810, Goethe's argument that the eye not only perceives but produces colours changed the way colour perception was approached.[5] This paved the way for a connection between colour and the relatively new 'science' of psychology, resulting in treatments such as 'chromotherapy.'[6] Chevreul developed the 72-Part Colour Circle in 1839, to systematise colour.[7] During the twentieth century, experiments with colour occurred in both commerce and the arts, and its rehabilitation was aided primarily by the development of consumerism. Led by the automobile industry, American manufacturers used colour as a tool to create demand and to sell ideas by exploiting colour's power to convey meaning.[8] However, to do so required the legitimisation of the consumer's desire for colour.

A key strategy in the taming of the power of colour was the attempt to control it through classification and standardisation. Numerous theories on how to use colour in tasteful and harmonising ways were developed, for example by the painter, colour theorist, and teacher of Bauhaus members Adolf Hölzel, the chemist and colour theorist Wilhelm Ostwald, and the colour theorist and Bauhaus teacher Johannes Itten. Further attention was given to colour's ability to convey meaning and to affect emotion by colour theorists from a diverse range of backgrounds including occultism, fashion, art, and science. Theories on the physiology and psychology of colour were developed, and research into synaesthesia was undertaken by the painter Wassily Kandinsky, who turned music into colour, and by Alexander Scriabin, who turned colour into music.[9]

As part of these studies, colour theorists explored how colour gained meaning through its associations. Matthew Luckiesh, the physicist and director of General Electric's research laboratory, writing in 1918 noted: 'Associations of colors with certain things, events, ideas, sentiments, and emotions, that is, with certain experiences, has formed a rudimentary foundation of a language of color.'[10] A variety of books and articles were published advising

industry and the consumer on the uses of colour, aiming to demonstrate how colour could be controlled and manipulated to a variety of ends.[11] Like the work of Luckiesh, many of these publications described colour as a language and advocated exploiting colours' connotations to imbue consumer items with meaning. For example, in *The Theory and Practice of Color* (1920), Bonnie Snow and Hugo Froelich explained that colours selected by an individual in any context sent messages to those who saw them:

> Color is a language through which man expresses his thoughts and ideas, his feelings and aspirations. Our houses, our clothes, our offices, our shops and factories, our streets and gardens, our schoolrooms, our surroundings and perquisites everywhere proclaim us. We cannot prevent this inevitable advertisement. What we choose and buy and wear and use tells with brutal frankness what we are.[12]

The commercial impetus for naming Alice Blue and Phantom Red was to exploit colour's ability to acquire associated meanings. However, once introduced into the public sphere, both colours found other meanings developed around them, based on old as well as on new associations.

By describing the history of Alice Blue and of Phantom Red on a micro-level, we will analyse how such shifts in meaning influenced the way the colours were perceived and investigate how new subtexts were applied to these shades to sell fashionable clothing and cosmetics. This will involve a reading of the conflicting associations with each shade and an analysis of how these discrepancies were negotiated and used for commercial purposes. To this end, we will use the concept of 'connotation' as it was introduced by the philosopher and semiotician Roland Barthes in his essay the 'Rhetoric of the Image' (1964). According to Barthes, connotations are produced when cultural knowledge is combined with the image perceived. Similar to shapes, colours are connected to sets of connotations which are pivotal to the overall meaning of coloured images and artefacts. In addition, Barthes explains that cultural knowledge is historically and culturally determined, and notes that text is often used to anchor an image; hence written or spoken text 'fixes' the meaning of an image.[13]

For our cultural historical analysis of Alice Blue and Phantom Red, we will analyse the textual messages used to anchor their meanings. In addition, we will show that texts and paratexts related to a colour not only fix meaning but produce new possible connotations. As a consequence, when discussing the history of the colours a historical analysis of the discourse about these two shades is of paramount importance. As we investigate the layers of meaning attached to the colours under scrutiny, we will also consider consumers' possible perceptions of them. This will allow us to better understand not only how they might have influenced consumers' decisions to buy Alice Blue gowns and Phantom Red lipsticks, but also how they were used to lure audiences into theatres in order to consume musical theatre and films.

Finally, understanding the various connotations of the colours can also help us understand how consumers attempted to construct a specific identity by wearing these shades. Consider the case of Dorothy Blankenship, a student at the Peace Institute in Raleigh, North Carolina, whose junior student yearbook entry in 1929 was 'a full blown rose, Phantom Red lipstick, Juliet.'[14] Written either by herself or by her classmates, the entry was limited to a list of two to three associations. The inclusion of Phantom Red Lipstick suggests that Blankenship either sought to be or was identified with the brand, which prompts the question of what identity and what meaning this was.[15] Within such a context the popularity of colours like Alice Blue and Phantom Red can be seen as part of a complicated cultural construction in which

consumers were encouraged to view colour as a language to convey their agency based on various associations with the colours.

This study has been made possible by the large scale and on-going digitisation of archive material on websites such as the Media History Digital Library, the Internet Archive and the Hathitrust Digital Library, which enabled references to the two shades to be found across a range of intermedial sources. Without the digitisation of this material it would have been impossible to bring together so many references to these shades from such diverse sources without many years of research.

2. Alice Blue: Love, Loss, and the American Way

Alice Blue was launched at the beginning of the twentieth century at the presidential inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919). In February 1905, an article with the title 'Inaugural Gown of "Alice Blue"' appeared in *The Minneapolis Journal*, describing the gown that Edith Roosevelt (1861-1948) would be wearing to her husband's inauguration ceremony. The silk of the gown was woven at a silk mill in Paterson, New Jersey, the centre of American silk industry at the time, and the article describes the fabric as 'an entirely new design and new shade' that came 'near to an electric blue.'[16] The wording of the description connected the colour to the new, the industrial, and the modern, and the article reported that the future first lady wished it to be known as 'Alice Blue,' in honour of her stepdaughter Alice Roosevelt (1884-1980), who had selected the 'peculiar shade of blue' after seeing it at the World's Fair in St Louis, Missouri in 1904.[17] Since her coming-out ball in 1901, Alice had been praised in the popular press for her beauty, style, and charm. The popular press referred to her as 'Princess Alice' and compared her to European royalty. The context of the launch of Alice Blue was within an already large market for 'Alice-inspired' goods, such as roses, songs, and candy bars. Alice blue was part of a series of tie-ups using her fame to sell commodities.[18]

A sample of Alice Blue silk was put on display in a shop window of John W. Thomas & Co., window in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with the explanation that 'under no circumstances [could it] be sold or given away.'[19] However, women's suits, dresses and skirts in the blue shade of the gown did become available for purchase later in 1905.[20] Whilst the original cloth from which the gown was cut was unavailable, only to be looked at, copies of it could be bought in large amounts.[21] Newspaper advertisements show that even though Alice Blue grew in popularity during 1905, it was not until 1906 when Alice Roosevelt married Nicholas Longworth that the colour reached its peak of success. The wedding was heavily reported in the newspapers, with detailed accounts of the richness of Alice's trousseau and the decoration of the White House where the wedding would take place. News articles also reported on new 'fads' connected to the wedding and mentioned the colour Alice Blue in almost every possible occasion.[22] Interestingly, it was not so much the unique silk that hyped the colour, but rather the 'star' Alice Roosevelt after which the shade was named that made the colour popular.

After an avalanche of Alice Blue advertisements in the newspapers of April and May 1906, the number of references to the colour rapidly decreased in the months that followed. In 1908, *The New York Press* speculated the colour had enjoyed only a short period of extreme popularity because people soon grew bored with Alice Roosevelt Longworth and her new husband.[23] Despite this decline in the shade's popularity, the former president's daughter continued to attract attention to herself by appearing in various shades of blue,[24] especially in February 1910 when she introduced a 'lighter shade of Alice Blue,' wearing a gown in this new colour to a White House musical.[25]

By using a Barthesian semiotic analysis, we can see that the colour's connection to Alice and Edith Roosevelt produced two possible connotations for Alice Blue. First, the shade was associated with high bourgeois culture. Secondly, the direct link to the President of the United

States and the fact that the shade was introduced at an official American ceremony also connected the colour to 'Americanness.' This is confirmed by the nationalistic discourse surrounding the silk from which the gown was made. For example, the 1905 window display at Thomas & Co. attracted attention for 'the silk being entirely of American manufacture.'[26]

The importance of the connotation 'Americanness' becomes clear when we look at the larger context of the textile industry. During the nineteenth century, the United States textile and fashion industries were strongly guided by France. Paris set the trends in style and colour for the following season's fashion. Silk colour cards and information on upcoming styles were sent from Paris to America, where they were used to predict the new season's fashions. However, in the early twentieth century, those leading the American silk industry wanted to become independent from Paris, and the silk industry on the East Coast, including Paterson where the Alice Blue silk was made, became a 'hotbed of nationalism.'[27] In The *Color Revolution* (2012), the historian Regina Blaszczyk examines American nationalism in the fashion industry at the beginning of the twentieth century, a time when the American silk industry sought to establish a system of American colour cards to replace those of Paris.[28] Another step in the process of creating an American colour system was the founding of the Textile Color Card Association (TCCA) in 1915 with its slogan 'American color for the American people.' The TCCA distributed a standard colour card that contained the colours that were always available, accompanied by a seasonal colour card predicting the fashionable colours for the coming six months. Although after World War I, Paris returned on the fashion market to lead trends, the TCCA remained successful in standardising colour for the American fashion industry.[29] So it was that Alice Blue was presented as an American product and surrounded by a discourse emphasising its 'Americanness.' As a consequence, it was a competitor of the usual shades and textiles strongly associated with Paris and played an important role in the strategy to overtake Paris.[30]

Even though Alice Blue would never regain the amount of popularity it had in 1906, it remained a part of American culture. Advertisements presenting silk and linen in Alice Blue continued to be published, though in much smaller amounts. In 1910, the Salt Lake Railroad connecting Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City and introduced 'Pretty Alice Blue suites on sleeping cars for Honeymooners.'[31]

Also from around 1910, the colour increasingly appeared in relation to bourgeois weddings.[32] The use of the colour for wedding occasions refers back to the colour's association with the wedding of Alice Roosevelt, of course, but the blue was also a colour that was easy to connect to the institution of marriage. In 1918, Luckiesh wrote that 'the expression of "true-blue" for constancy and fidelity is commonly used,' and added that blue was associated with hope, constancy, fidelity, and generosity.[33] Alongside these positive connotations, Luckiesh also explained that the colour blue is 'associated with coldness and melancholy.'[34] However, a sad colour is not necessarily one that sells. Understandably one of the articles praising the colour Alice Blue in 1905 tried to assuage such negative connotations by connecting it to the president's daughter's wedding: 'One could never have the blues in a gown of Alice Blue.'[35]

In September 1913, the colour was explicitly coupled with sadness, as a deep feeling connected to Romanticism. In a review of the theatre play *Where Ignorance is Bliss*, in which the main character wears an Alice Blue coloured gown while playing Chopin on the piano, Rose McRae, the author of *The New York Press* review about it, commented that: 'Alice Blue harmonises with the sad music of Chopin, suggesting dim gardens and sad flowers, and a wistful little wind a-blowing.'[36] Chopin remains one of the key figures in Romantic music, while the dim gardens and sad flowers also referred to Romantic aesthetics with its focus on nature and strong emotions. In all, this brief text activated older connotations of blue for Alice

Blue, linking the shade to nineteenth century Romanticism.[37] From that moment on, Alice Blue was to be increasingly presented as a colour from the past.

Many of the aforementioned sad connotations for Alice Blue resurfaced once again in 1920, when the song 'My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown' from the musical *Irene* became a hit.[38] Sung by Edith Day, who played the main character Irene O'Dare, the song was released as a record and as sheet music, and became not only a big hit in the United States but also in the United Kingdom and other countries (Image 1). As a result, the shade once again became popular.[39] This resurgence led to remarkable newspaper reports. For example, in 1921 an Alice Blue coloured gown was mentioned as valuable part of the loot taken at a burglary.[40] In 1922, there is a report of a singer who dyed her cat Alice Blue to match the colour harmony of her flat.[41] In 1924, an Alice Blue Beauty Salon opened in Utica New York,[42] and between 1922 and 1924 a horse called 'Alice Blue Gown' was active on the racing tracks.[43]

'My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown' is a song with many layers of meaning. The shop girl Irene sings of the Alice Blue gown she once owned that could have provided her with a bourgeois wedding match. Here, Alice Blue's connection to marriage and weddings once again resurfaces. In addition, Alice Blue's continued association with high bourgeois culture matched the colour to the content of the song and to Irene's aspirations to upwardly mobility. As a result, in 1921 a newspaper article informs its readers, albeit ironically, that the 'lack of an "Alice Blue gown" is often the reason why great beauty is wasted behind the counter of a department store.'[44] Significantly, when Irene is singing the song, the gown is no more, worn so often it has 'wilted.' She has missed out on her chance to marry up. However, Irene does not regret the loss of the dress, and even adds that she would not want another like it. The gown lives in her memory, where she cherishes its former existence. The lyrics clearly reference fidelity, innocence, dedication, and commitment, confirmed by the forget-me-nots, a colour tie to the Alice Blue shade, marriage, and loyalty, as well as loss and melancholy. As already discussed, these romantic themes were already well-established with Alice Blue in the 1910s. Ruins, contemplating the past and death, and the deep emotions these may provoke, were popular themes in Romantic art and literature, and remained so in early twentieth-century popular culture when Alice Blue appears on the colour scene.[45] On the other hand, in 1919 Alice Blue actually *was* a colour from the past. It had been launched before World War I, in a world where women were finding their independence. During the war, they began working in offices and hospitals and earning their own money. Simultaneously, Alice Blue was the colour connected with the glamorous, independent, sexually interesting Alice Roosevelt, a pre-war woman who was considered a handful.

In February 1926, the First National film *Irene* was released to cinemas based on the musical from 1919. Colleen Moore, a popular actress of the time, was cast as the main character. The film ended with a fashion show filmed in Technicolor II, showing gowns of American design including one in Alice Blue.[46] Both the gown and the fashion show were emphasised in the advertisement campaign for the film,[47] part of a broader tendency to connect Hollywood with fashion. As in the 1900s, the 1920s saw attempts by the American textile industry to gain independence from Paris fashions, and the fashion show depicted in the film version of *Irene* contributed to this effort. In a 1926 *Buffalo Sunday Express* article 'Hollywood Beats Paris in Great World Battle of Styles,' the *Irene* fashion show was positively reviewed.[48]

Unsurprisingly, with the release of the film, the song 'My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown' enjoyed a revival.[49] Cinema orchestras often played the song before or during screenings of *Irene*.[50] However, the song itself was a thing of the past, just like the Alice Blue gown the song was about.[51] In 1928, a radio station mentioned the song, the musical, and the film in a nostalgic way:

> "Alice Blue Gown" that wistful little number from *Irene* a musical show of quite a few years ago…should bring back some vivid memories. We're sentimental to a high degree, and we'll never forget little Irene on stage or in the movies.[52]

Colleen Moore, the star of the film version of *Irene* was strongly associated with the flapper, a term that has had various meanings. In the 1910s, flappers were teenagers between the age of fourteen and seventeen, too old to be children and too young to be adults, but by 1922 the term had been appropriated by a group of young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four who were part of a sub-culture inclining towards feminism. These more activist flappers demanded the right to do the 'inappropriate,' such as wearing short skirts leaving the knee bare, rolled-up stockings, bobbed hair, and heavy make-up.[53] Naturally, they were strongly critiqued for their 'extreme' behaviour. In 1922, various reactions to flapper culture were mentioned in the news.[54] For example, some businesses banished flapper outfits from their offices for being too revealing.[55] It was reported that fashion lines inspired by the flapper emerged in a tamed, far more decent, over-the-knee version.[56] The film industry also incorporated the flapper as a type, introduced to attract youth audiences, but it too felt a need to tame the flapper so it would not lose the older part of the audiences, including the mothers of flappers.[57] This commercialisation of the flapper is a classic example of how capitalist structures incorporate subversive cultural styles.[58]

That Colleen Moore became a symbol for the flapper is interesting with regard to the fact that in her role as *Irene*, she clearly downgrades the edgy image of the flapper. This harmonises with the idea of an Alice Blue gown representing innocence, a memory of the past. With this in mind, it is most noteworthy that in April 1926 Colleen Moore appeared in *Motion Picture Magazine* wearing a most decent evening frock. The model of the frock was recommended for girls of sixteen to twenty-four, who in the accompanying text are advised to 'choose light pastel shades for evening wear.'[59] This advice becomes more significant when taking into consideration a quote in the *Harrisburg Evening News*, published in 1925:

> One day when members of the family were sitting on the porch, a young woman passed attired in a red hat, red dress, red hose and red pumps. Lewis' father remarked: "There goes a flapper."[60]

However, as will be shown in the following section, red also was a colour that was not easily linked to a fixed connotation.

3. Phantom Red: 'Flaming' Colour, Flapper Fashions, and Hollywood

In 1925, Phantom Red was introduced by the TCCA and was inspired by Technicolor sequences of the masked ball scene in the 1925 film *The Phantom of the Opera* (Image 2). Margaret Hayden Rorke, the director of the TCCA, took inspiration from the colour fashions of Paris and reportedly named the new colour 'Phantom Red,' after seeing the film in Paris.[61] *The Phantom of the Opera* was set in the Paris Opera House, creating an inevitable association with Paris and the shade, as well as with the fashion and cosmetics products associated with the film and the colour. Whilst Alice Blue was proudly promoted as American, Phantom Red's promotional material tended to emphasise a relationship with Paris rather than with Hollywood.[62] This suggests that for the colour's promoters an association with Paris remained paramount. The only exception to this was the advertising text for the Phantom Red cosmetics range which links the brand not only with Paris but with New York and Hollywood as well, hinting at the growing importance of American fashion trends centred in both locations. While

Paris remained the centre of fashion, Hollywood and its designers and stars were becoming increasingly important.[63] The popular press commented on these developments in articles such as in the February 1929 issue of *Photoplay*, 'Your Clothes Come from Hollywood. How the Creations You See on the Screen Influence You More Directly than Paris Fashion.'[64] For some consumers, Phantom Red's association with the Hollywood movie industry may have brought it fashion credibility.[65] Like Alice Blue before it in 1905, Phantom Red was unusual in that it originated in American culture but unlike with Alice Blue there is no evidence to suggest its American connection was used to promote or sell it. Any connotation of 'Americanness' would have been implicit and likely aligned to the film's production in Hollywood.

Image 2: 'Phantom' from the Technicolor II sequence of the 1926 film *The Phantom of the Opera*. © Photoplay Productions

For Universal Pictures, the producer of *The Phantom of the Opera*, Phantom Red presented a wonderfully novel tie-up opportunity, a commodity linked to a media production such as a film through promotional material.[66] Then as now, fashion items were a common source of tie-in material, and the department store a popular site for the exploitation of such connections. Film historians note the power of the movies to stimulate consumerism, and from the 1910s onwards Phantom Red appears to have been the first colour shade inspired by the cinema.[67] At the most basic level, promotional and branding material for Phantom Red fashions and cosmetics were intended to appeal to consumers who enjoyed the movie and might be interested in purchasing items linked to it. On another level, by buying Phantom Red products they might feel a vicarious connection to Hollywood and the movie industry.[68] The selling of Phantom Red was not limited to fashion and makeup but was also tied with items such as milkshakes and ice cream.[69] Alongside these promotions, retail stores ran advertisements and it

was through these initial tie-ups that many consumers' had their first contact with the colour and which informed their association of the Phantom in the name.

Image 3: Advertisement for Howland's Department Store, with promotional image of the Phantom, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 26 October 1925.
© *The Bridgeport Telegram* and Hearst Conn. Media Group

Phantom Red's links to the Technicolor scenes in *The Phantom of the Opera* tie the colour with technology and the modern. Advances in colour during the 1920s were generally seen as a sign of progress or the modern, as Walter G. Baumhogger, vice-president, Montgomery Ward and Company, wrote in 1929: 'Everything that people wear, everything they

use, everything they surround themselves with, must have color.'[70] Whilst none of the promotional material for Phantom Red referenced the Technicolor process or the presence of colour sequences in the film, this link to innovation and progress would have been implicit for those who saw the film. This connotation may have been particularly appealing to consumers who sought to follow new fashion trends, including the modern flapper style.

Surviving store advertisements mentioning the colour reveal on its release in October 1925 the shade's links with film. However, over time the shade was increasingly advertised with no reference to its origins. Although it was most common for a connection between the colour and the film to be made in the texts of advertisements, there are cases where illustrations of the Phantom were used as well, as demonstrated in an ad for Howland's Department Store, Bridgeport, Connecticut (Image 3).[71] Surviving packaging for the cosmetics brand also shows the Phantom was prominent in its branding. For example, the Phantom appears on display packaging and on a Phantom Red Rouge compact case from the 1920s. The same image of the Phantom was used in promotional material for both the cosmetics and the fashion lines but has been somewhat sanitised from the presentation of the Phantom in the film. In the masked ball scenes, the Phantom wears his famous red cloak and a rather gruesome skull mask. However, in the promotional images, the Phantom wears a black eye mask, instead, as seen in the Howland advertisement. This is hardly surprising given that the purpose of the Phantom was to sell clothes and beauty products.

Using the image of the Phantom, a male character, to promote the colour for clothing and cosmetics lines was an unusual promotional tool. Whereas a female star allowed clear connotations of beauty linked to the product, the image of the Phantom appears, by modern standards at least, to offer a rather ambiguous connotation for consumers to interpret. Rather than a fixed and clear meaning for his presence, his image allows for freer readings of his connotation to the colour. Perhaps the colour's ability to acquire multiple associations allowed consumers a subversive reading of Phantom Red if they so chose, a reading linking the shade not only with the Phantom but the strength of his desire for Christine. The image of the Phantom in impassioned pose with one arm raised mid-action reoccurs in promotional material. Could the association with the Phantom have created a connection to Romanticism, with its emphasis on imagination and emotion? On naming fashion shades, Rorke commented:

> Every color must have a name that means something….All of the 70 autumn shades have...romantic nomenclature. The 16 new evening shades are dedicated to France, which is having its one-hundredth anniversary of Romanticism.[72]

Romanticism is mentioned as an inspiration for colour names, and this hints not only to the importance of the power of colour to convey emotion but to the fact that Rorke and the TCCA exploited this connection to create interest in their colours.[73] Flappers were often characterised in contemporary writing in terms evoking Romanticism, of a dichotomy of innocence and knowledge, of love and romance, and of drinking and nightlife, and consumers gained knowledge about these through mediated experiences such as novels and films rather than merely through real life experiences.[74] Phantom Red appears during the Flapper Era, and arguably the character of the Phantom and his tragic passion for Christine might have been appealing to consumers.

For the Phantom Red cosmetics line, there appears to have been an attempt to anchor the meaning of the term Phantom in terms of a desirable cosmetic effect. Indeed, the effect of the make-up is described as 'Phantom-like.' This may be a clever play on the name Phantom Red, introducing a new connotation for the brand name.[75] By changing the context of the term

Phantom in this way, the advertisement developed a new reading of the brand name that linked it with a natural, translucent, nearly invisible quality. Whilst make-up was increasingly acceptable during the 1920s, it still retained negative associations with unnaturalness, trickery, and wantonness, though many young, fashionable women, particularly those defining themselves as flappers, found it perfectly acceptable to 'paint' their faces. Indeed wearing makeup was considered a new right for young women. Colour played an important part in the negative connotations for make-up. Gaudy, unnatural colours drew attention to the wearer.

Image 4: Phantom Red Lipstick Advertisement, *Photoplay*, June 1928, a rare example of a more sexualised tone adopted by the brand. © Media History Digital Library

Whilst the Phantom Red cosmetic range generally sought to distance itself from the more controversial associations of make-up, we have found three exceptions where a more salacious approach was taken in its advertising. In 1928, the April and June editions of *Photoplay* and the June edition of *Vogue* contained Phantom Red Cosmetics advertisements with an assertive, sexual tone: 'Lips that tantalize. Red – and what red...smouldering fire...the heart-break color,'[76] and 'Plenty of "It"…personality plus…appeal that gets what it goes after' (Image 4).[77] On the one hand, advertisers invite the consumer to read the product as something

subtle and passive that will enhance natural beauty, whilst on the other, they offer it as a way to create a proactive, outgoing, sexualised persona.

Image 5: Phantom Red Lipstick Advertisement, *Motion Picture Magazine*, August 1928, conservative tone used in promotional Material. © Media History Digital Library

The conflict between celebrating and taming the colour is further demonstrated in the use of Mary Philbin as the female face of Phantom Red Cosmetics during the 1920s. Philbin's endorsement not only strengthened the range's links to the film and to Hollywood glamour, but offered new readings of the brand. Throughout her career Philbin was portrayed as sweet and innocent. *Motion Picture Magazine* noted in 1928 in a caption under a photo of her holding flowers: 'The beauty of Mary Philbin is as fresh and as wanting in artifice as that of the flowers she holds.'[78] In publicity material, she was normally presented with a slightly old-fashioned appearance and with long curly hair, even when the fashion was for short bobs. Nearly all of the advertisements for Phantom Red Cosmetics in this period reflect the image of the angelic child-woman projected around Philbin rather than the more sexualised approach. The text in the advertisements complements this image using terms such as 'nature's warmth' and 'the natural beauty of glorious girlhood,' and offer Phantom Red lipstick as a means to gain a natural, youthful looking beauty (Image 5).[79] This is in direct contrast to the contemporary, outgoing flapper image personified by actresses such as Colleen Moore and Clara Bow, who wore their hair short and were portrayed as having outgoing personas both on and off the screen. Here Philbin's presence offers a taming effect on the negative connotations of make-up, introducing

overtones of the old fashioned, respectable girl. Three sexualised exceptions to this advertising strategy included images of Philbin with shorter hair, either bobbed or worn up to give the illusion of short hair, but Philbin's presence still brought a connotation of respectability.

A similar tension between reserve and outgoingness can be found in the descriptions of the Phantom Red clothing and the way it was advertised. Phantom Red was regularly described in the press and in retailer advertisements as something vibrant and strong: 'brilliant scarlet,' 'snappy crimson,' 'startling,' and most commonly, 'flaming.' The word 'flaming' was commonly used in the 1920s to describe youth and flapper culture, as in the novel *Flaming Youth* (1923), which was also adapted into film starring Colleen Moore. Both conservative and radical contemporary commentators tended to define youth in sexual and moral terms in the 1920s,[80] and the word flaming suggests not only passion and emotion, but is directly connected to the flapper. As an adjective, it also brings to mind red flames and the heat of fire and in turn danger and a lack of control. For example, in his 1929 autobiography, singer and vaudeville performer Taylor Gordon recalls when his boss' wife wore 'a Phantom Red dress with matching red shoes' on a night out. 'He [Taylor's boss] spied her red dress, her flaming red dress, and made her take it off.'[81] In this context, flaming connotes inflammatory, provocative behaviour, bringing to mind the flapper once more. This was a connotation of red still circulating in contemporary discourse, for example, in a newspaper fictional serial, 'The Hollywood Girl:'

> Bobbie owned a bright red dress that she hardly ever wore. She loved the brilliant color of it…But somehow, she thought it was too "loud." Too gay for her. Not in good taste. But tonight she put it on, feeling that it matched the reckless unhappy mood she was in. She painted her mouth until it was the same color … "I don't look like Bobbie Ransom at all.…But I do look like the kind of girl the men fall for."[82]

In contemporary writings, red's positive symbolic connotations were also stressed. For example, one contemporary wrote: 'All women should have a red dress.…There's a certain lifting effect on the spirits that no color can have as effectively as red.'[83] It is also important to note that bright reds were common during the 1920s, and therefore whilst Phantom Red may have carried certain colour meanings for consumers, it was a fully 'rehabilitated' colour.[84] Nevertheless the use of the word flaming to describe Phantom Red inevitably plays with connotations of danger and the flapper, which is probably why Rorke did not use it in the official announcement of the shade, though for some sections of the consumer public this connotation might have been appealing. Fascinatingly, Rorke describes the colour as 'a soft, elusive shade.'[85] Having introduced this vibrant red to the market, Rorke, like the cosmetics company, attempts to tame the emotive power of the colour with her descriptors.

4. Conclusion

The cases of Phantom Red and Alice Blue have shown us several remarkable patterns. Both colours were connected with the cultural domains of celebrity, passion and sadness (Romanticism), youth, sweetness and innocence, naughty out-going girls attracting men, sexuality, and the flapper. Both colours show how in the early twentieth-century colours were tied in with popular culture through fashionable clothing and cosmetics, celebrity, advertising, musical theatre, popular songs, cinema, fan magazines, and movie stars. The mediatisation of the colours positioned them as fashionable and desirable, but also unleashed a piling up of different and conflicting connotations surrounding them. Both colours are connected with 'Americanness' and can be identified as being part of the 'battle of styles' between Paris and

Hollywood that was going on in the investigated period. Remarkably, this happened within a context of 'taming' colour through standardisation. The TCCA used colour cards to name and prescribe fashionable colours for the coming season. Naming and standardising a colour creates a starting point for new connotations to emerge, turning original meanings upside down and inside out. Our most important conclusion is that colours in themselves do not merely refer to objects or artefacts, and as such can be easily used in a propagandistic ways connected to the semiotics of meaning. For each colour, various connotations can be activated by the use of anchoring texts about or around a colour. Colour's versatility is extremely valuable in commercial consumer contexts such as fashion because it allows for the production of multiple and new connotations.

Notes

[1] In early film most colours were applied to the black-and-white image, either by hand or mechanically (stencil, tinting and toning). However, from the beginning people were searching for a way to reproduce colours photographically. These systems, of which many emerged during the 1920s, were often referred to as 'natural colours.'

[2] Whilst it is not clear if the TCCA controlled and licensed the name Phantom Red to Carlyle Laboratories, Universal Pictures certainly were aware and approved of the branding. They gave their consent for images of Mary Philbin and references to the film to be included in advertisements for the cosmetics range.

[3] David Batchelor, *Chromophobia* (London: Reaktion, 2000), 22-23.

[4] Christine McGaffey Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (New York: The Business Bourse, 1929), 352.

[5] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Zur Farbenlehre* (Tübingen, Germany: JGCotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1810).

[6] Edward D. Babbitt, *The Principles of Light and Color* (New York: Babbitt, 1878).

[7] Chevreul, Michel-Eugène, *De la loi du contraste simultané* (Paris: Pitois-Levrault, 1839).

[8] Regina Lee Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2012), 139.

[9] Adolf Hölzel, 'Einiges über die Farbe in ihrer bildharmonischen Bedeutung und Ausnützung,' (Lecture), In Proceedings of the *Erster Deutscher Farbentag auf der 9. Jahresversammlung des Deutschen Werkbundes in Stuttgart am 9 September 1919,* (Berlin: Selbstverlag des Deutschen Werkbundes, 1919), 10-26; Wilhelm Ostwald, *Die Farbenfibel* (Leipzig, Germany: Verlag Unesma, 1917); Wassily Kandinsky, *The Art of Spiritual Harmony* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914). For more detailed information on these debates see for example: Joshua Yumibe, *Moving Color: Early Film, Mass Culture, Modernism* (Techniques of the Moving Image) (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 17-37.

[10] Matthew Luckiesh, *The Language of Color* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1918), accessed 30 January 2013, http://archive.org/details/languageofcolorb00luck.

[11] Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution*, 140.

[12] Bonnie E. Snow and Hugo B. Froelich, *The Theory and Practice of Color* (New York and Chicago: Prang, 1920), 10, accessed 23 March 2014, http://archive.org/details/cu31924002932634.

[13] Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (Noonday Press 1977), 32–51 [1964] Barthes distinguishes the connoted image from the denoted image. Denotation, he explains, is the literal image, a non-coded iconic message that can only be constituted if all connotations are evicted. Denotation functions at the level of the first degree of intelligibility. As a consequence, denotation of colours is the moment of identification and labelling of a colour as blue, red, yellow, purple or any other colour without attaching any cultural meaning to

it. Connotation is the coded iconic message, the symbolic image or the cultural message. Barthes explains that: 'a system of connotation is a system which takes over the signs of another system in order to make them its signifiers.' It is a symbolic, culturally determined message, which is discontinuous, meaning that it can vary geographically, temporarily and between individuals. The variation depends on different kinds of knowledge – practical, national, cultural, aesthetic – that can or cannot be activated when an image is being 'read.'

[14] Peace Institute, *The Lotus* (Raleigh, NC: Peace College, 1929), accessed 31 May 2013, http://archive.org/details/lotus1929peace.

[15] It is important to note that we are not attempting to identify every possible interpretation of the two colours by contemporaries. Any number of experiences, some unique to an individual could help create a meaning and identity for the colour. For example the term Phantom Red was used sporadically in the 1920s to describe subversive communist activities. Therefore for consumers who came across the term Phantom Red in this context the colour could have formed an association with communism that might have appealed to or appalled them depending on their political affiliations. 'Blue Forces to Defend S.A. Against Phantom Red Army,' *San Antonio Light*, 22 October 1928, 3, accessed 6 March 2013, http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/51973/News-TE-SA_AN_LI.-1928_10_22-0003/486889475?backurl=&ssrc=&backlabel=Return&rc=3148,158,3750,300;3836,158,4094,300.

[16] 'Inaugural Gown of "Alice Blue,"' *Minneapolis Journal*, 20 February 1905, 8, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045366/1905-02-20/ed-1/seq-8/.

[17] In 1917 the dress became a museum's object, as it was deposited at the Smithsonian Institute, where it remains today. '"Alice Blue" Silk,' *Minneapolis Journal*, 25 March 1905, 8, accessed 8 May 2014. http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045366/1905-03-25/ed-1/seq-8/.

[18] Stacy A. Cordery, *Alice: Alice Roosevelt Longworth, from White House Princess to Washington Power Broker* (New York: Viking, 2007), 43-62. And 'In Regal Style,' *Stark Country Democrat*, 16 February 1906, accessed 8 May 2014. http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84028490/1906-02-16/ed-1/seq-7/.

[19] '"Alice Blue" Silk.'

[20] Remarkably, four days earlier the shade was already advertised by Franklin Simon & Co. amongst their specials for Saturday. This shows us that suits in Alice Blue were already in the stocks to be sold at the department stores before it was introduced by the help of Edith Roosevelt's inaugural gown. This hints at the possibility that the American silk industry had anticipated or even orchestrated the success of Alice Blue after the inauguration. See: 'Franklin Simon & Co. – Specials for Saturday,' *The Evening Telegram*, 16 February 1905, 16, accessed 8 May 2014. http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[21] In fact this was a classic example of how fashion works according to Mary Lynn Stewart, who states that '...the logic of fashion is based on the tension between originality and reproduction.' See: Mary Lynn Stewart, 'Copying and Copyrighting Haute Couture: Democratizing Fashion, 1900-1930s,' *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 104.

[22] 'President's Daughter Directs the Decorators,' *San Francisco Call*, 17 February 1906, 2, accessed 8 March 2013, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1906-02-17/ed-1/seq-2/; 'In Regal Style,' *Stark Country Democrat*, 16 February 1906, 7, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84028490/1906-02-16/ed-1/seq-7/; 'Five of the Most Striking Gowns in the Wedding Trousseau of Miss Alice Roosevelt,' *The World*, 3 February 1906, 3, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030193/1906-02-03/ed-1/seq-3/; '"Alice Blue" Dominates. Rich Trousseau of the White House Bride. Gowns for Street and House Wear Are Elaborate. One Hat Is Declared to Have Cost $1800,' *Boston*

Daily Globe, 18 February 1906, 11, accessed 4 November 2013, http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/boston/doc/500566184.html?FMT=AI&FMTS=ABS:AI&type=historic&date=Feb+18,+1906&author=&pub=Boston+Daily+Globe+%281872-1922%29&desc=ALICE+BLUE"+DOMINATES.

[23] 'People wearied of the hundreds of thousands of columns about the young woman for whom it was named that were printed before and after her wedding.' See: 'Through the Lorgnette - Copenhagen's Vogue Grows,' *The New York Press*, 21 April 1908, 5, accessed 8 May 2014, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[24] 'Through the Lorgnette: Mrs. Longworth in Blue Shoes,' *The New York Press*, 17 March 1907, 6, accessed 8 May 2014. http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[25] Both versions of Alice Blue can be found in Ridgway's *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature* from 1912, the first colour is referred to as Alice Blue and the new shade as Light Alice Blue. Robert Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature: With Fifty-Three Colored Plates and Eleven Hundred and Fifteen Named Colors* (Washington, DC: By the Author, 1912), 29 & 34, accessed 20 February 2014, http://archive.org/details /mobot 3175300 2026018.

[26] '"Alice Blue" Silk,' 8.

[27] In 1921, the occultist Grumbine writes the following on blue in his *Psychology of Color*: 'Light blue symbolises the British and American nations and pre-eminently the "literary" temperament, because it stands for knowledge and life, freedom, fraternity, happiness.' See: J. C. F. Grumbine, *Psychology of Color* (Cleveland: The Order of the White Rose, 1921), 45, accessed 21 February 2014, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nnc1.cu12125741.

[28] In 1914, the transition was accelerated because the First Word War disrupted communication lines with Europe, and the French colour cards ceased to appear, leaving space for American equivalents. That same year Paterson's silk makers saw an opportunity to start setting their own trends.

[29] Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution*, 74.

[30] Ironically, an advertisement from 1905 presented Alice Blue as the latest fashion from France. This shows how strongly taste and style were connected to France and Paris, and how difficult it was to change this discourse. 'John G. Myers Company: Handsome French Novelty Colored Dress Goods,' *The Albany Evening Journal*, 11 June 1905, 14, accessed 12 February 2013, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[31] 'Pretty Alice Blue Suites on Sleeping Cars for Honeymooners,' *The Tacoma Times*, 21 August 1911, 1, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085187/1911-08-21/ed-1/seq-1/.

[32] For example: 'Duke-Wester.' *Hartford Herald*, 13 May 1908, 1, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84037890/1908-05-13/ed-1/seq-1/; and 'Miss Mackay Becomes Bride of Mr. O'Brien,' *New York Tribune*, 22 September 1922, 11, accessed 19 March 2013, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[33] Luckiesh, *The Language of Color*, 119.

[34] Ibid., 119.

[35] 'Alice Blue: The Favored Shade Appears in Hats, Parasols and Mitts, as Well as Gowns,' *Washington Times*, 3 June 1905, 7, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1905-06-03/ed-1/seq-7/.

[36] Rose McRae, 'Gorgeous Gowns in Pink and Blue, Worn by Rita Jolivet in "Where Ignorance Is Bliss,"' *The New York Press*, 14 September 1913, 2, accessed 12 May 2014, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[37] Michel Pastoureau writes about blue and Romanticism: 'Everywhere blue was adorned with the poetic virtues. It became…the color of love, melancholy and dreams….What's more, the blue of the poets was connected with the blue of popular expressions and proverbs, which for a long while had labelled dream images and fairy tales as "blue tales," and in which the "blue bird" was an ideal, rare, and unreachable being.' Michel Pastoureau, *Blue: The History of a Color* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2001), 140. In 1920, Snow and Froelich also mentioned these Romantic connotations for blue. They stated that blue was modest and retiring, like the blue forget-me-not. Further, they associated blue with quietness and restraint. See: Snow and Froelich, *The Theory and Practice of Color*, 40-41.

[38] The musical premiered in November 1919 at the Vanderbilt Theatre in New York. The story tells about Irene O'Dare, an Irish girl from Manhattan. She works in the family's piano store. When she is sent to Long Island to tune a piano, she meets the rich Donald Marshall III. Irene falls in love with him. When Donald's friend Ozzie opens a modiste's shop, run by Madame Lucy, Donald is willing to finance, but only if Irene and her working class friends are hired to pose as society girls. After some complications, struggles, kisses, break-ups, and fights, the musical ends with Irene revealing her true identity, and Donald declaring his love.

[39] '"Irene" Celebrates 600th Performance,' *Long Island Daily Press*, 14 April 1921, 2, accessed 8 May 2014, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[40] '$40,000 Loot Recovered in Burglar's Home,' *New York Tribune*, 12, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1921-12-18/ed-1/seq-12/.

[41] 'Singer Dyes Cat Blue: Law Objects to Her Colour Scheme,' *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 23 February 1922, 4, accessed 16 July 2013, http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000563/19220223/029/0004.

[42] 'Alice Blue Beauty Salon,' *Utica Observer-Dispatch*, 10 July 1924, 28, accessed 15 May 2013, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[43] The horse was mostly mentioned in the *Buffalo Courier*. For example: 'Alice Blue Gown, Louanna Make It Double for Keene,' *Buffalo Courier*, 26 October 1922, 18, accessed 8 May 2014, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[44] '"Irene" at Second Week at Majestic,' *Brooklyn Standard Union*, 11 October 1921, 10, accessed 8 May 2014, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[45] Peter Delpeut, *Diva Dolorosa: Reis naar het einde van een eeuw* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff 1999).

[46] The designer was Cora MacGeachy. YouTube features the Technicolor II fashion show finale in which Colleen Moore wears an Alice Blue coloured gown in a segment called 'May Time Garden Party.' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPDsaWYO-VA. See also poster of Moore wearing the gown at http://www.examiner.com/article/march-at-niles-essanay-silent-film-museum.

[47] The shade Alice Blue also resurfaced in the newspaper in an article presenting blue as the popular colour for the spring collections of 1926. Alice Blue was presented in this text as 'the old favorite.' 'Fashion Notes,' *Saratogian*, 6 February 1926, 10, accessed 7 July 2013, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[48] 'Hollywood Beats Paris in Great World Battle of Styles,' *Buffalo Sunday Express*, 14 March 1926, 5, accessed 6 March 2013, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.

[49] It was often performed on the radio. In addition, the song was again recorded by Victor, however in an instrumental version by the Victor Salon Orchestra, accessed 13 February 2014, http://victor.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/800008582/BVE-34329-Alice_blue_gown.

[50] For example see: '[Rex Advert],' *Ironwood Daily Globe*, 27 April 1926, 5, accessed 13 May 2013, http://tinyurl.com/nprb4mq; 'Irene, with Colleen Moore at Victoria for Three Days,' *Buffalo Courier*, 30 May 1926, 52, accessed 8 May 2014, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.
[51] Ironically, the Two-Strip Technicolor was not suited to reproduce the famous shade and made it appear a bit greenish. The colour from the past could not put up with modern technology such as film in natural colour.
[52] 'Station WSPA Announcing.' *Saratogian*, 5 January 1928, 12, accessed 8 May 2014, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.
[53] Flapper clubs such as The Royal Society of Flappers and The National Flapper's Flock surfaced and the journal *The Flapper* emerged as a result of this movement. 'Hairless and Careless,' *Coconino* Sun, 5 May 1922, 6, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87062055/1922-05-05/ed-1/seq-6/.
[54] See for example: 'Modern Girls Face Certain Disaster; "Flappers" Called Saddest Type of All,' *El Paso Herald*, 9 May 1920, 1, accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88084272/1920-05-08/ed-1/seq-15/.
[55] For example companies started to banish flapper outfits from their offices for being too revealing. 'Big Business Banishes the Flapper,' *The Morning Tulsa Daily World*, 16 July 1922, [adv], accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042345/1922-07-16/ed-1/seq-26/. See also: 'Modern Girls Face Certain Disaster,' 1.
[56] Lady Duff-Gordon, also known as Lucille, designed the outfits for the musical version of Irene in 1919. 'Flapper Suits by Lady Duff-Gordon,' *Ogden Standard Examiner*, 26 March 1922, [adv], accessed 8 May 2014, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85058393/1922-03-26/ed-1/seq-31/.
[57] For example, in the film *Flaming Youth* (1923), Colleen Moore stars as the flaming flapper Pat, who, in 'reality' is just an innocent little girl hiding behind the mask of promiscuity. After this role, Moore's flappers increasingly were portrayed as innocent and ignorant and closer to the so-called Cinderella-type of the poor working girl who ends up marrying a rich man. However, because Moore was playing them, these characters continued to be associated with the flapper, for example, in *Photoplay*: 'Colleen portrays to a nicety the "Sallys" and "Irenes" and flappers. She flaps better than any other artist.' "Colleen and Irene," *Photoplay*, July 1926, 147, accessed 11 February 2013, http://www.archive.org/stream/photoplay 3031movi-page /n149/mode/2up. See also, Sara Ross, 'The Hollywood Flapper and the Culture of Media Consumption,' in *Hollywood Goes Shopping*, ed. David Desser and Garth Jowett, Commerce and Mass Culture Series (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 57-81; and, Sara Ross, '"Good Little Bad Girls:" Controversy and the Flapper Comedienne,' *Film History* 13, no. 4 (1 January 2001): 409-423. Although *Flaming Flapper* is often considered to be Moore's first association with flappers, a year earlier she had declared herself a flapper in an interview, in which she declared that a flapper 'is just a little girl trying to grow up – in the process of growing up.' In this way, Moore brought the flapper type back the earlier meaning of teen-age girls, too young to be adults and too young to be children. Gladys Hall, 'Flappers Here to Stay, Says Colleen Moore,' *The Flapper*, November 1922, 2, accessed 13 March 2014, http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com/Silent_Movie_Actress_Colleen_Moore_Interview_Colleen_Moore_Hollywood_Flapper.
[58] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York and London: Routledge, 1979), 90-99.
[59] 'Dress to Suit Your Type,' *Motion Picture Magazine*, April 1926, 28, accessed 11 February 2013, http://archive.org/stream/motionpicturemag31brew - page/n279/mode/2up/search/"dress+to+suit".

[60] 'Knew She Was a Flapper,' *Harrisburg Evening News*, 30 January 1925, 18, accessed 16 February 1914,
http://www.newspapers.com/image/57744516/?terms="Knew+She+was+a+Flapper".
[61] Newspaper articles from the film's press book reported Rorke had seen the film in Paris with Carl Laemmle President of Universal Pictures Corporation who produced the picture and the author of the original novel, Gaston Leroux. Philip J. Riley, *The Making of the Phantom of the Opera* (Absecon, NJ: MagicImage Filmbooks, 1999), 242-243.
[62] Riley, *The Making of the Phantom of the Opera*, 242-243; and 'Motion Picture Sets Style for First Time: Paris Decrees Phantom Red for Fall,' *Brooklyn Daily Star*, 17 September 1925, 14, accessed 18 February 2013, http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html.
[63] Robert Dance, Bruce Robertson, and Santa Barbara Museum of Art, *Ruth Harriet Louise and Hollywood Glamour Photography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 109.
[64] Lois Shirley, 'Your Clothes Come From Hollywood. How the Creations You See on the Screen Influence You More Directly than Paris Fashion,' *Photoplay*, February 1929, 70-1, 130-2, cited in Robert Dance, Bruce Robertson, and Santa Barbara Museum of Art, *Ruth Harriet Louise and Hollywood Glamour Photography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 109. See also 'Hollywood Beats Paris,' *Buffalo Sunday Express*.
[65] Interestingly, in Paris a similar trend is visible. For example the journal *Cinéa – Ciné pour tous* printed photographs of American movie stars wearing Parisian fashion in the 1920s.
[66] For further reading see Jeanne Allen, 'The Film Viewer as Consumer,' *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 5, no. 4 (1980): 481-499; Mary Ann Doane, 'The Economy of Desire: The Commodity Form In/of the Cinema,' *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11, no. 1 (1989): 23-33; and Charles Eckert, 'The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window,' *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 3, no. 1 (1978): 1-21.
[67] It was not to be the last, and subsequent shades inspired by colour films included Midnight Sun, an orange or yellow, in 1926 and Sutter's Gold, in 1936.
[68] Allen, 'The Film Viewer as Consumer,' 481-499.
[69] For example, in Pittsburgh twelve stores from the McCullough Drug Co., and the May Drug Co. turned their windows over to the Phantom Red Lipstick with 'elaborate window displays' being made to feature the picture and the lipstick. Lon B. Ramsdell, 'Pittsburg Is Thrilled. "Phantom of the Opera" Exploitation Campaign Too Much for Otherwise Hardened Town,' *Exhibitors Trade Review* 19, no. 11 (6 February 1926): 11, accessed on 10 December 2013, https://archive.org/stream/exhibitorstrade00new - page/n547/mode/2up/search/"phantom+red".
[70] Quoted, in Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution*, 159.
[71] While for the cosmetics range, images of the Phantom and Mary Philbin, the female star of the film, were used.
[72] 'Mrs Rorke Made Your Color Ensemble a Fact,' *Appleton Post Crescent*, 25 October 1928, 8, accessed 25 May 2013, http://tinyurl.com/nhtd3j2.
[73] Rorke also named shades after an object of the same colour, taking inspiration from subjects as diverse as aeroplanes and zoos. See 'Zoo Helps Name Fashion's Colors,' *Ogden Standard Examiner*, 27 May 1928, 3b, accessed 13 May 2013, http://tinyurl.com/nnbpfy8.
[73] '[Photo and Caption for Mary Philbin],' *Motion Picture Magazine*, November 1928, 22, accessed 3 May 2013,
http://archive.org/stream/motionpicturemag36moti- page/n401/mode/2up.
[74] Ross, 'The Hollywood Flapper and the Culture of Media Consumption', 57-81.
[75] This would have been particularly important for consumers who did know the link between the cosmetics range and the film and were seeking to make sense of the brand name.

[76] '[Phantom Red Advertisement],' *Photoplay*, April 1928, 146, accessed 14 April 2013, https://archive.org/stream/photoplay3334movi-page/n571/mode/2up.
[77] Ibid., 145.
[78] 'The Beauty of Mary Philbin,' *Motion Picture Magazine*, Aug 28-Jan 29, 1928, 22, accessed 3 May 2013, http://archive.org/stream/motionpicturemag36moti-page/n401/mode.
[79] '[Phantom Red advertisement]', *Motion Picture Magazine*, August 1928, 106, accessed on 5 June 2013, http://archive.org/stream/motionpicturemag36moti-page/n109/mode/2up/search/"Phantom+red"; '[Phantom Red Lipstick Advert],' *Motion Picture Magazine*, October 1928, 115, accessed 8 June 2013, http://archive.org/stream/motionpicturemag36motipage/n369/mode/2up/search/"Phantom+red".ews-UT-OG_ST_EX. 1928_ 05_27-0019.
[80] Cynthia Felano, 'Hollywood in the 1920s: Youth Must Be Served,' in *Hollywood Goes Shopping*, ed. David Desser and Garth Jowett, Commerce and Mass Culture Series (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 88.
[81] Taylor Gordon, *Born to Be* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1929), 149, accessed 1 February 2013, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015002613555.
[82] Beatrice Burton, 'Hollywood Girl,' *Warren Tribune*, August 22, 1927, accessed 17 February 2014, http://www.newspapers.com/image/37100767/.
[83] Henri Bendel, 'Frocks Will Greet Spring in 1 Piece,' *Joplin Globe*, 17 March 1929, 15, accessed 16 February 2014, http://www.newspapers.com/image/14976851/?terms=%22Frocks+Will+Greet+Spring+in+1+Piece%22.
[84] 'Gotta Have a Red Gown This Season, Girls,' *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 September 1926, 31, accessed 16 February 2014, http://www.newspapers.com/image/14976851/?terms="Frocks+Will+Greet+Spring+in+1+Piece".
[85] 'Motion Picture Sets Style for First Time,' *Brooklyn Daily Star*.

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The Unique Standard: Fordist and Post-Fordist Production Dynamics in Fashion and Architecture

Clara Olóriz Sanjuán

Abstract

The management of sizes related to 'uniform,' 'off-the-peg,' and contemporary 'mass-customisation' phenomena are intrinsically related to fashion production processes as affordable alternatives to more expensive haute couture. Similarly, architecture has crossed its disciplinary boundaries to make use of fashion's terms and production strategies to cope with society's requirements. Its spaces are meant to be shaped, 'ready-made,' consumed or 'mass-tailored' to the inhabitant's demands. In defining and shaping these demands, both fashion and architecture are constantly constructing an image of the society they are addressing. During the twentieth century, both disciplines revealed a paradigm shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, or from standard to non-standard forms of production and consumption. In this article, I will analyse the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth-century incipient industrialisation which entailed an all-encompassing systematisation of standards and the production of a specific tabula of sizes, moulds and spaces in which the consumer society would fit and live. Then, I will draw a parallel between the manufacture of large quantities of prêt-à-porter clothing during the post-World War II period and the prefabricated off-the-peg spaces in architecture. Finally, I will discuss the 1970s critique of the lack of individualisation of standardised production that initiated a trend that continues developing today: mass-customisation. This article critically addresses the contemporary crossing of boundaries in fashion and architecture production dynamics and focuses on the invention of the 'unique standard.'

Key Words

Fordism, mass-consumption, standard sizes, off-the-peg, ready-to-wear, post-Fordism, mass-customisation, architecture, fashion, Le Corbusier, Gropius, Charles James.

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1. Introduction

'Uniform,' 'off-the-peg,' and contemporary 'mass-customisation' phenomena are terms related to technologies of clothing production developed from the end of the ninetieth century until today. Their progression shows the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production: from standardised, low-cost, and affordable forms of mass-production to the late twentieth-century concerns about the individual consumer and specialised production. These terms are the devices through which fashion and, in similar ways, architecture, understand diversity – multiplicity and difference – and construct more manageable visions of a complex and varied society.

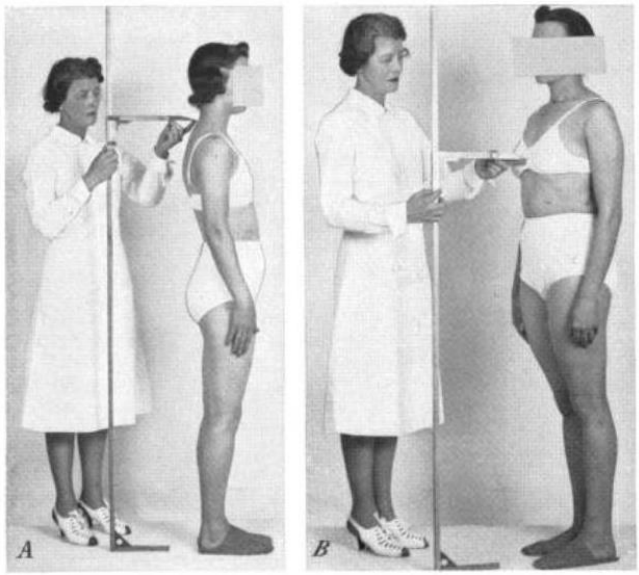
This streamlining of diversity is strongly determined by available production techniques and requires agreement or coordination among designers, producers, and consumers in the establishment of a set of measurements, sizing systems, and feedback protocols. Thinking about and classifying under these agreements establishes a common language among all the agents

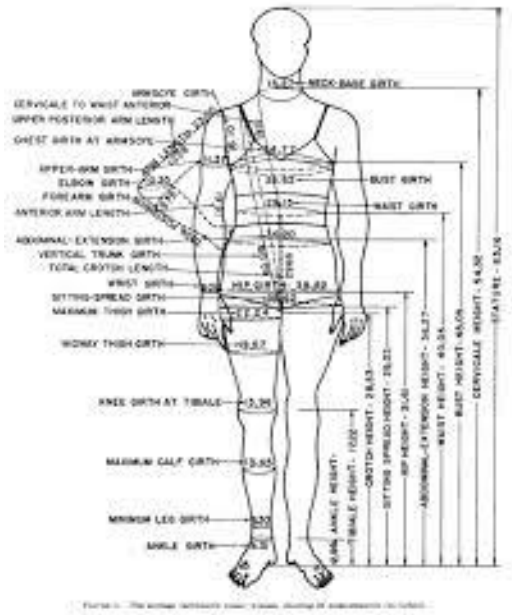
involved in the production of both fashion and architecture, from designers to consumers, which conditions the way goods are designed, produced, and purchased.

2. The Definition of the Uniform Type: Parameters and Standards

Innovations in clothing production modes have been deeply influenced by military developments. According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology,[1] the American Civil War (1861-1865), 'was a pivotal element in the historical development of men's ready-made clothing.'[2] The development of soldiers' garments as a uniform or single form normalised the sizes and the standardisation of clothing dimensions to fit every soldier. 'Anthropometric measurements taken on 100,000 white army recruits…established the physical "norms" for the average white American male,' observes the design, art, and culture historian Christina Cogdell.[3] Scientific and statistical formulas were developed in order to establish an average set of measurements or sizing system.

Following the Civil War and since the 1880s, catalogue retailing, or 'mail-order,' has been popular in the United States and anticipated standardisation developments of the twentieth century.[4] In the 1940s, the National Bureau of Home Economics conducted a survey of 15,000 women to establish a set of standards for ready-made garments.[5] The fifty-nine measurements taken from each volunteer generated a classification of various body types that were then used to standardise industrial production.[6] The resulting sizing system was used by catalogue companies to define their sizing standards and to communicate with their consumers, and became the common language with which designers, producers, and consumers would operate. Designers would work according to standard dimensions known to the producer and to the consumer who could then order clothing from a catalogue. Such studies not only developed a communication system among all agents involved in the production of garments but also allowed the classification of populations into body types to which basic silhouettes would fit (Images 1 & 2).[7] As Cogdell puts it, 'they proceeded to test thousands of individuals under the pretexts of compiling data from which to create "norms" and classifying individuals into their allotted categories.'[8]





Images 1 and 2: US White Woman's Measurements used for pattern making and 'Arithmetic Mean.' Miscellaneous Publication No. 454, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1941. © National Archives and Records Administration

The discourses around the establishment of a set of norms and fixed types, based on average measurements to streamline the mass production of garments, led in some cases to the conclusion that there existed a 'perfect man' or an ' ideal body type,' as Cogdell expresses in her book *Eugenic Design* (2004). The average of all the measurements would result in idealisations such as the 1942 *Normman and Norma*, a normalised sculpture or statistical mean of the human male and female, created by physician Robert L. Dickinson and the sculptor Abram Belskie, 'which arose from and embodied anthropometric studies of "native white Americans."'[9] Writes Cogdell:

> All these sculptures and contests communicated to the public physical forms for statistically average "types" that in actuality did not exist or correlate with any one specific individual, despite serious attempts to locate one.[10]

'Norm,' 'normalisation,' and 'standardisation' were commonplace in the vocabulary of efforts to control mass production in the race for an efficient and precise manufacture of goods and were common concerns for architects and fashion designers alike. Indeed, architects shared some parallel preoccupations with those involved in garment production. Post-World War I and World War II breakthroughs under military programmes in the field of mass-production and industrialisation enabled architects to incorporate industrialised construction techniques such as prefabricated components, steel, and precast concrete,[11] and to use assembly machinery such as tower cranes.[12] As a consequence of both wars, the shortage of skilled labour, and the need to provide dwellings for the masses, architects were forced to cope with these demands and develop more efficient, accurate, and cost effective techniques. Buildings began to be conceived as the assembly of large quantities of identical components. The repeatability of mass-produced

architecture changed not only the nature of building but the profession of architecture. As the following quotation by the architect Gilbert Herbert shows, the so-called 'great masters' of modernism took part in the heroic period of prefabrication with their explorations and experimentation in industrial dwellings*:*

> This is the period (1930s) when the great masters, Le Corbusier, Gropius, Frank Lloyd Wright, found it necessary to deal with the technological imperatives and social ideology of mass housing….This is the period when European architects of standing in the modern movement (Martin Wagner and Ernst May, Hans Poelzig and Hans Scharoun, Josef Hoffmann, Max and Bruno Taut, Otto Bartning) engaged with enthusiasm in designing prototypes for industrial production or even total systems of prefabrication developing them in the greatest of detail.[13]

In their attempts to systematise design to cope with the housing shortage and its affordability, early twentieth century architects tackled the multiplicity of society through type classifications. Proposals such as the architect Alexander Klein's minimum dwelling chart, 'Existenzminimum' (minimum dwelling, Bad Dürrenberg, 1927-1929), reflect how family types could be relegated to various house types, whose dimensions and areas are determined by the number of beds required. Le Corbusier's *maison-type, maison fabriquée en série*, and *machine à habite* were inspired by academic efforts from the eighteenth and ninetieth century to define a clear and systemic design methodology, responsive to functional conditions and influenced by the productive conditions of mass-production.[14] In the *L'Espirit Nouveau* article '*Des yeux qui ne voient pas'* (1921), Le Corbusier considered the house as an industrial product, a 'machine for living in' or '*La maison est une machine a habiter.*'[15] This is similar to the idea of clothing as something to live in, rather than solely to value for its visual effect or status.

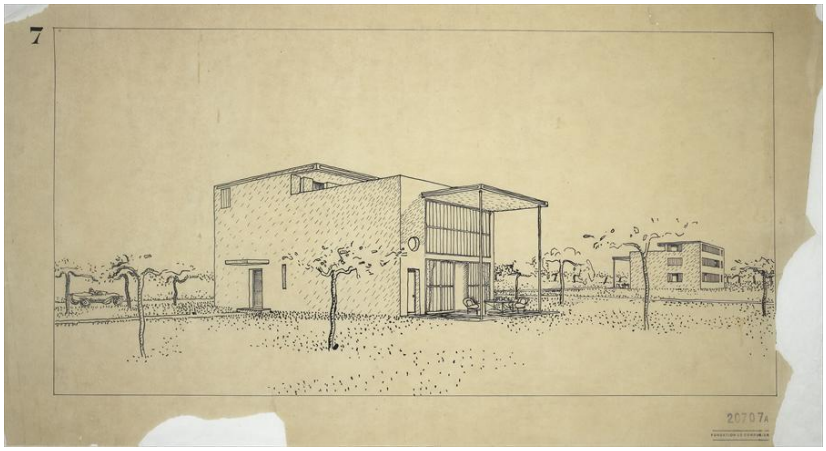


Image 3: Le Corbusier, *Villa en Serie*, 'Citrohan,' 1922. © FLC/ADAGP

Le Corbusier's '*Maisons en Serie*' chapter is structured in relation to the constructional methods employed in his own experiences in mass-production, *Dom-ino, Monol, Citrohan* (Image 3) and *Immeubles-Villas*. In *Vers une Architecture*, the '*Maison Citrohan*' from 1919, he conceives of the house as *outillage*, equipment; names it after an automobile, the *Citroën*;

and presents it as a mass produced *maison-type*.[16] The fact that Le Corbusier named his mass produced *maison-type* after a car echoes Fordist principles, in terms of efficiency and affordability in manufacturing the first mass produced car, Henry Ford's Model T (1908-1927).

Le Corbusier endorsed the use of light-weight and artificial materials rather than the solidly-built building 'which sets out to defy time and decay,'[17] advancing later ideas about expendability and the use of plastics. Similarly, the garment production industry had begun incorporating new lighter and synthetic manufactured fibres such as rayon (1910), and later nylon (1938), and acrylic (1950).[18] As a strategy for the fulfilment of a prefabricated house, he proposed a common unit of measurement for their assemblage and adaptation to one another, a dimension system based on human proportions baptised as the 'modulor' (Image 4).

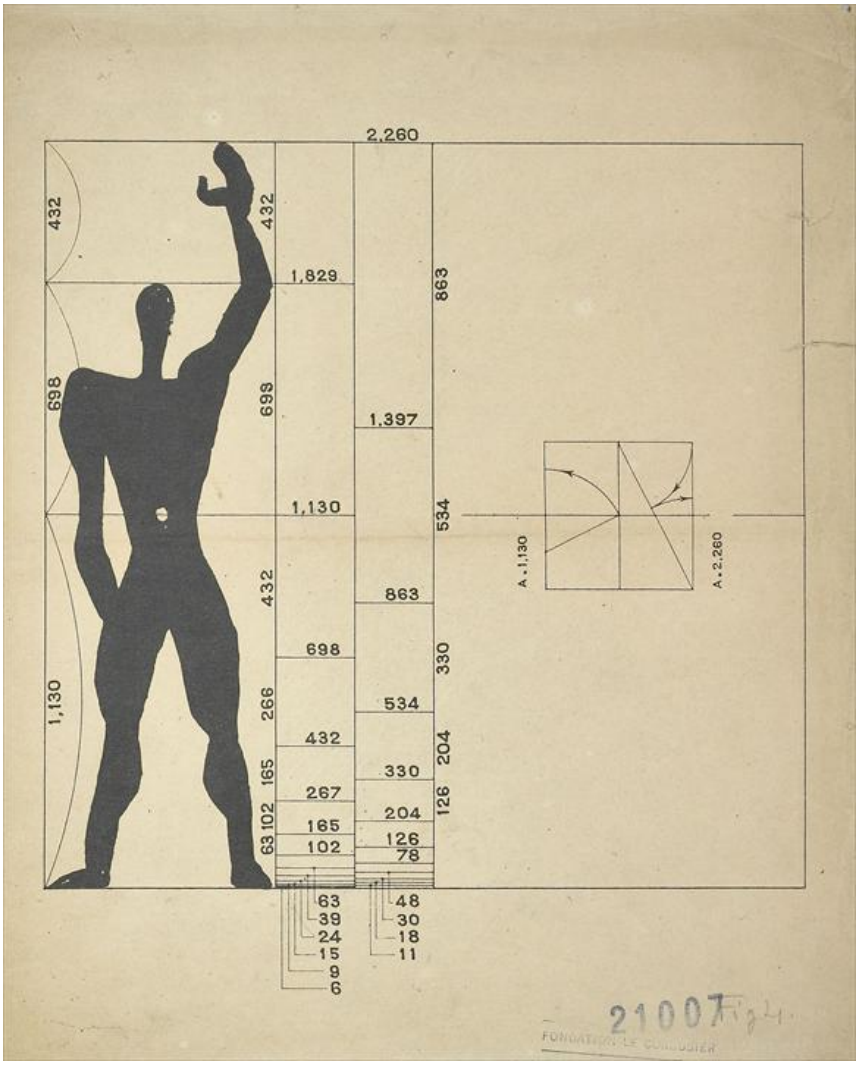


Image 4: Architectural Setting of Standards: Le Corbusier's Modulor, 1945.
© FLC/ADAGP

Previous to Le Corbusier, the Bauhaus architect Ernst Neufert established a system of standard common dimensions that he first published in the *Architects' Data* (1936). Still in use today, the book deals with ergonomic and functional dimensioning for the standard body, a tradition in architecture since the Vitruvian man from the Renaissance, and very much in tune with the ideal normalised body types used in garment production (Image 5).

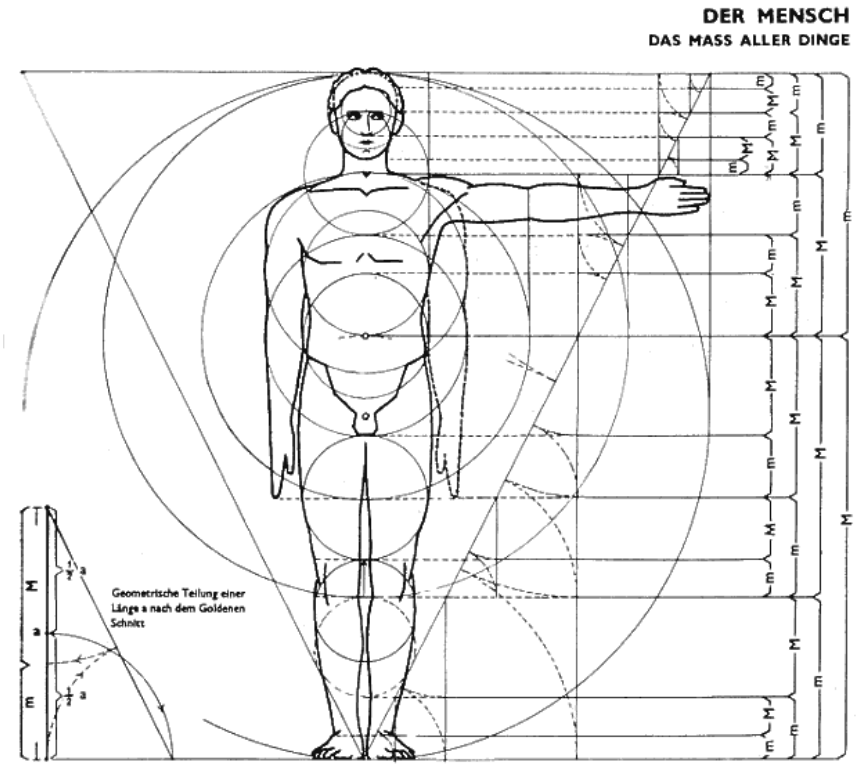


Image 5: Architectural setting of standards. Neufert's version of the Vitruvian Man, 1936. © Ernest Neufert, drawing used for the cover of *Architects' Data*[19]

Another tool shared by both fashion and architecture was the catalogue. For architects, the catalogue facilitated a modular coordination among design, production, and assembly, which determined the geometrical definition of the parts and their potential aggregation. For example, the building elements assembled by crane erectors determined the dimensions that architects used in their designs. The modular nature of construction was reflected in the use of graph or gridded paper – under a given system of dimensions – to guide architects in the dimensioning of their projects. Catalogues not only became the medium through which industry put prefabricated materials at the hands of architects but also the way in which some inhabitants bought their houses. For example, Le Corbusier built his *Spirit Nouveau* pavilion 1925 from elements coming from navy industries. Architects became familiar not only with catalogues from the construction industry but in the case of the Gropius experiments, the production of architecture itself was offered to clients in catalogues as the M1 copper house prepared for the Hirsch Kupfer catalogue from 1931 (Image 6). The modular components of this house also

reveal the multiple possibilities of rearranging the modules of the house according to the site conditions.

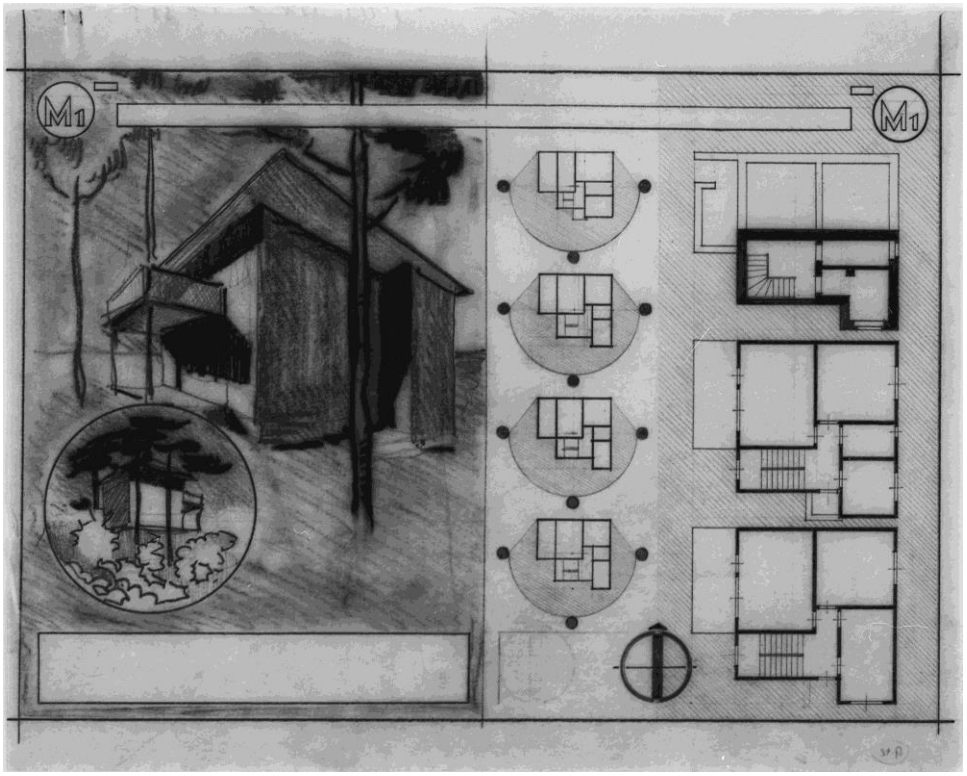


Image 6: Walter Gropius, Prefabricated Copper Houses, 1931-1932. Building type M1, plans and perspective sketches, 1930-1931. Photo: Imaging Department. © President and Fellows of Harvard College[20]

A similar trend occurred in garment design, with pattern making, which reduced costs and facilitated the language of apparel production. The apprentices of the designer Charles James, for example, marked his muslins with six-inch-grids, 'just like the graph paper used by the turn-of-the-century immigrant tailors for reproducing sizing.'[21]

On the American scene, Fordist production techniques were used in the creation of Levittown (Image 7), one of the first mass produced postwar suburbs (1947-1951). William J. Levitt devised the construction process as an assembly line, broken down into a series of steps, each one executed by a group of specialised labour. In this way, he managed to supply low-cost, single-unit housing for the middle class. His strategy was based on the control and speed-up of the production of an identical unit of mass housing which would fit the 'new mass culture of post-war society.'[22] Levitt compared this Fordist trend in the making of houses to developments in the manufacturing of clothing.

> We believe that the market for custom housing, like that for custom tailoring, no longer exists. People who want to buy that kind of thing will always be

> able to get it, but the real market is for the ordinary, mass-produced suit of clothes.[23]

While in the past, a garment would have been custom made in its entirety by a tailor or a seamstress, Fordist production techniques redefined a garment as merely an article of clothing that could be mass manufactured through use of an assembly line of cutting, stitching, attaching buttons, finishing, and packaging a – process that is used to this day.

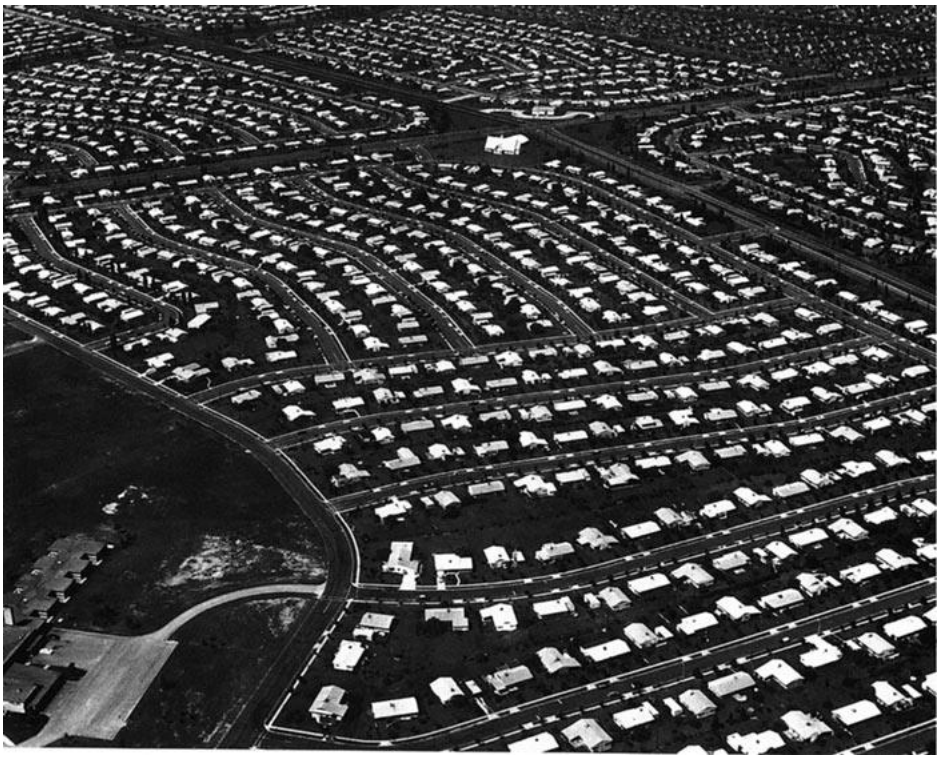


Image 7: Levittown's mass produced house-units, ed. Latcham, ca. 1959.

Levitt's intentions were heavily disapproved of by contemporary architectural critics such as Lewis Mumford, who described Levittown in 1961 as:

> a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lines up inflexibly, at uniform distances on uniform roads, in a treeless command waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same incomes, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless prefabricated food, from the same freezers, conforming in even outward and inward respect to a common mold manufactured in the same central metropolis. Thus the ultimate effect of the suburban escape in our time is, ironically, a low-grade uniform environment from which escape is impossible.[24]

As with Gropius, such prefabrication dealt with human diversity by imposing unity, and reducing people to a 'statistical mean' rather than respecting the rich diversity that is human life.' Critics argued that the resulting 'imposed unity' excluded 'free choice and personal preference.'[25]

Philosophically, these developments in the field of fashion and architecture attempted to disseminate a way of living and producing goods linked with a sense of social responsibility on the part of clothing designers and architects. However, uniform and typological classifications were also instrumentalized as a common language to control production and to rationalise production and thus profits. Under the influence of Fordist production, both fashion and architecture constructed a classification, tabula, or grid in which each individual from society could fit, based on canons under which ideal types are defined. These constraints or standards, implied by production methods, are associated to mentalities, that is to say, the way we manage and produce knowledge about a society, and, as Cogdell has observed, foreshadow the rise of eugenics, 'an offshoot of the Industrial Revolution's shift to controlled production.'[26] For the philosopher/sociologist Michel Foucault, such tabula are used 'to tame the wild profusion of existing things' and enable:

> thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and their differences – the table upon which, since the beginning of time, language has intersected space. [27]

How do such grids[28] lead us to 'simplifications,' 'absolute classifications,' and 'superimpositions' designed to neutralise, homogenise, control, normalise both people and things? How do we operate within this realm of taxonomy? Under which standards or categories do we establish such *tabulas*? The last section of this paper will address these questions in the shift towards post-Fordist forms of production initiated in the 1970s – or Lyotard's postmodern definition as 'incredulity towards metanarratives' – more specifically from the perspective of mass customisation.

3. 1950s and 1960s Off-the-Peg Spaces

While criticised, Fordist principles of production, efficiency, and affordability were implemented in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States and the British fashion and architectural scenes. The social and moral philosophy behind modern standardisation continued to be associated with the provision of a 'better quality of life,' 'urban renewal,' access to affordable goods, and democratising equal rights and consumption possibilities. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed a reframing of mass production principles to tackle contemporary socio-political demands and technological conditions to create 'the diverse urban and architectural utopias of that era.'[29] As we have seen, the principle of modular coordination was not new, a fact acknowledged by the European Production Agency (EPA) in 1959.[30] Post-war industrialisation techniques in the United States were responsible for the manufacturing and distribution of a wide array of fashionable clothing for the masses.

> Ready-made articles of clothing were portrayed as modern and fashionable during a time when the new consumer industries were rapidly redefining the way Americans viewed mass-manufactured goods. Instead of seeing the purchase of mass-produced clothing as entailing a loss of individuality, American women began to accept the pieces of ready-made merchandise as

> convenient, affordable, and up-to-date fashion items that could be replaced easily as styles changed.[31]

'Pop Fashion,' a result of the expansion of popular culture and consumer culture, was made possible with Fordist production techniques. Nigel Whiteley, Professor of Visual Arts, Lancaster University, UK, describes clothes of the 1960s 'as *popular*, *young*, and highly fashionable and, therefore…stylistically *expendable*, but also relatively *low cost* because they were either poorly made (acknowledging physical expendability) or *mass produced*.'[32] As examples of the trend in London, Whiteley mentions the Biba and Quorum brands.[33] Biba, run by Barbara Hulanicki and her husband Stephen Fitz-Simon, sold fashionable but cheap goods. It started as a mail-order boutique with the 'policy of selling cheap clothes as part of their "knock-down, throw-away-and-buy-another philosophy"' and 'provided both stylistic and physical expendability.' Hulanicki saw mass production as a means towards 'cheapness and expendability…to the advantage of the consumer.'[34]

These developments introduced new constraints for garment design and production. The mass market and consumer trends evolved into market research on consumer preferences, merchandising, and human ergonomics. Designers and producers began to rely on 'market statistics and their imaginative skill in using them to predict' in order to 'introduce an element of control that feeds back information into industry.'[35] The rise of television and its sophisticated visual advertising further transformed fashion's relationship with the consumer, constructing a desirable image of the society that it was addressing, further standardising and democratising fashion, paving the way for the global, historical phenomenon of what the sociologist Gilles Lipovetsky has called 'the empire of fashion.'[36] According to the architectural critic Reyner Banham, these developments occurred hand-in-hand with advances in the techniques of serial production.[37] Socially, the fact that products became fashionable built the foundations for a consumer society based on pop-culture and pop-technology.[38]

Similarly, architects building affordable houses for the masses needed to be responsive to consumer needs. Consequently, mass-production techniques and the industrialisation of architecture introduced a new constraint for design: consumer's taste, which located architects in the realm of fashion. The French self-taught architect Jean Prouvé noted that architects found they needed 'to produce the best housing at the most attractive price. This is what spells success in industry; the client's requirements determine the standards of the product.'[39] During the 1950s and 1960s, architectural production shifted from tailor-made buildings and traditional methods of construction to off-the-peg assemblies of components or kits of ready-made parts, transforming conventional concepts of space and design. Attempts to surpass the lack of individuality from previous decades such as in Levittown, focused on giving purchasers some say in decision-making, which floor plan distribution they preferred, areas for each of the rooms, etc., but always within the 'guidance' or constraints of the dimensioning or production system used. These concepts reflect Konrad Wachsmann's and Walter Gropius' General Panel System from 1947, which consisted of a packaged set of components ordered from a catalogue, delivered and assembled on site. In Los Angeles, the designers Charles and Ray Eames planned and constructed their own house, known as Case Study House, n.8, in two days from elements ordered from a catalogue of industries external to architecture, such as aircraft and factory construction.[40] The catalogue, a shared medium used in architecture and fashion, supplied designers, producers, and consumers with the potential of multiple possibilities of assembly.

Modular component housing anticipates questions of participatory design. In the 1950s and 1960s, the question of combinatory and assembly began to cater to individual consumer tastes and may represent an intermediate stage between mass-produced and mass-customised goods, in which variety is achieved through the combinability of repeatable components.

Konrad Wachsmann, Gropius' collaborator, advanced these ideas in 1931-1932 – not so much in the idea of the houses sold by catalog that already existed and were sold in places like Sears Roebuck but in the clients' participation – in relationship to his contributions to the wooden manufacturing company Christoph & Unmack:

> I developed new types of catalogues, which I believe for the first time in Europe did not offer finished buildings but instead all components to build with. Modular grids had been printed in those catalogs in which clients could draw their own approximate floor plans.[41]

From the fashion side, we can also find another early example of the challenging of established standards. In 1945, Charles James made a series of alterations to the standard dress dummy, later adapted by the US Department of Standards. 'He shortened the measurement from the nape of the neck across the top of the shoulder to the front underarm pivot point to 10 ½ inches. (Existing mannequins were 11 ½ to 12 ½ inches.)' James' objective was to achieve a more 'skeletonized form' because in his view: 'it was more advantageous to pad out each dummy to the customer's measurement.'[42] He also considered his mannequins as models for moving bodies:

> In 1965, he created a flexible sculpture model later executed in foam rubber and metal templates. Through the center a flexible rod bends the figure to show the effect a change of posture will have on the fit of a dress and its points of stress.[43]

The 1950s and 1960s British architectural climate also witnessed some radical proposals in relation to 'pop-technology' or fashionable and consumable architecture; 'change' was a fundamental aspect of the condition of technology in the twentieth century together with an 'acceptance of fashionability.'[44] Due to breath-taking technological updates, objects quickly became obsolete, developing intellectual attitudes for living in a throwaway economy,[45] present, already, in Biba's 'throw-away-and-buy-another philosophy.' This notion of expendability was actualised by Archigram, the avant-garde group of architects based in London, in their development of disposable environments, plug-in cities, and interchangeable and movable plastic capsules. The architects Alison and Peter Smithson created the 'caravan-embryo' in 1959, the 'appliance house' in 1956-1957, and 'the House of the Future' in 1956. At the Ideal Home show in 1956, they expressed their views on housing as an alternative to the conventional permanent house. Cedric Price's unbuilt Fun Palace for London (1961) was an architecture adapted to the tendencies of the moment; a purchasable item which could be advertised as an open prefabricated system, re-arrangeable by means of a crane and adaptable to changing demands. The Fun Palace can be proposed as analogous to a skeleton shelf, where off-the-peg spaces can be added or removed by means of an erector crane, condensing some of the ideas that permeated the 1950s and 1960s architectural and fashion milieus.

Such innovations were a response to the demand for design flexibility in a society committed to change, comfort, pleasure, consumption, and built-in obsolescence, thus, triggering the emergence of open-systems. Similar to 'open fashion,'[46] architecture was emerging as an open system and can be viewed as part of an all-encompassing 'consummate system of fashion.'[47]

4. The Twenty-First Century: The Unique Standard?

As a critique to the repeatability and 'generic-ness' of identical components in Fordist production and its imposing control over society, as well as the technical obsolescence and faith in technology of the 1950s and 1960s, the 1970s post-Fordist ideals re-described a new approach toward user, consumer, and inhabitant individualisation. As Joseph Pine, management advisor and author of *Mass Customization: The New Frontier of Business Competition* (1993), saw it, 'Mass-customisation' was an industry response to stay competitive in an era when consumers were rejecting homogenisation and seeking customised ways to express their individuality:

> America is losing that dominance (its world economic dominance through the system of Mass Production for most of the twentieth century) in large measure because Mass Production could not handle the increasingly turbulent market environment of the past twenty or thirty years. Companies in other countries have been quicker to shift to a new system of management, Mass Customization, which both causes and thrives on turbulence.[48]

Lyotard defines postmodern knowledge as the refinement of 'our sensitivity to differences' and the reinforcement of 'our ability to tolerate the incommensurable.' For Lyotard, 'its principle is not the expert's homology [pertaining to qualities of sameness], but the inventor's paralogy [as alternatives to the established ways of thinking].' Challenging the established norms, 'invention is always born of dissension, from the heterogeneity of language games.'[49] The post-Fordist shift in fashion and architecture turned towards individualisation. Mass production, writes Cate T. Corcoran, technology editor for *WWD*, 'combines advanced technology with factory production, instead of old-fashioned craftsmanship, to make something unique yet affordable.'[50] A hybrid of custom dressmaking and mass production made possible by advanced computer technology, it offered two things that went out of fashion when the factory took over: a good fit and a measure of individuality.[51] Post-Fordist fashion provides variety without increased costs; similar to classic Fordism, it uses mass-production techniques to produce individually customised goods and services. The futurist writer Alvin Toffler anticipated this development in his 1970 *Future Shock*, and the idea was further developed in 1987 by Stan Davies in *Future Perfect.* In some cases, a system of core components with personalised accessories and finishes, such as 'Design Your Own' by Timberland and '*mi Adidas*' by Adidas, provides consumers with online systems for choosing their own finishes.

In other cases, post-Fordist fashion based on rapid-production techniques by means of digital inputs can produce an infinite variety of outputs, fit to every individual. Levi Straus was a pioneer in product customisation with its 'Personal Pair' jeans from 1995.[52] Contemporary examples include Selve, 'the luxury shoe individualiser,' as their webpage reads, and Lori Coulter's 'made-to-order swimwear.'[53] These brands offer personalised products with regards to shape, size, and finishes, at affordable prices, in order to target consumers with less than perfect bodies whose physiques do not correspond with size templates, and who may 'think that something must be wrong with their bodies since so few off-the-rack trousers fit them.'[54]

Both Selve and Coulter use 3D scans (Image 8) such as $[TC]^2$ Fit Logic, Intellifit or Lectra-3D Fit.[55] Data capturing and body scans that use computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) technologies are required in order to fabricate mass individualised products. Not yet readily available to the average consumer, 3D body scans challenge the reductivist classifications of generic body types that purport to reduce human diveristy to a finite list of generic types and are meant to provide manufacturers with more precise measures for a customer, and thus, more acurate input parameters. In this way, the

consumer shifts from a generic, homogenous, and standardised type to a specific individual with distinct wants and needs. If in the mass-production phenomena the elite client of the past 'closed fashion'[56] system was transformed by democracy and standardisation processes into the mass-client, in a mass-customisation, open fashion system, each consumer is seen as a unique individual.

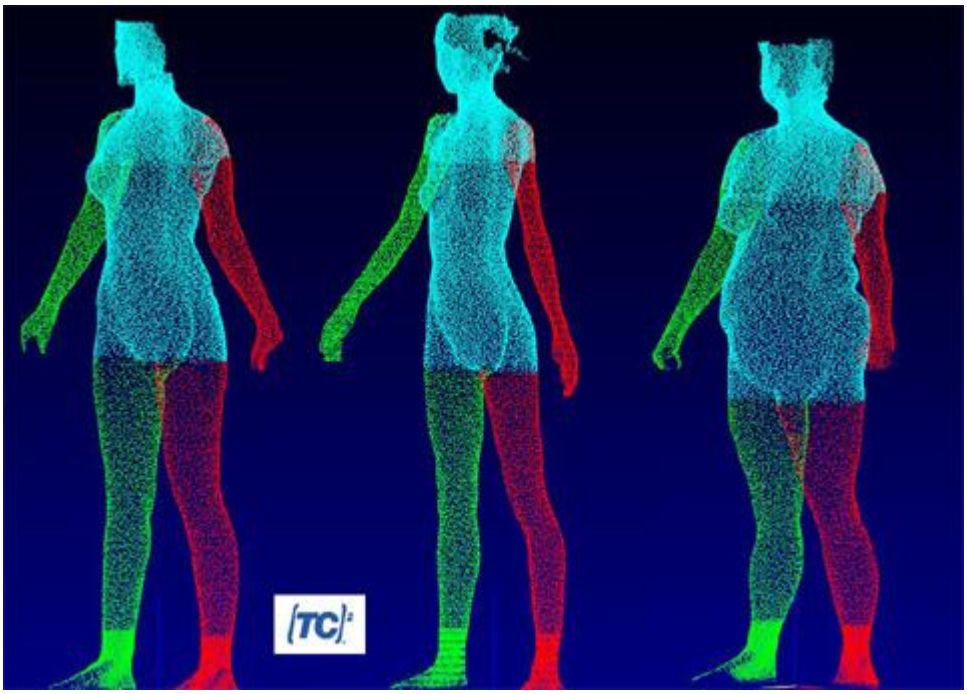


Image 8: [TC]^2 Body scanning, 2009. © Image provided by [TC]^2

The body scan seems to challenge the aforementioned classifications of body types, overcoming the reduction of human diversity to a finite list of generic types and generating an almost infinite set of accurate measures of the individual body. As a critique to the reductivist approach of generic types and its failure to recognise diversity in society, contemporary claims in garment fashion and architecture respond with ever-adaptive, customised, and individualised proposals which are meant to cater to the complexity and diversity of contemporary conditions. This shift towards customisation has been further enabled by the emergence of rapid manufacturing systems such as Computer Numerical Control CNC, 3d printers or laser cuts used today in both fashion and architecture, in which a set of orders is given to a machine to fabricate individualised and an almost infinite variety of goods.

Added to consumer individualisation, the production process also has been streamlined through the use of software such as Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) which links all the stages of production from its origin, through design, manufacture, delivery, and marketing. The clothing company Liz Claiborne uses a highly configurable software system by Parametric Technology Corp. called Windchill to 'streamline communications,' cut time to market, 'help the company be more on trend and cut costs,' 'work with software Claiborne is already using for design,' and 'connect key suppliers to the software.'[57] Scientific modes of operation in the form of computational algorithms are in control of the forms of production, be it the gathering

of users' data, the production process, or the generation of an infinite number of fabric variations. These tools are increasingly becoming the new operative framework for designing and managing data. Given the complex, diverse, and rapidly changing conditions that both fashion and architecture face today, designers in both fields are using digital techniques to provide the necessary flexibility to accommodate consumers' demand for diversity.

In relationship to architecture and parallel with fashion dynamics, I am proposing two approaches as examples of mass-customisation and individualisation from the twenty-first century: adaptation to any condition, input, or infinite variation and participation or choice of inhabitants in public consultation processes.

Regarding the first proposal, the architect Patrick Schumacher has named the ability to be flexible as 'the ecologically adaptive eloquence' of 'parametrically malleable elements.'[58] Parametrically malleable elements are defined by an algorithm in which input parameters are fed, obtaining a different output for every modification in the variables. Similar to fashion's PLM software, parametric in architecture stands for the relational capacity of linking modifications in certain aspects of the design to other variables in the system which are adapted or adjusted accordingly. Thus, the algorithmic definition of an urban city block generates variation in each of its iterations, with every input, enabling the possibility of adaptation to any condition. In contrast with the idea of fixed types mentioned earlier, Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* (1933, Image 9) was characterised by the repetition of an identical tower in an orthogonal grid. In the case of Zaha Hadid's and Patrick Schumacher's block for Kartal Pendik Masterplan in Istanbul (2006, Images 10, 11 & 12), while every block shares the same algorithm, it is adapted to the parameters defined by the perimeter of the block and its height.

Image 9: Repetition of identical towers in Le Corbusier's Plan *Voisin*, 1925. © FLC/ADAGP

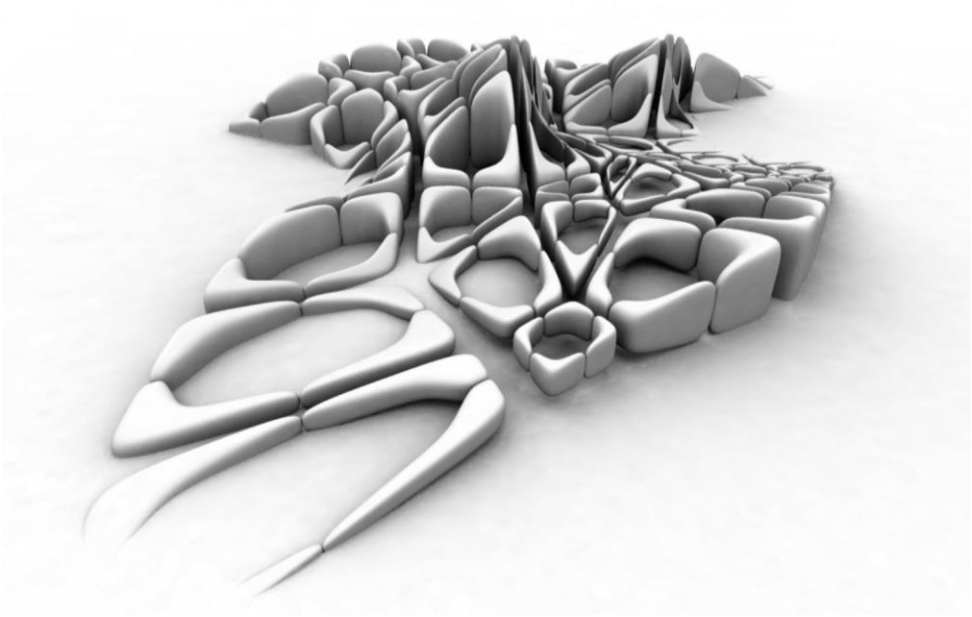
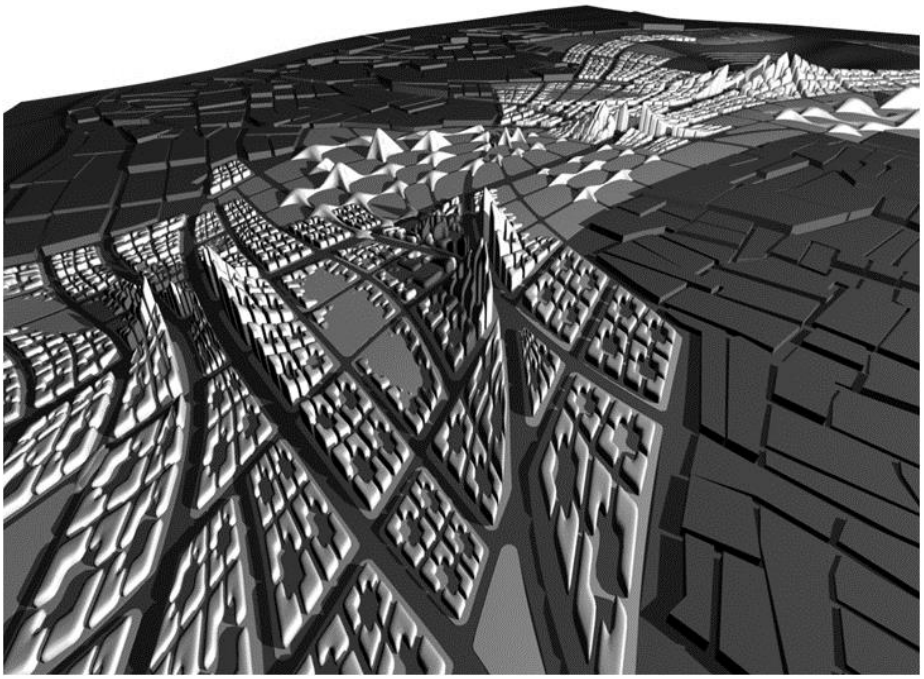


Image 10: Parametricism's infinite variation, Kartal Pendik, Istanbul, by Zaha Hadid and Patrick Schumacher, 2006. © Zaha Hadid Architects

Added to parametricism, one can find another parallel between the dynamics of the mass-customisation of clothing and of architecture in the trend of public participation in decision-making processes. As mentioned earlier, in any mass-customisation process, the consumer participates in the last stages of design. Similarly in architecture, especially during the urban planning meetings and focus or feedback groups, citizens are given the chance to help decide the future of their city's built environments, becoming another input. Looking closer at the mass customisable products coming from the Kartal Pendik Istanbul project and mi Adidas custom shoes, one can conclude that variation only occurs with regards to shape and/or size, at a geometrical and rather superficial level. In the case of mi Adidas, the only customisable aspect is the colour of its parts; in the case of the Istanbul project, a topologically identical block is repeated, the only changing factor is its geometric dimensions and angles. The difference between the two derives from time constraints: the architectural phenomena are more related to questions of adaptation and catering for differences that have a slower turn-around time to reach the consumer, while in clothing or shoe design, the consumer interaction is faster and more immediate. Added to this, construction phases and fashion's four annual seasons set radically different time frames for both disciplines.

Paradoxically, in some ways, these new marketing approaches are reducing the objectives of individualisation and creating a new closed system, not far from the mass-produced types.[59] Meeting the individual's needs is translated into variations of superficial choices, a clumsy attempt of the mass market to tame and enslave the drive towards individualisation. Fordist typological classifications differ from post-Fordist algorithms only in the number of their geometrical variations. The former are limited and the latter, infinite. But these endless variations do not cater to qualitative differences but to quantitative ones. Similarly, going back to the parallel of individualisation through consumers' or inhabitants' participation, there are debates for and against it. On the one hand, public participation

enhances the appropriation of planning proposals and decisions by local communities as well as takes into account local knowledge. On the other hand, in some cases, the type of choice actually given to citizens is questionable. For example, there may be a hidden, flexible or 'invisible' control over the real choices individuals are allowed to make.



Images 11: Kartal Pendik Masterplan, Istanbul, by Zaha Hadid and Patrick Schumacher, 2006. © Zaha Hadid Architects

Moreover, there has been a shift from mass-production to mass-customisation, a shift from 'economies of scale,' 'lower unit costs of a single product,' to 'economies of scope,' 'the application of a *single process* to produce a greater variety of products or services more cheaply and more quickly.'[60] The 'single process' or 'isolated system' defines the envelope under which variation can happen, thereby constraining variety to a single system, to an apparent difference. It may well be, as Pine asserts, that the best method for customisation is by creating 'modular components,' already anticipated in architectural prefabrication, bringing us back to a strategy rooted in the 'economies of scale' that deals with the configuration and interchangeability.[61]

5. Conclusion

Drawing from the parallels between fashion and architecture, more specifically in garment and housing production, I have reflected on the way both disciplines address consumers, and the ways in which they read and construct an image of society. We have seen how the question of typification emerged from the efforts to democratise the purchase of garments and housing in questions related to catalogues, standards, and affordability. In the 1950s and 1960s, the implementation of mass-production techniques brought closer the parallels between fashion and architecture to the extent of triggering what has been termed as 'fashionable architecture.' Contemporary concerns and critiques of the Fordist model have

moved the objectives of both disciplines – once again – closer in their search for individualisation and consumer/user participation. The reappearance of the malleable grid behind mass-customisation brings us back to our initial reflection on the tabula with which Foucault describes in the preface of *The Order of Things*, 'the ordered surfaces and all the planes,'[62] or, in this case, the algorithms that we use to think, manage, and organise society. It raises questions in relation to mentalities such as: What does it mean that something is fit or adaptable to the individual? Is it an alibi or hidden envelope under which still remains a flexible form of control? What is the real aim of mass-customisation? Does it entail a meaningful variation or choice? Do we simplify diversity under a malleable grid of meaningless variation? Is this variation equal to diversity?

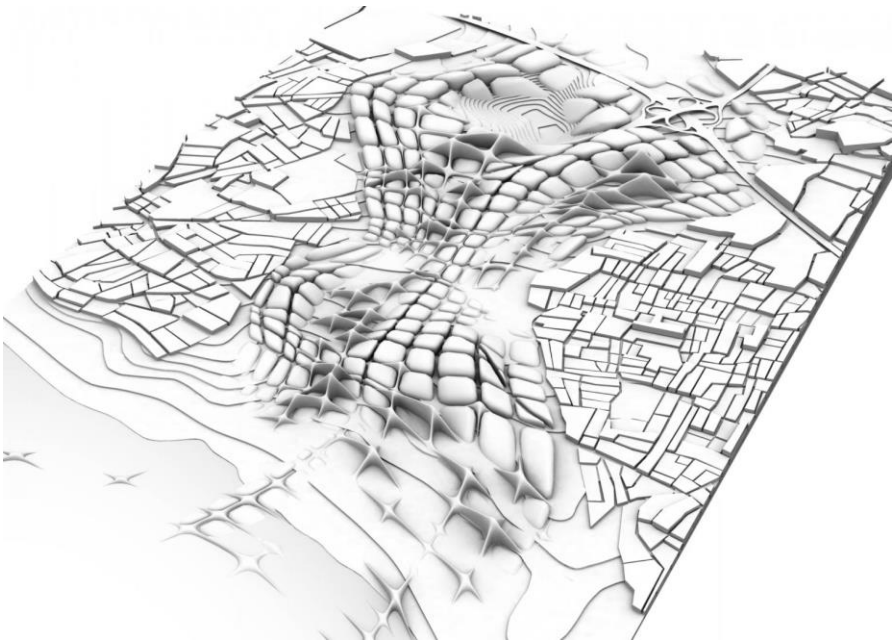


Image 12: Kartal Pendix shows the infinite variation provided by a Parametric block allowing maximum adaptation, 2006.© Zaha Hadid Architects

For me, whether in fashion or architecture, the taxonomies that manage knowledge, inherent to normative modes of mass-production from the first half of the twentieth century, do not seem, at the moment, radically challenged in their degrees of control. Our modes of thinking and operating in relation to society still continue to construct an ordered and controlled surface in which we classify and typify, with the risk of simplifying or taming individuality and multiplicity. Contemporary developments from the last decade occurring in fashion and architecture question the very possibility of a unique standard under systemic digital approaches and call for a redefinition of what we mean by individualisation and consequently – meaningful difference.

Notes

[1] Previously National Bureau of Standards.
[2] 'As the war continued, however, manufacturers started to build factories that could quickly and efficiently meet the growing demands of the military. Mass production of uniforms necessitated the development of standard sizes. Measurements taken of the soldiers revealed that certain sets of measurements tended to recur with predictable regularity. After the war, these military measurements were used to create the first commercial sizing scales for men.' 'Short History of Ready-Made Clothing,' *NIST*, accessed 21 June 2013, http://museum.nist.gov/exhibits/apparel/history.htm.
[3] Christina Cogdell, *Eugenic Design. Streamlining America in the 1930s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 193.
[4] Elaine Stone, *The Dynamics of Fashion*, 3rd ed. (New York: Fairchild Books, 2008), 503. 'The change from homemade to ready-made apparel was another significant fashion trend. Mass-production of garments such as corsets and men's shirts began in the mid-1800s; by the mid-1890s, as more men – and also women – began working in factories and offices, the apparel industry responded to the demand for practical clothing….Ready-made apparel became wide-spread available from mail-order catalogues such as Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Montgomery Ward (popularized with the expansion of mail delivery) and the advent of department stores in major urban centers.' Stone, *The Dynamics of Fashion*, 8.
[5] Cogdell, *Eugenic Design*, 197.
[6] 'Short History of Ready-Made Clothing,' *NIST*.
[7] 'In the 1930s, Agnes Brooke Young's research showed that there are actually three basic forms – straight or tubular; bell-shaped or bouffant; and the bustle, or back fullness – with many variations. Today, most fashion experts include four variations on the tubular silhouette: slim, rectangle, wedge, and A-line.' Stone, *The Dynamics of Fashion*, 48.
[8] Cogdell, *Eugenic Design*, 216.
[9] Ibid., 192.
[10] In contests such as 'In Search for the Living Norma' from 1945, Ibid., 198.
[11] 'Most industrial technologies use mechanical matrices (stamps, moulds, casts, etc.) to reproduce identical copies. Matrices have a cost, and once made, it makes sense to keep using them to amortise this cost by spreading it over as many copies as possible. Economies of scale increase in proportion to the number of copies; hence in this mode of production it is cheaper to make more identical copies of fewer different items.' Mario Carpo, 'Micro-Managing Messiness,' *AA Files* 67 (November, 2013): 17.
[12] The latter transformed the role of some construction labourers into crane erectors and machine drivers.
[13] Gilbert Herbert, *The Dream of the Factory-Made House: Walter Gropius and Konrad Wachsmann* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1984), 5.
[14] As described by Reyner Banham in *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Architectural Press, 1960), 244.
[15] Charles Édouard Jeanneret-Gris Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 13th ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 234-235.
[16] Banham, *Theory and Design*, 244. Le Corbusier built a prototype of his *maison-type* thanks to *Voisin*, a French aircraft enterprise re-adapting war technologies into the housing business that provided serial production techniques. The production of the *Maison Voisin* illustrated the idea of a lightweight machine to live-in as the concept of automobile bodies or airframes, arranged to provide comfort, fewer difficulties of transport, better economics and infinitely

variable surfaces. Nonetheless, as a counterargument to these modern principles, Banham criticised the *maison-type* or the *maisons* as *machines à habiter* for not challenging, by means of technique, the traditional notion of a house. Moreover, he reproached the modern understanding of technology or what he called the First Machine Age's superficial consideration of the machine advances and the manipulation of engineering 'in the interests of a particular conception of architecture,' as he wrote in 'Machine Aesthetic,' *Architectural Review* 117, no.700 (April 1955): 227.

[17] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 234-235.

[18] 'Manufactured or synthetic fibers have been improving the quality of our lives since rayon, the first synthetic fiber, went into production in 1910.' Data extracted from a chart: 1910 Rayon, 1924 Acetate, 1938 Nylon, 1950 Acrylic, 1953 Polyester, etc. Stone, *The Dynamics of Fashion*, 147.

[19] Ernst Neufert, *Architects' Data*, 4th ed. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

[20] Graphite and crayon on paper. Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, gift of Walter Gropius, BRGA.57.42.A. Photo: Imaging Department. © President and Fellows of Harvard College. Dimensions: 34.8 x 43.7 cm (13 11/16 x 17 3/16 in).

[21] Elizabeth Ann Coleman, *The Genius of Charles James* (New York: Brooklyn Museum and New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1982), 107.

[22] David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: Random House, 1993), 139.

[23] Ibid., 134.

[24] Ibid., 140.

[25] Herbert, *The Dream of the Factory-Made House*, 64-65.

[26] Cogdell, *Eugenic Design*, 213-214.

[27] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), xix. Foucault refers to a passage in Jorge Luis Borges' 'The Analytical Language of John Wilkins' in which he mentions knowledge classifications: Wilkins', an unknown Chinese encyclopaedia, and that of the Bibliographic Institute of Brussels. The three of them register arbitraries, for according to Borges, 'there is no classification of the Universe not being arbitrary and full of conjectures.' These three classifications reveal knowledge and language arranged according to different systems of thought or different mentalities. Borges' reflections suggest the impossibility of classifying the universe or even the existence of such universe itself: 'there is no universe in the organic, unifying sense, that this ambitious term has.' However, as Borges states, this fact 'cannot stop us from planning human patterns.' We cannot avoid the establishment of standards – based on what we consider 'objective recordings' and norms – to understand society, according to our own classifications, to our own objectification or management of knowledge about society. Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Analytical Language of John Wilkins,' in *Other Inquisitions 1937-1952*, trans. Ruth LC Simms, ed. Jorge Luis Borges (Austen: University of Texas Press, 1993), 101-106.

[28] The all-encompassing nature of classifications reflects the philosopher/sociologist Jean-François Lyotard's discussion of the 'metadiscourses' or 'grand narratives' 'used to legitimate knowledge.' 'They allocate our lives for the growth of power. In matters of social justice and of scientific truth alike, the legitimation of that power is based on its optimizing the system's performance – efficiency.' Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv.

[29] Gerald Staib, Andreas Dörrhöfer, and Markus Rosenthal, *Components and Systems. Modular Construction-Design-Structure-New Technologies* (Munich: Detail, 2008), 5. Or as Le Corbusier stated in the 1959 edition of *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui:* Inside the pavilion (in

1925) a fine placard announced: 'INDUSTRY TAKES OVER BUILDING' – The Key premise. In 1959, i.e. thirty-five years later, industry (AT LAST!) is taking over building.
[30] 'The principle of modular co-ordination…is not new but it is only since Le Corbusier, 'Preface,' *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (London: Architectural Press, 1987), the Second World War that its application to modern building methods has been systematically studied.' European Productivity Agency, *Modular Co-Ordination in Building*, 9.
[31] Wally Barker, 'Apparel Industry Series: History of the Apparel Industry – Part 1' Accessed 21 June 2013, http://www.wallybarker.com/History%20of%20apparel%20industry.html.
[32] Nigel Whiteley, *Pop Design: Modernism to Mod* (London: The Design Council, 1987), 97.
[33] Quorum more associated with a wealthier clientele.
[34] Ibid., 96.
[35] 'These trends, which become more pronounced as a culture becomes more mechanized and the mass-market is taken over by middle-class employees of increasing education, indicate the function of the product critic in the field of design as popular art: Not to disdain what sells but to help answer the now important question. Both designer and critic, by their command of market statistics and their imaginative skill in using them to predict, introduce an element of control that feeds back information into industry….Both designer and critic must be in close touch with the dynamics of mass-communication.' Reyner Banham, *Design By Choice*, ed. Penny Sparke (London: Academy Editions, 1981), 90-93.
[36] Gilles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) [1987].
[37] Reyner Banham, 'On Trial 5. The Spec-Builders: Towards a Pop Architecture,' *Architectural Review* 132 (July 1962): 43.
[38] Pop technology had reintroduced expendability and radical technology questioned the very basis of architecture, preparing the ground for an architecture *autre.* Nigel Whiteley, *Reyner Banham: Historian of the Immediate Future* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 184.
[39] *Jean Prouvé: Prefabrication, Structures and Elements*, ed. Benedikt Huber and Jean-Claude Steinegger (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 24.
[40] James Stirling, *James Stirling: Writings on Architecture,* ed. Robert Maxwell (Milan: Skira, 1998), 68.
[41] Quoted from Wachsmann in Herbert, *The Dream of the Factory-Made House*, 93. These kits started earlier in the USA in earlier twentieth century, sold by places like Sears and Roebuck.
[42] Coleman, *The Genius of Charles James*, 107.
[43] Ibid., 109-110.
[44] Nigel Whiteley, 'Olympus and the Market Place: Reyner Banham and Design Criticism,' *Design Issues* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 35.
[45] Reyner Banham., *A Critic Writes: Selected Essays by Reyner Banham*, ed. Mary Banham, Sutherland Lyall, Cedric Price, Paul Barker. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
[46] Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Joseph Pine, *Mass Customization. The New Frontier in Business Competition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1993), xiii. See also Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion.*
[49] Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, xxv.
[50] Cate T. Corcoran, 'Individuality: The New Brand Focus,' *WWD* 192, no. 98 (8 November 2006): 8.
[51] Cate T. Corcoran, 'Mass Retailers Find Custom Clothing Fits Them Just Fine,' *WWD* 188, no. 9 (14 July 2004): 10-12.

[52] Corcoran, 'Mass Retailers Find.'
[53] 'Companies that have given it a whirl include Lands' End, Tommy Hilfiger, Target, Ralph Lauren, J.C. Penney, Nike, Timberland, Atelier Avocado, Dolzer, Timbuk2, Zazzle, and Brooks Brothers, which is offering men's made-to-order shirts online starting at $110.' Corcoran, 'Individuality: The New Brand Focus.'
[54] Holly Haber, 'Shoppers Try on a New Fit System for Size,' *WWD* 191, no. 49 (8 March 2006): 8.
[55] Stone, *The Dynamics of Fashion*, 223.
[56] Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*.
[57] Cate T. Corcoran, 'Brands Embrace PLM,' *WWD* 191, no. 49 (8 March 2006): 8.
[58] Patrick Schumacher, 'The Parametric City,' *Zaha Hadid: Recent Projects* (Tokyo: A.D.A. Edita, 2010).
[59] In the parametric block proposed for Istanbul, change is limited quantitatively, because qualitatively speaking all the blocks are equal. Following the philosopher Henri Bergson's distinction between qualitative and intensive multiplicities versus quantitative and extensive ones, the architectural theorist Sanford Kwinter refers to the reductionist notion of 'controlled quantitative modelling' which helps to clarify this point: 'Reductionism is the method by which one reduces complex phenomena to simpler isolated systems that can be fully controlled and understood. Quantitative methods…are related to reductionism, but they are more fundamental, because they dictate how far reductionism must go. According to them, reductionism must reduce phenomena to the ideal scale at which no more qualities exist within a system, until what is left are only quantities, or quantitative relations. This is, for example, the basis of the Cartesian grid system that underlies most modern models of form. The classical grid system does not, strictly speaking, limit one to static models of form, but it does limit one to linear models of movement or change. A linear model is one in which the state of a system at a given moment can be expressed in the very same terms (number and relation of parameters) as any of its earlier or later states …it can do so only insofar as it plots the movements of a body within that system, and never the changes or transformations that the system itself undergoes.' Discussed in Sanford Kwinter, 'Landscapes of Change: Boccioni's "Stati d'animo" as a General Theory of Models,' *Assemblage* 19 (December 1992): 50-65. Thus, the same 'controlled quantitative modelling' criticised in Le Corbusier's *maison-type* repetition, can be found in the parametric block iteration within a linear grid. The aforementioned examples despite their critique to the normative approaches of mass-production are in a way condemning change 'to a degree (quantity), never allowing adaptation in kind (quality)' in Kwinter's words. In order to deal with complexity, multiplicity or diversity, systemic approaches based on digital technologies of design and production, reduce adaptability to 'controlled quantitative modelling,' confining variation to a linear grid. As a result, the consumer or inhabitant is left with a superficial choice – a marketing ploy of consumers' data – trapped in a malleable grid or in a different manner of control. In relation to the supposed lessening of control behind post-Fordist approaches, many authors have pointed out that is just a different form of control.
[60] Pine, *Mass Customization*, 48.
[61] Proposed by William J. Abernathy and James M. Utterback in 'Patterns of Industrial Innovation,' *Technology Review* 80, no. 7 (June/July 1978), 40-47. See of 'Six Types of Modularity.'
[62] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xix.

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They Shoot Prada, Don't They? Fashion 'Shoot' with Cynthia Vaiden Guest

Jacque Lynn Foltyn

Abstract

The photographer Cynthia Vaiden Guest is the founder of SHOOTMYSHIT, an art and business project where weapons experts blast away at clients' designer clothes and handbags, customising them with bullet holes and powder burns, and where 'pre-done' T-shirts are also available for purchase. As Guest modifies or outright destroys shirts and bags to make her own tongue-in-cheek 'brand' of 'shot fashion,' and photographs the process, her design work can be situated under the deconstruction (*la mode destroy*) movement that restructures and re-semantifies conventional aesthetics. Describing herself as a 'political contrarian,' Guest opposes consumerism, logos, and 'sheep-like following of brands,' and uses firearms as 'art tools' to refashion fashion. Here she discusses her mentors, including Andy Warhol and his companion Jed Johnson, and their influence on her art practice. She also provides candid insight into her understanding of gun culture and how this is an important conceptual underpinning to her work. In particular, her articulation regarding the 'gun as art tool' and the role this plays in her attempt to redress consumerism, corrupted values, and the conventional aesthetics of modern society through the SHOOTMYSHIT project provides a critical awareness of deconstructionist fashion techniques. Paradoxically, Guest operates within the same framework of the luxe fashion brands she shoots by replacing them with an anti-brand or 'cooler' brand, a fact of which she is humorously aware. The interview and follow-ups for this article occurred during the period 2011-2014, by telephone, emails, and in person in New York City.

Key Words

Cynthia Vaiden Guest, fashion, luxury, brand, anti-brand, authenticity, consumerism, deconstruction, culture jamming, guns, SHOOTMYSHIT, Andy Warhol, Jed Johnson, Zelig.

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1. Introduction

Describing herself as having a 'naughty sense of rebelliousness,' the photographer Cynthia Vaiden Guest is the founder of SHOOTMYSHIT, an art and business project where weapons experts blast away at clients' designer clothes and handbags, customising them with bullet holes and powder burns. 'Pre-done' T-shirts are also available for purchase at her website (shootmyshit.com). Guest's first career was as an accessories designer in the early 1970s in Paris. She also worked for Menagerie boutique, an upscale boutique in San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Beverly Hills, California; did accessories design for American Durable Products; started her own accessories line; and did freelance accessories work in Paris, where she also worked as a stylist. To finance her travels, she took arts-related jobs that came her way. At various times Guest did makeup and wardrobe for independent film companies, was a gallery assistant, photographer's stylist, newspaper columnist, letterpress printer, and worked at a Paris couture house.[1] In the 1980s and early 1990s, she worked for Jed Johnson (1948-1996), the interior decorator/film director companion of Andy Warhol (1928-1986).[2] 'My background is really peripatetic. I just "shot out" in the world and did everything I thought I might want to

do,' she tells me (Image 1). 'Through each career choice I made I had great training and great mentors so I was made better and better through each thing.' Today, Guest is a fine arts photographer and is represented by Saatchi Art. Known for creating imagery that encourages the viewer to reassess the ordinary and for her semi-abstract aesthetic, Guest is currently 'concentrating on boxing and commissioned portraits but essentially making things that catch my eye more abstracted and painterly.' Her scope is wide, with subjects ranging from men locked in mixed martial arts 'combat,' to atmospheric images of animals, buildings, the Brooklyn Bridge, and activist pieces such as *Fucking Artists* (2010, Image 2), which was part of a juried exhibition focused on controversy.[3] She is currently training with a former pro heavyweight boxer and planning to do a photographic series on him. 'I'm doing it because I love the art of boxing, love the men, love feeling strong and love landing a punch.' Guest has won numerous awards for her photography, most recently from the National Arts Club in New York City.[4] Witty, intelligent, energetic, unconventional, and the mother of one child (daughter Pinky), her 'cool' personal style, an extension of her art and personality, has been featured in the 'Fashion & Style' section of *The New York Times* in a feature about mothers and daughters.[5]

Image 1: *Self with Purple Hair,* 2013. © Courtesy of Cynthia Vaiden Guest

Joan Kron, Contributing Editor at Large for *Allure* magazine and a member of the *Catwalk* Advisory Board, brought 'SHOOTMYSHIT' to my attention. I was intrigued by what I heard about Guest because she literally (with a rifle) and figuratively (with a camera) shoots fashion objects, redesigning, repurposing, or blasting them to smithereens with bullet holes and powder burns (Image 3). Highlighting her wry humour, the Shootmyshit.com mission statement proclaims:

> About us: If you've ever wanted to pop a cap (not your collar) in the pony-riding joker on your shirt, or felt like your plain white tee was just missing

something, you've come to the right place. Every item is hand-blasted in the U.S. of A. by a crack team of weapons experts, including Special Forces agents, prize fighters, and an all-around badass bunch. We think everything looks a little more badass with a bullet hole. Choose from a wide selection of pre-shot shit or let our team of expert sharpshooters customise the item of your choice. With every custom order, we'll throw in the casing, with a photo of the hired guns showing your shit who's boss.[6]

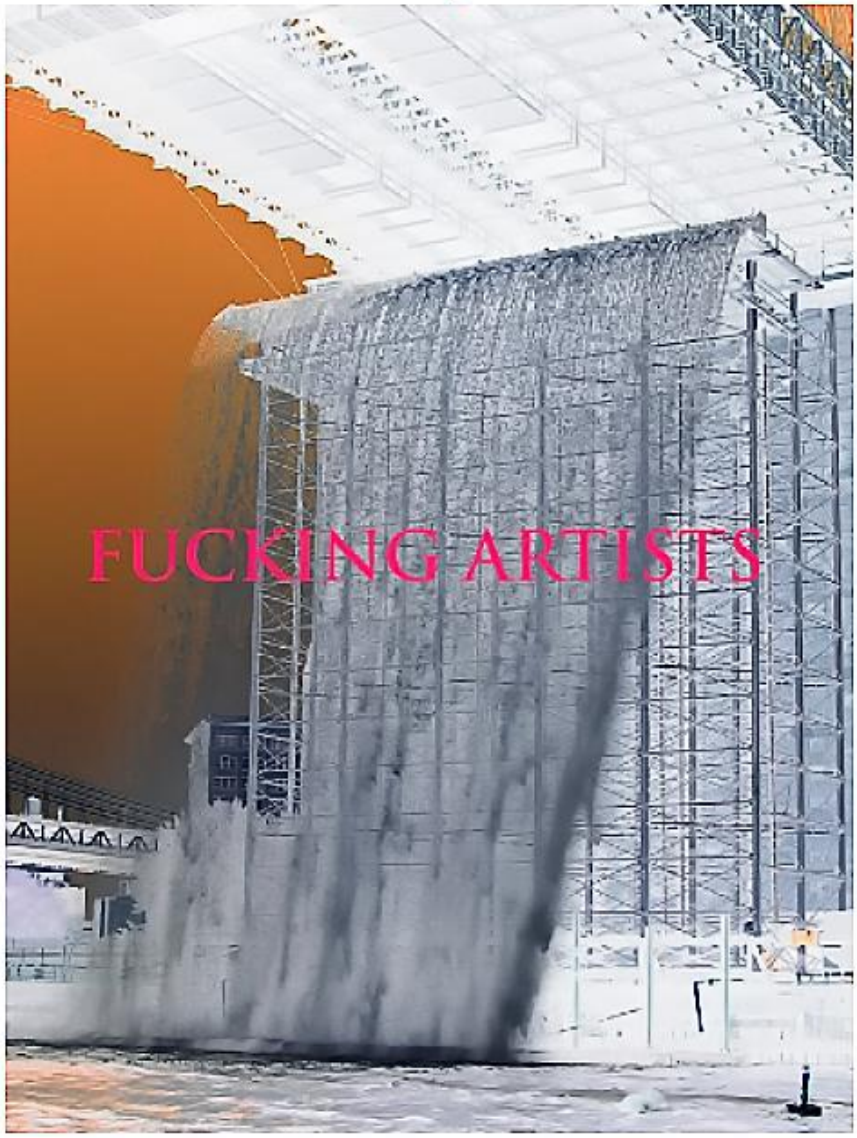

Image 2: *Fucking Artists*, 2010. © Courtesy Cynthia Vaiden Guest

Since 2011, Guest and I have had an ongoing conversation, by telephone, emails, and in person. An article about Guest and SHOOTMYSHIT was originally planned for 2013, but that date was pushed back after a series of mass shootings in the USA.[7] The resulting horror made publishing the article, which has its moments of levity, not feel right just then. Sadly, there apparently is no right time to publish the article, so we have moved ahead with it. Of course Guest and I talked about gun violence in the United States, and Guest made it clear that while a gun enthusiast, she has a number of thoughts about 'troubled people' who have no 'business being able to acquire guns.' Guest grew up with a respect for guns, is not a hunter, and has 'never killed anything.'

In May 2014, Guest and I met twice on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, where she lives across from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. At our last meeting, she prepared lunch for us as we spoke about fashion, style, luxury brands, consumerism, art, fear, death, war, masculinity, faux fur road kill, hunting down big 'game' luxe items to shoot, military fashion, hanging out with Andy Warhol and Jed Johnson, her punk period, and a 'dirty weekend with *The Clash*,' among other topics. 'I have always had a festive life, probably because I'll talk to anybody, lol,' she explains. 'I am eternally curious,' she observes, noting that curiosity drives her life. 'If I am intrigued by something I study it until I can learn no more about it, and then go on to the next thing.' Throughout our talks she maintained her humour and a sense of the ridiculous.

Image 3: *Smiley Face*, 2011. © Courtesy of Cynthia Vaiden Guest

2. Early Influences: 'I'm Zelig'

Guest is an only child, and her father used to be the number one sharpshooter in the US Marines. She grew up with guns, but was a shooter, not a hunter.

CVG: I'm from California originally. And I grew up with someone saying, 'let's go ride horses' and there would be a rifle and we would shoot cans off a fence. And nobody got in to any particular uproar about it. It was just part of Western life.

JLF: The Wild West.

CVG: Yes, the Wild West! Nobody was gesturing to 'kill' somebody. You just did it to show you were a good marksman.

JLF: American cowboy culture.

CVG: Which originates with Indians, who are the original character of the cowboy, the quiet, strong person. I think that is where the cowboys got all of their material.

Her comfort with guns clearly contributed to the genesis of SHOOTMYSHIT, but to comprehend fully the drivers behind Guest's photography and fashion design one must understand that in the 1980s she was friends with Andy Warhol and Jed Johnson, the film director/editor, interior decorator, and then companion of the famous artist. Johnson employed her as a decorator's assistant and his design firm Johnson, Wanzenberg & Associates was located on the third floor of Warhol's Upper East Side Manhattan townhouse. Johnson and Guest became close personal friends, and she gave *Catwalk* a photo she took of him in London in 1990, when he brought a plush toy gift for her daughter (Image 4).

Image 4: *Jed Johnson, Plush Toy for Pinky in London*, 1990.
© Courtesy of Cynthia Vaiden Guest

Working for Johnson introduced Guest into the most exalted worlds of art and fashion of the time. Among Jed Johnson's clients were Mick Jagger, lead singer of *The Rolling Stones*; the actor Richard Gere; Pierre Bergé, the fashion mogul and co-founder of the Yves Saint Laurent fashion empire; Peter Brandt, the art collector billionaire; Marina Schiano, the style icon and Creative Style Director for *Vanity Fair*; Thomas E. Ammann, the Swiss art dealer; Henryk Richard de Kwiatkowski, owner of Calumet Farm, one of the most prestigious thoroughbred horse breeding and racing farms in the United States; and the billionaire investor Carl Icahn. When she answered the phone on the third floor of Warhol's house, she could be talking to Jacqueline Onassis (a friend of Jed's), the architect Phillip Johnson, or the celebrity photographer Fran Leibovitz.

JLF: Quite a resume.

CVG: Yes. I oversaw a lot of the construction on Jagger's townhouse. Jed and I got mentioned in the graffiti from Jagger's stalker which was sprayed on the outside wall one morning. I [had] a police escort to and from work.

As a daily visitor in Warhol's home for two years while Johnson was still his companion, Guest noted that his traditional personal aesthetic was at odds with the Pop art for which Warhol was known. She observed his ironic stance toward consumerism first hand, but noticed that he was an avid and knowledgeable shopper, who searched New York stores on a daily basis for antiques and other items Johnson could use in his decorating work.[8]

JLF: Would Andy Warhol have approved of SHOOTMYSHIT?

CVG: He would have loved it!

JLF: What was it like to hang out with Johnson and Warhol?

CVG: I came in at the end of the Warhol scene. Jed was starting out as a decorator, and I was his first assistant along with his twin brother Jay. He moved away from Andy's to live with his partner, the architect Alan Wanzenberg. I believe that was devastating for Andy. I was one of very few people who got to be inside their amazing and beautiful house on East 66th. They gave me a birthday party at Regine's [famous NYC supper club] and their gift to me (I'd been hoping for a signed print) was the chef's hat I used to be amused by when I walked to work down Lexington. On the display in the corner of the uniform store stood a chef's toque with the name stitched onto it in red sans serif letters 'SHIT HEAD.'

The Warhol shtick at that time was a little passé. His untimely death [1987] brought back his caché. I really am not old enough to have known the heyday, but got to be friends with Fred Hughes [Warhol's business manager of twenty-five years] and Pat Hackett [Warhol's secretary and editor of *The Andy Warhol Diaries* (1989)],[9] René Ricard [poet, art critic and painter]. Weirdly, when I was a naive teen in Santa Barbara, I knew Jonathan Sedgwick, Edie's brother [Edie Sedgwick: Warhol's famous 'It Girl,' one of Warhol's 'Superstars']. I've been so lucky! I've crossed paths with the most amazing people and tried to learn from them all. Andy was a cypher, possibly because of the shooting. [Warhol was shot by Valerie Solanas in 1967.[10]]

> He had a Midas touch with antiques and was a hoarder. Stacked important paintings in the pantry, shelves of Germantown Navajo rugs near our office space, Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann [furniture designer associated with Art Deco], Puiforcat tea services, cookie jars, a cupboard of Joy perfume for hostess gifts. His and Jed's exquisite taste informed and elevated my style to such a degree that I am forever trying to edit and analyse my visual field. I am grateful every day. And like any great artist (I'm thinking of Tony Duquette too), it isn't about the price, just the beauty and the rarity and the inventiveness.

As a fortunate young woman interacting with Warhol, and working with Johnson and his celebrity client base of members of the fashion and art set, Guest found her creativity influenced. I understood why she described herself as 'Zelig,' the Woody Allen character in the 1983 'mockumentary' of the same name, a human chameleon who finds himself moving among prestigious intellectual and art circles and transforms himself, accordingly.[11] As her Saatchi website biography states:

> My photographs are influenced by painting and my paintings reflect my grounding in photography. My eye has been educated by friends and teachers: Andy Warhol, Jed Johnson, Caleb Nelson Carter, and by masters I love; Degas (landscapes and later work with camera), Rainer Fetting, and photographic atmospherists like Julia Margaret Cameron, Eugene Meatyard, Edward Steichen. And I admire the passion for abstraction in the works of William Eggleston.[12]

Explaining why she became a fine arts photographer later rather than sooner, Guest says, 'I think because I was so young, I was self-conscious about picking it up around the guys that were so good.' From Warhol she learned a number of important lessons such as 'always flatter people in their portraits,' remarking that while she was once 'stubborn about keeping my style "pure,"' she realises now 'that's a little immature. In general they [Warhol and Johnson] taught me to up my game. You discover so many worlds if you are taught how to see them.'

3. Gun as Art Tool

As we spoke about the origins of SHOOTMYSHIT, Guest emphasised that the project is a political statement as well as an art project. Describing herself as 'a political contrarian,' she feels strongly about the intersection of fashion, advertising, and consumerism, and says she first spotted the coming together of this triumvirate in the early 1980s. What particularly irked her was the arrival of 'branded' clothing and accessories, festooned with logos, which also offended her sense of personal style.

> **CVG:** Style was something you just had – we made outfits out of toilet paper and threw together amazing ensembles with stuff from the ten-cent bin. All of a sudden, you couldn't walk down the street without being bombarded by branding! Suddenly everyone had to have a little alligator on their chest or huge double Gs [Gucci] on their luggage. It was ridiculous!

In reaction to what she perceived as a 'visual onslaught' of various iterations of the Lacoste logo, Guest began to envision what she calls the 'ultimate anti-brand. Instead of a

'cutesy animal, twee sportsman' or artfully arranged initials exhibited on one's clothing, 'why not sport the ultimate badge of cool: the bullet hole?' To the enthusiastic response of her cool, art-oriented friends in the 1980s, she whipped up a small batch of T-shirts riddled with bullet holes. They agreed that 'Your shit looks cooler when it's been shot.' Her favourite design? *Smiley Face* (Image 3). Her favourite fashion items to shoot? Iconic brands, fakes of iconic brands, and clothing and accessories with logos, which she loathes and is all too happy to 'hunt' and 'kill.' Guest only shoots on gun ranges and styles the 'shoots' for her shooters (Image 5).

Image 5: *Faux Birkin Shot Up*, 2011. © Courtesy of Cynthia Vaiden Guest

CVG: My intention with this project is to re-purpose the gun into an artist's tool. Chris Burden, Andy Warhol, William Burroughs have all used guns in support of their art.

JLF: Gun as art tool? Can you speak more about that?

CVG: That for me is everything. I love getting a new camera. I love new paper. I love new ink. I love brushes and I love paint and I love fabric. I love everything that goes into the creation of the piece. That is what drives me as much as my concept.

JLF: Please say more about the gun as an art tool.

CVG: The gun is definitely part of the conceptual process. I don't know if this is precisely on the money, but one of the things always missing from art history classes is the artist's love of the tools. The gun is great because it's the perfect tool to make a hole in fabric or thicker things like leather. It's [art] not always about a message; sometimes it's about

> the luscious paint, the new brush, the texture of the paper. You can see it in Lucien Freud's work. You want to taste the paint.

When I asked her about her own gun art tool of choice, the answer was surprising, but also quintessential Cynthia.

> **JLF:** What do you shoot with?
> **CVG:** I participate with my .22 rifle. We call it a Barbie rifle but it's the best weapon for the Smiley Face.

Noting that her rifle is actually called 'Cricket, My First Rifle,' Guest says she could have bought it 'in hot pink but that wouldn't have been tasteful or ironic. It only shoots .22s.'

While enthusiastic about the 1980s project, Guest says that 'life quickly got in the way,' as she married, became a mother, and lived in the art and fashion capital cities of New York City, London, and Paris. She shelved her shoot-it-up fashion project until the first decade of the twenty-first century when she noticed that 'logos had once again taken the fashion world by storm, but this time in even grander proportions.' To her dismay, 'WASPS, rappers, and investment bankers alike had taken to the streets' and were assailing her aesthetic sensibilities 'in a dizzying flurry of Burberry nova check, head-to-toe LV,' and 'interlocking Cs [Chanel],' and the general searching of identity and status through brands. She objected for aesthetic reasons but also because she disapproves of the growing gap between the rich and the poor, and of what the sociologist Thorstein Veblen famously called 'conspicuous consumption,' the hegemony of what the sociologist Jean Baudrillard aptly termed 'consumer society,' where cynical business processes have made 'luxe' a multibillion dollar global enterprise that preys upon consumers.[13]

In 2010, Guest decided to 'shoot' her own 'brand' of fashion. Arming herself with a box of .22 calibre short bullets and a stack of T-shirts, she joined forces with a crew of sharpshooters, including ex-Special Forces agents and professional fighters, and launched SHOOTMYSHIT (http://www/shootmyshit.com).

> **JLF:** Where did you get the name SHOOTMYSHIT?
> **CVG**: I started with 'Shoot my Shirt' but realised it was better.
> **JLF:** Much better! In the popular language right now there are things, like 'don't touch my junk' and 'shoot my shit' has resonance, doesn't it?
> **CVG:** It's perfect.
> **JLF:** What you are doing has a combination of drama and humour.
> **CVG:** Exactly. It's not meant to be serious. It is mean to be funny.
> **JLF:** Yes, but it does have this undertone of larger cultural issues. You have the cowboy thing going on, the military, and the hunting...the faux hunting.
> **CVG**: That's right. And the 'road kill.'
> **JLF**: The people pay $25, $50 & $75. $75 is to get a pre-done T-shirt. Do they get a photo of the shooter? Any information about the shooter?
> **CVG:** It depends upon whether it is a custom order; if you send me something, you get the photo of the shooter and the spent cartridge. You get a photo of your stuff getting shot.

$25 is for a big bloom shot from a 12 gauge shotgun. You can't do more than three of those on a shot, without totally shredding it. $50 for a Smiley Face.

JLF: The *Beatles* song: 'Happiness is a Warm Gun,' on the *White Album* [1968].

CVG: There you go. I had not thought of that; that's great. I felt very naughty doing the *Smiley Face.*

Image 6: *Edgy Williamsburg* [Brooklyn] *Fashion*, customised by Cynthia Vaiden Guest. © Photo courtesy of Kevin Brady, 2012

Guest offers her original shot T-shirt design, which has secured a fan base and become a cult favourite 'with everyone from hipsters to tough-as-nails boxers' (Image 6). One can custom order 'your own shot up shit,' designate the weapon, 'hire' the sharpshooter of your choice from her stable of shooters, and custom order a signed photo of your own 'hired gun' shooting your item (Image 7). She views herself as a stylist and art decorator, when it comes to both meanings of 'the shoot.' SHOOTMYSHIT products definitely require a special eye for what should be shot and give new credence to the fashion slang of 'killing a look.' Her favourite custom shoot-it-up commission so far? A Louis Vuitton briefcase, for which the owner wanted the 'full treatment.' Needless to say, Guest was happy to comply.

Image 7: *Wilton Shooting Range, Guys with Vintage Machine Gun, Shredding a T-shirt*, 2011. © Courtesy of Cynthia Vaiden Guest

JLF: Do you have examples of someone wanting a particular brand shot?
CVG: The most recent quirky shoot out was a pair of Calvin Klein underpants for Cesar Padilla of the vintage store Cherry. Also some fake and real Louis Vuitton stuff.

Guest's connection to Cesar Padilla is worth elaborating on, for not only is he owner of one of the most highly rated vintage boutiques in the world that also supplies vintage clothing and accessories to films, music videos, and television shows, he and Guest share a fascination with T-shirts. Indeed, Padilla is author of *Ripped: T-Shirts from the Underground* (2012), a visual history of over 200 T-shirts that were distressed and destroyed by Punk bands such as *Sex Pistols* and *Sonic Youth.*[14]

CVG: I have a friend who has a Goyard [bag] and he keeps getting close to having me shoot that up, but I think he's afraid I will miss and will wreck his Goyard bag.
JLF: He wants an aesthetically placed gun hole.
CVG: He's waffling. He doesn't want the brand to be so obvious. It's a surprise to me how the branding thing has become so [popular]. I don't want to wear anything with a label on it.
JLF: Wearing something with a gunshot also becomes a conversation piece.

CVG: Certainly. It makes it different from anyone else's.

JLF: It does customise it. Part of fashion these days is conformity and part of it is customising your look. And you can customise your look with a gunshot. I would like to talk more with you about the intersection among fashion, advertising, and branding. You mentioned the visual onslaught of these brands. Is your project an anti-brand reaction? Are there particular brands that people want shot more than others? Like the alligator being shot out of the Izod?

CVG: That was so good! One wants those things off one's shirt if you are at all edgy.

JLF: Yes, but you are still 'wearing' it. You are still wearing the brand but the logo is gone. What about the ubiquitous Louis Vuitton brown bag?

CVG: That is the perfect thing to shoot up, in my opinion. I could not want that more. It's particularly worth shooting because there are so many rip-offs, counterfeit stuff. That has a certain irony for a while. 'I'm going to march around with my faux Louis Vuitton bag and nobody will know the difference. The fact that that is on the back of some very bad money issues [makes it worth being shot.]

JLF: Are you more interested in shooting a fake or a real LV?

CVG: Oh, no, much better to shoot a real.

JLF: The brand right now is rethinking itself because it has been bastardised by the faux bags but also because those bags have become kind of downmarket.

CVG: Overexposed.

JLF: People who really can't afford them, saving up their pennies to buy the real thing and walking around with their tiny wristlet or whatever, partaking of the dream, but the people who can afford the expensive ones don't really want to be associated with that. I have noticed that those bags [brown] are not in the windows anymore at local LV stores at luxury fashion centres [in San Diego, California, where I live]. The logo is all in one colour on a patent bag. The LV becomes part of the design pattern.

CVG: Interesting. They try to have fun [Marc Jacobs was creative director of Louis Vuitton, 1997-2013]. They try to do different stuff and certainly having that Japanese guy [Takashi Murakami] do all that work was really fun. That was a great attitude. That was an expensive piece of 'labelled-ness.'

JLF: Sending it up. You are sending it up further. You should offer your services.

CVG: I was thinking I would offer my services to Martin Margiela or one of those types, to shoot their sale stuff to make it 'come back alive.' Because it is really worth it [as] a way to get your sale things out of the store….It's on my wish list. I'm friends with the NYC city store manager and he's got one of my shot T-shirts, so maybe this [interview] will open his eyes.

JLF: A new way to repurpose?

CVG: Exactly! I want to find a store that will give me their unsellable clothes so I can make them fabulous.

Decades before the photographer Tyler Shields photographed then girlfriend Francesca Eastwood, the daughter of the actors Clint Eastwood and Francis Fisher, as she bit, torched, and chain-sawed a $100,000 red crocodile Hermes Birkin bag (2012),[15] the ultimate luxe accessory, Guest was riddling designer bags with bullets. Of course, such anti-luxe statements by the privileged are counterbalanced by those made by the desperately poor. A colleague of mine Michael Ivy, Senior Lecturer in Fashion, Film, Costume Design and Make-up at the South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance (AFDA), wrote me about a conspicuous waste trend he was witnessing in South Africa.

> Oh goodness! Craziness! You will never guess [the] new thing here. Amongst very poor people (those way under breadline) they save up for expensive name brands only to get a group of onlookers together and then burn the clothing or shoe item. It is new ritual. Buying fashion to burn for entertainment. They even buy expensive cakes and drinks to burn.[16]

Driven by the pursuit of prestige, conspicuous waste is a profitless economic expenditure.[17]

In terms of design, I would situate SHOOTMYSHIT fashion as a tongue-in-cheek example within the larger movement of deconstruction or *la mode destroy*. As she customises, modifies, repurposes, or outright destroys designer clothing and handbags, and T-shirts, Guest restructures, re-semantifies, and reconstructs the conventional aesthetics of fashion in a post-fashion world.[18] As with other deconstructionist-oriented designers and artists, her work is political, redressing consumerism, corrupted values, and the conventional aesthetics of modern society.[19] In the 1980s, the designers Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake and Martin Margiela pioneered a revolution in fashion by exposing hemlines, frayed seams, and turning garments inside out. More dramatically and for the purposes of this article, deconstructionists changed the very materials of fashion, through processes one associates with dereliction.[20] For example, in 1993, Hussein Chalayan buried fabric with iron filings, dug it up after six weeks, and then made clothing with the fabric, which had taken on a rich golden-brown patina.[21] In the 1997 exhibition of his designs at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, the fashion designer Martin Margiela saturated assorted white clothing with growing medium agar and sprayed it 'with green mould, pink yeast or fuchsia or yellow bacteria, and housed in specially constructed greenhouses' for four days while 'moulds and bacteria grew on the clothes.'[22] Guest uses the gun as an art tool and the resulting bullet holes and powder burns in her designs. Paradoxically, she operates within the same framework of the luxe fashion brands she shoots by replacing them with an anti-brand or 'cooler' brand, creating new authenticity, uniqueness, and provenance for the shot item, a fact of which she is humorously aware. Her own brand of deconstructive fashion thus recommodifies the fashion object as anti-fashion but remains fashion by defining itself in relation to what it is not.

Guest's shoot-it-up fashion has resonance with the theatrical 1970s Punk music, dance, and fashion and ideological subculture/counterculture but she makes clear that she 'would never follow a movement, just borrow from it.' Punks famously destroyed the clothing they wore, ripping, shredding, tearing, painting, and safety-pinning it as part of their aesthetic, which cultural critics have interpreted as symbols of anarchy, anger, and urban decay. Fashion designers like Zandra Rhodes later made Punk-influenced fashion mainstream, providing it with economic value for non-Punk fashion industrialists.[23] Guest's shot fashion designs reference the original intentions of the Punks. Her aesthetically placed bullet hole becomes a perfect metaphor for her symbolic militant activism as she hacks, culture jams, and refigures the logos she despises, ridiculing the consumerism, conformity, and class biases behind them, replacing what is 'cool' with a new cool.[24]

Destroyed fashion probably has earlier origins with subcultures who were making their own political statements, for example the 'outlaw' bikers who wore their leather and jeans conspicuously distressed like Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1953).[25] And then there are the patched jeans that came out of the Haight-Ashbury hippie San Francisco scene, which was also biker territory then. These subculture and counterculture groups existed well before Punk style, destroyed fashion, and culture jamming were on the radar.[26] As with the co-optation of the Punk style by the fashion-industrial complex, the biker and hippie aesthetics have gone luxe. In July 2014, dozens of designers were offering jeans with strategically placed tears, holes, and paint splotches for $200 or more. At the Shopbob website, I found the following distressed denim prices: True Religion ($358), Stella McCartney ($375), R13 ($595), and DSQUARED2 ($690).[27] At Bergdorf Goodman, the prices climbed higher with Saint Laurent offering a pair of 'Distressed Skinny 5-Pocked Jeans' for $890.[28] These were paired with a $19,990 fox fur vest so resembling road kill that I imagine Guest taking a shot at it.[29] In the course of our talks, I asked Guest what she makes of such 'destroyed' designer fashions becoming luxe.

CVG: Make it luxe by ripping it up might be a different class interpretation of the upper class way of dressing – soleless topsiders, jackets and shirts with holes, nothing matching. I think my personal version is more of a FU to that class thing, as well as the sheep-like following for branded items. And definitely makes it unique – too much self-consciousness out there.

JLF: Designers like Margiela and Chalayan work on the conceptual level, and aren't 'slumming.' Your work could be appealing to them. Making statements too about things like gun violence and war. It does not have to hit you over the head.

CVG: I would hope so. People need to be a little more open-minded. It's a part of life. People are upset about shooting the deer and eating it. But they don't mind going to the market and buying the dead chicken. I feel like it is one of those issues. It is a fact of life; things must die for you to live.

JLF: So how does wearing a T-shirt with gunshots evoke that for you?

CVG: You are not afraid of it. You are not afraid of the topic. You are not afraid of the connection. You don't have fear. You are not willing to trivialise it because you know what it is.

JLF: So these thoughts are informing your creative process. Others might not get that. Are there other ways you can destroy? You could put a knife through something. What is it about a gun?

CVG: The beauty of the gun is that it is completely its own machine. People ask me if I…will take 'this' to China [to mass manufacture faux 'shot' fashions]. And no, I wouldn't, because why would I? The gun is perfect. It 'manufactures' exactly what you want it to do and if I suddenly had a process that 'faked' the gunshot then it would lose everything. The whole thing must be as it is [authentic]. I have thought about the next thing. Somebody said, 'why don't you do paintball,' but that's not sexy or fun. I was thinking that maybe I would blow stuff up.

JLF: It would be harder to wear it. The powder burn seems critical in your designs.

CVG: There are a lot of people who say, can you shoot my ex-husband's stuff and don't need to send it back but I just want a video [Laugh].

JLF: I was looking at the photo you took of Derrick Utopic, lead guitarist for the heavy metal, punk group *UTOPIC*. I write about art and death imagery and wearing a T-shirt that is bullet ridden does bring up thoughts about death, as if the person himself has been shot and the shirt is forensic evidence (Image 8).

CVG: I think it makes the shirt edgier, and Derrick looks tougher and more mysterious. The SHOOTMYSHIT merchandise is never supposed to represent death, that's why there's no blood and gore. The shots are ornamentation in a bad ass way.

Image 8: *Derrick from UTOPIC Wearing Shot Up Punisher Shirt*, 2012.
© Courtesy of Cynthia Vaiden Guest[30]

Guest and I talk at length about the process by which her clients find her website and make arrangements to commission or purchase shot fashion items. She mentions the website image of 'the road kill vest on the target and the guy shooting it' as an advertising pitch. 'Because I know what I am doing photographically, I make it a strong image, not just a snapshot.' I then ask her what would be an unacceptable commission and who exactly her clients are.

CVG: I have never killed anything. I would not accept someone sending me something to kill. That would not be okay.

JLF: Thank you. Would you shoot a real fur coat?

CVG: Happily! I'll do anything!

JLF: Who are the people who tend to buy your shot products? Why do they?

CVG: That was another big surprise to me. They could do exactly what I am doing in a much more efficient way. They can shoot their own shit, as it were, but they like my little brand, they like me, they like the spirit of it, they like the website so they are willing to pay for that. It's very flattering.

JLF: Are your customers generally people who don't use guns?

CVG: Yes, it's exotic for them. I had a middle-aged woman from Hartford Connecticut send me three shirts to shoot. I tend to think that the people who are attracted to it are not worried about it.

JLF: They are not thinking they are glorifying gun violence?

CVG: No, and that is an issue. Obviously one thinks about that. It makes such a great fashion statement that you have to just pass along.

JLF: Fashion is also about novelty and takes different elements of our culture and puts them together in an interesting way. There is an empire of fashion that drives consumer culture. There's a fascination with fashion, brands, guns, and violence and you are combining these.

CVG: It is very attractive.

JLF: The aesthetically placed bullet hole and power burn. Cigarette burns can have that almost gunshot look.

CVG: Less attractive.

JLF: Definitely less attractive.

CVG: Part of my fascination with this is the self-containment of the gun. Create a machine to do it. You don't have to hire a machine to do it for the gun already exists as a perfect machine for this.

JLF: Not mass produced product. You are customising fashion with this perfect machine. Guns have their individual imprints...forensics.

CVG: With one of the cartridges I use with a 12 gauge, you can see a four leaf clover shape. The load can go through and do a bit of that but because it is a big load it tends to make a big hole. It's not so distinct. That's part of my experimentation. To see what is around and how it does it. In order to get the powder burn you have to get fairly close.

JLF: What are your favourite guns?

CVG: So far the Luger [German automatic pistol] is great for the .22.

JLF: The Luger – that is another cultural icon!

CVG: Exactly! It's pretty darn exciting. I have not yet used a Glock.

JLF: I know these names and I don't even know what they look like!

CVG: I love the 12 gauge. That is great. It really fires big blasts if you want it to.

JLF: Any particular gun manufacturer?

CVG: I'm too ignorant to know that. I'll have to ask one of my weapons experts.

The AK-47. It's classic.

4. The Shooters and a Fashion for the Military

As Guest and I talked, the subject of the actual shooters, many of whom are veterans of war, who customise and repurpose the items Guest is entrusted to shoot, was a prominent theme.

JLF: You note that your designs are 'shot by weapons experts.' How did you come up with that idea of having weapons experts shoot the shit?

CVG: I know some. It's better because then I can expand my world of weapons to you. *Smiley Face* is [from] a .22 short, out of a little rifle. The ones at the bottom of the [web] page, that are big, are from a 12 gauge [shotgun], with a very big cartridge (Image 9, atmospheric portrait). You have to be careful because some of them will just shred it into nothing. It's an experiment, anyway, just start to see which weapons and objects intersect.

***Image 9*: *Carlos in Shirt Shot with 12 Gauge Rifle*, 2011.**

JLF: Who does most of the shooting?

CVG: I can do it with my little rifle but I've found all sorts of entertaining guys at gun ranges willing to shoot a T-shirt. It may be the best way to meet men from all walks of life. In the 1980s I got a friend with a Luger to shoot them. You need the small calibre [.22] in order to control the size of the hole and get a smidge of powder. And enable an accurate close range shot. I have two special ops guys I can ask. Would love to team up with a SEAL [US Navy's Sea, Air, Land teams].

JLF: Do they do it for free? Just for the joy of it?

CVG: Yes, lol, more for the joke of it. All of them think I'm crazy.

Guest also talked in detail about how she recruits her shooters and their diversity. Businessmen, college kids, hunters, hipsters, Boy Scout leaders, ex-Marines and FBI agents have all shot for her. One of the most enjoyable places for her to recruit is the counter of Cabela's, the specialty retailer of hunting, fishing, camping, shooting, and related outdoor recreation merchandise. 'There is also some great fashion there,' Guest explains as we take an aside into ghillie suits, camouflage that makes a hunter or warrior look like a moving haystack or pile of weeds.

CVG: I find from my end that it is fun and I love the people I am meeting. One of the things I found very interesting about it is that when I recruit somebody spontaneously at the shooting range, the people under thirty, they don't care if I pay them. They enjoy doing it and what they really are excited about is that they get to be mentioned.

JLF: The fame factor...the Warhol proverbial 15 minutes! Their pictures might go up on the website.

CVG: Exactly. That is thrilling to them. Somehow that particular personality, which is very much under thirty, combined with their love of brands, and [anti] brand reaction.

JLF: Love of brands, love of consumption, and love of fame. They all go together. And celebrity.

CVG: They all go together.

JLF: It's like a mini-reality show.

A subsection of shooters is particularly attractive to Guest and her clients, the weapons expert, men like Carlos, a former Army Ranger, Special Operations, 7th Group, Fort Bragg North Carolina (Images 9 & 10). We spoke about her recruitment of warriors for her project.

JLF: That goes along with the glorification of violence, the warrior. Just the fact that it is not an ordinary person shooting. It's an expert doing the shooting. Can you talk about that?

CVG: They are heroes in a way. One of them is ex-Special Forces. He's done really remarkable stuff that he can't talk about much. My father was a sharpshooter in the Marines and in the war in Japan, so I did grow up with a sense of fear and a sense of respect about this that I think is very important.

JLF: Can you talk more about fear and its relation to guns?

CVG: This is really important to me: In my life if I have fear, I want to understand it so I can make the fear proportional. With guns, if you know about them and how to use them, and know how powerful they are, you respect them. Your fear is different from just a general fear that is created by movies. It was something I thought was very scary when I saw it on TV but when I went in person and learned about it I discovered that it was much more complicated, much more interesting and less dangerous than it appeared to be. The people who do it know what they are doing. There's a training. It's kind of like being a cowboy in a rodeo.

In May 2014 in New York City, Guest informed me that her father was not only a lauded sharpshooter in the Marines during World War II but a POW. This fascinating piece of her personal story led to more discussion about the gun as an art tool, violence, masculinity, and further insights regarding the origins of the SHOOTMYSHIT project.

Image 10: *Carlos in Uniform*, 2012. © Courtesy of Cynthia Vaiden Guest

JLF: Can you elaborate on your father's military record during World War II and how that may have influenced your relationship with guns?

CVG: He was captured in the Philippines, spent a year in prison camp there; then [he] was sent on a death ship to work in the Mitsubishi mines in Northern Japan for two years. He came home weighing ninety pounds. My father's war record is part of my attraction to violence. It's a way of aestheticizing violence by turning it into something else.

JLF: Looking at your photographs of men, I see their muscular arms, etc. I'm not making any conclusions about it but I think it is interesting, the look of your shooters. How did you select them? Do you have any people with big bellies? Are they volunteers?

CVG: I ask them and they do it. On the website there is a trio of three guys. I met them at the shooting range and they had a machine gun so I asked them if they wanted to shoot, and they said, 'absolutely.' They strafed [attack repeatedly] my faux fur vest. It was great because it looks like road kill. Actually, this is one of the most fun moments because I was outdoors at the shooting range with that vest on a target form. There were probably fifty people there. It was a good cold winter afternoon with sunlight and people were enthusiastic about being out there doing their shooting and when they saw the horribly ugly road kill vest go up on the target I assure you they all stopped and stared at it and spent five minutes making fun of it. They were saying things like 'you have to kill it again, because it's pretty dead already.'

JLF: It was literally dead 'dead' because it was faux fur.

CVG: It was hilarious, watching these guys be completely amused by the fact that we were shooting this vest up.

We speak of the cult of masculinity, the bestselling 1984 memoir by the poet and feminist Rosemary Daniell, *Sleeping with Soldiers*: *In Search of the Macho Man*, an exploration of the sexual attraction some independent women feel to men 'who live dangerously, who are frankly and naturally masculine.'[31] We also speak of the vogue for the military and military fashion, and how these relate to her project.

CVG: Shooting is a world of high testosterone and I just kind of like the gun thing. What I found is that it is filled with a lot of very kind people, which is what you don't expect. It's intriguing and that's what is interesting about working with people at shooting ranges. It's completely a cross section. When you go to the gun counter at Cabela's giant sporting goods store, it is probably fifty feet long and there are guys in hunting outfits, there are guys in suits, and there's a couple of women, and there will be hipsters and then there will be some 'ghetto-y' looking people. It is so diverse. That was a big surprise. The press tries to make you think that it is this weird group of people but every time I go out, it is just everybody. It's like going golfing.

JLF: On your website, some prize fighters are doing the shooting, too. You have a double whammy there.

CVG: Well [laughing], they tend to come out of the military, these guys, so they have learned that stuff. I started knowing my Special Forces guy through the boxing.

JLF: Do you have any thoughts about being a woman in charge of a bunch of men who are shooting for you?

CVG: The image that jumped into my mind was Barbara Stanwyck in *The Big Valley* [1965-1969 television Western series]. But I love being around guys doing basic things – I love the skill, the knowledge of the equipment, the finesse. And I feel all womanly yet capable (Slim Keith?).[32] The reason I love NYC is that everyone here is the best at what they do or are seeking to be the best. So I get to hang out with some pretty swell guys.

We speak of the current respect for the military in the United States, so unlike the Vietnam War era when returning veterans from this unpopular, hugely opposed war, which the USA 'lost,' were often treated with disrespect. We also speak about military and hunting fashion looks, associated with firearms.[33]

JLF: Right now and every number of years there is a military look in fashion, and your work coordinates with that in some ways, as an ironic statement that you can wear something that has not only been shot but shot by military people. I'm wondering what your thoughts are about hunting and military fashion and about the way you have created a military fashion, literally.

CVG: Didn't Yves Saint Laurent do a safari look? That evokes guns.

JLF: Ralph Lauren always does a safari look. Military fashion is in vogue right now and you are having former military personnel create a new kind of military fashion. And we are also involved in several wars in the world right now. What you are doing is timely.

CVG: One of the reasons it captures the imagination is there is no draft. The people who have gone to the war have volunteered to be there and therefore they don't make up that strand that would go through every family in the US [if there were a draft]. It's a very specific group of people. They are highly trained and want to be doing what they are doing. You might not know a single person like that; that is part of the fascination, particularly here in the Northeast [where she lives and does the shooting]. There are so many intellectuals and high creativity going on that is mind-oriented, not necessarily body-oriented. You can ask people and they won't know anybody who is serving. They don't have a clue. This plays on that desire to know, to be connected to it, even if it is in an ironic fashion.

JLF: The photographs you show have very particular images of manhood.

CVG: I did some of myself but I'm worried about my own particular glamour factor [laughing].

JLF: Somehow we associate guns more with men.

CVG: It wasn't that. I actually have two women who want to be part of it but I haven't been able to take them out to shoot. There are women shooters but there are fewer of them. I did not want to quiet it down

with my own 'olderness.' It's more about age to me. I'm still cute. I want it to be neutral.

JLF: I would not say it's neutral. The images of the men – they are attractive, muscular, virile looking. In fashion there is often a connection among sexuality, gender, and violence. Women wearing military garb changes it, compared to men wearing it. It's a different look. In fashion, the military look is now associated more with women.

5. Conclusion

Talking with Cynthia Vaiden Guest about SHOOTMYSHIT over the past three years has been thought-provoking on multiple levels as I pondered her shot up fashion 'brand,' symbolic activism, culture jamming, and the perfect metaphor of the bullet hole. When Guest and I first spoke in 2011, I asked her whether the project might be some sort of ironic statement about the relationship among the American glorification of guns, gun violence, and even of anti-gun control in the United States. She agreed that 'was part of it.'[34] In this article, she provided candid insight into her understanding of gun culture in the United States, how that has shaped her use of the gun as an art tool, and how that culture is an important conceptual underpinning to her work.

Notes

[1] Letterpress printing is a technique of relief printing that uses a printing press. Cynthia Vaiden Guest's photography can be viewed at:
http://www.cynthiaguest.zenfolio.com;
http://www.saatchionline.com/cynthiavaiden; and
http://www.shootmyshit.com.

[2] Johnson died in 1996. Excerpt below from our transcript, regarding his tragic death.

JLF: I read that Jed Johnson died at age 47 on TWA Flight 800 in New York in 1996.

CVG: Really terrible – he hadn't died of AIDS like so many. He was so golden – kind too – it was shocking that his death was so abrupt. His luck came through for him when he was one of the few whose body was found intact right away….I miss him always. We used to drive everyone crazy around us because we spoke in really quiet tones, like we were keeping secrets [lol].

Today, Jed Johnson Associates continues under his brother Jay Johnson and Arthur Dunnam, and senior designer Heather Moore. http://www.jedjohnson.com/history.php.

[3] The controversy: the installation of the Ólafur Elíasson waterfall under the Brooklyn Bridge, which killed all the trees by the River Cafe in Dumbo, from salt spray. Juried exhibition: Silvermine Arts Center, New Canaan, Connecticut.

[4] Cynthia Vaiden Guest photography: http://www.saatchiart.com/cynthiavaiden; see also her website: http://www.cguestphoto.com/cguestphoto.com/HOME.html.

[5] Ruth La Ferla, 'Some Motherly Advice: How to Be Cool,' *The New York Times*, 22 December 2005,

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/22/fashion/thursdaystyles/22TEENS.html?r=0&adxnnl=1&pagewanted=all&adxnnlx=1404677712-AqR8VfyPDxFqKcbTPhBjgw.

[6] 'Your Shit Just Looks Cooler When It's Been Shot,' Shootmyshit.com, accessed 17 January 2014, http://www.shootmyshit.com/shootmyshit.com/order.html.

[7] Most notably the notorious 14 December 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut in which twenty children and six staff members were murdered by a disturbed young man.

[8] For a catalogue of Andy Warhol's collections of Americana, Art Deco, American Indian Art, Kitsch, etc. I refer the reader to: John William Smith, ed., *Possession Obsession: Andy Warhol and Collecting* (Pittsburgh, PA: The Andy Warhol Museum, 2002).

[9] Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *The Andy Warhol Diaries* (New York: Warner Books, 1989).

[10] Solanas authored: Valerie Solanas, *SCUM Manifesto* (London: Verso, 2004) [1967] which advocated the elimination of men. On the day of the attack, she had been turned away from the Warhol Factory after asking for the return of a misplaced script she had written.

[11] *Zelig*, dir. Woody Allen, 1983: Los Angeles, CA: Orion Pictures.

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[13] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: Unwin Books, 1970) [1899]; Jean Baudrillard, The *Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998); Dana Thomas, *Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2007).

[14] Cesar Padilla, *Ripped: T-Shirts from the Underground* (Milan and New York: Rizzoli Universe Promotional Books, 2012).

[15] 'Birkin: Francesca Eastwood, photography,' *Tyler Shields.com*, 26 May 2012, accessed 7 July 2014, http://www.tylershields.com/2012/05/26/birkin/May 26, 2012 tyler.

[16] Personal communication, email. Michael Ivy, Feb 6, 2012: South Africa.

[17] Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, ibid.; see also, Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, vol. 1 of *Consumption*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

[18] Vinken, Barbara, *Fashion Zeitgeist: Trends and Cycles in the Fashion System*, trans. Mark Hewson (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004).

[19] Şölen Kipöz and Deniz Güner, 'The Conceptual Resistance of Hussein Chalayan within the Ephemeral World of Fashion,' in *Fashions: Exploring Fashion through Cultures*, ed. Jacque Lynn Foltyn (Oxford, UK; Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2013), 229-243.

[20] Patricia Mears, 'Fraying the Edges: Fashion and Deconstruction,' in *Skin+Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture*, ed. Patricia Mears and Susan Sidlauskas (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), 30-37; Caroline Evans, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

[21] Evans, *Fashion at the Edge*, 253.

[22] Ibid. The intellectual education of these designers was influenced by the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, who exposed the instability of meaning and encouraged the playing with form. Jacques Derrida, *On Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) [1967]. See also: Alison Gill, 'Deconstruction Fashion: The Making of Unfinished, Decomposing and Re-Assembled Clothes,' *Fashion Theory* 2, no. 1 (February 1998): 25-49.

[23] Bonnie English, *A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th Century: From the Catwalk to the Sidewalk* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007); Jo Stephenson, 'Britain's Brand Story in the

Fashion Films of the Central Office Information (COI),' *Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style* 2, no. 2 (2013): 63-84.

[24] For more information about culture jamming, see: Afsheen Josophe Nomai, *Culture Jamming: Ideological Struggle and the Possibilities for Social Change* (ProQuest: UMI Dissertation Publishing, 2011); and, Kalle Lasn, *Culture Jam: How to Reverse America's Suicidal Consumer Binge: And Why We Must* (New York: William Morrow, 2000). My thanks to Jess Berry and Leonard R. Koos for their insights.

[25] *The Wild One*, dir. László Benedek, 1953: Hollywood, CA: Stanley Kramer Productions, Columbia Pictures.

[26] Personal communication, Marty Graham, 16 January 2014. Graham is a collector and seller of vintage fashion and worked in haute couture in Paris during the Punk period. 'All of us punk rockers destroyed our clothes, slashed off sleeves and collars and pegged our pant legs. Safety pins everywhere.'

[27] 'Distressed Jeans,' *Shopbop.com*, accessed 12 July 2014, http://www.shopbop.com/clothes-denim-distressed-jeans/br/v=1/2534374302101673.htm?all.

[28] 'Saint Laurent Distressed 5-Pocket Jeans,' *Bergdorfgoodman.com*, accessed 12 July 2014, http://tinyurl.com/m2npdrq.

[29]'Saint Laurent Fox Fur Vest, Natural,' *Bergdofgoodman.com*, accessed 12 July 2014, http://www.bergdorfgoodman.com/search.jsp?N=0&Ntt=YSL+fox+fur+vest&_requestid=65501.

[30] Punisher is a fictional comic book anti-hero comic book character, featured in Marvel Comics publications, and has appeared in three films.

[31] Jacket copy: Rosemary Daniell, *Sleeping with Soldiers: In Search of the Macho Man* (New York: Henry Holt, 1984).

[32] Slim Keith, style icon and socialite of the 1950s and 1960s.

[33] Recommended reading: Patrizia Calefato, *Luxury Fashion, Lifestyle and Excess* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014); Calefato writes of war as 'an anthropological luxury in which humanity challenges itself;' see also, Michael A. Langkjær, 'Not Entirely Subversive: "Rock Military Style" from Jimmy Hendrix to *Destiny's Child*,' in *Fashions*: *Exploring Fashion through Cultures*, ed. Jacque Lynn Foltyn (Oxford, UK: ID Press, 2013), 193-228.

[34] For further reading about fashion and violence see, Evans, *Fashion at the Edge*; and especially Rebecca Arnold, *Fashion Desire and Anxiety: Image and Morality in the 20th Century* (New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), in particular the chapter 'Violence and Provocation.'

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Exhibition Reviews

Charles James: Beyond Fashion

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
8 May – 10 August 2014
Curated by Harold Koda and Jan Glier Reeder
Catalogue: ***Charles James: Beyond Fashion***
Harold Koda and Jan Glier Reeder, with a prologue by Ralph Rucci
and contributions by Sarah Scaturro and Glenn Petersen
New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014,
264 pages, $50, illustrated, with bibliography and index
ISBN: 978-0300204360

Image 1: *Charles James Ball Gowns*, 1948, photograph by Cecil Beaton, Beaton/*Vogue*/Condé Nast Archive. © Condé Nast, courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The first time I became aware of Charles James and his work, I imagined magic, some otherworldly entity whose manipulation of fabric transcended rational explanation. I could not shake the feeling that the clothes he crafted were more akin to sculptures than dresses, museum

pieces, relics of study, silken evidence of a bygone golden age (Image 1). It turns out I was on to something. Charles James' massive contribution to fashion was evidenced by the recent display of his works in an art museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, alongside modern artworks and fragments of ancient architecture. In the deep recesses of the exhibit's darkened galleries, dotted with spotlit masterpieces, I saw a quote of his float by: 'In fashion, even what seems most fragile must be built on cement.' These are the words of a sculptor, whose practice showed appreciation for fashion's ethereal qualities, beauty, and elegance, but was rooted in its physicality and construction, impeccable seams, breathtaking volume, balance, and structure. James' calculated touch elevated his garments to works of art, and his artistic temperament was caught by the photographer Cecil Beaton in a 1936 portrait (Image 2).

Image 2: *Charles James*, ©1936. Photograph by Cecil Beaton, the Cecil Beaton Studio Archive at Sotheby's, courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The perfectionism of his practice was honed and developed over a career spanning some fifty years, from his beginnings as a milliner in Chicago, to the opening of his first dressmaking business in 1928, and to the years spent in London and Paris where he began to establish himself as a significant designer and artist among contemporaries such as Christian Dior, Elsa Schiaparelli, and Cristóbal Balenciaga. By 1945, back in New York, he opened his own workroom and salon on Madison Avenue, and by the early 1950s, he was at his peak of popularity and production. His dressmaking skills, which proved him to be simultaneously a

designer, sculptor, engineer, and architect, were at their zenith and most realised in the cleverly engineered ball gowns he created in the post-war period. Voluminous dresses with names referencing the perfection of nature, the Tree, the Clover Leaf, the Swan, and the Butterfly are all examples of James' tireless tinkering with sartorial ideas and executions.

During his lifetime, the Anglo-American designer was well aware of the lasting significance of his work for legacy and teaching purposes. As early as the 1940s, he encouraged some of his most loyal patrons to donate their Charles James garments to the Brooklyn Museum in New York City. This collection of nearly 200 garments and 600 related materials, the bulk of which was transferred to The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in 2009, along with an additional donation of items in 2013, made *Charles James: Beyond Fashion* possible. Co-curated by Harold Koda and Jan Glier Reeder, the exhibition was presented in three galleries – the new Anna Wintour Costume Center, the Carl and Iris Barrel Apfel Gallery, and special exhibition galleries on the museum's first floor.

A natural start for the viewer was to begin with the first floor gallery, where a minimal white wall with the show's title was punctuated by a plaster mannequin jutting from its side, a replica of the designer's sculpture of an idealised female form. A single oil painting hung nearby in the entrance – a 1949 portrait of Millicent Rogers, a stylish socialite, jewellery designer, and one of Charles James' primary clients. The folds of her ivory satin pouf dress were mirrored by a muslin mock-up of the same design in an adjacent display. This and other muslins of designs from the late 1940s and early 1950s surrounded the sole piece of furniture in the show, The Butterfly Sofa, an ergonomic design with the same anatomical attention and curvilinear qualities as his garments, originally produced in 1951 for his friends and art patrons John and Dominique de Menil.

Past the white walls of the entrance, there was an expanse of black. Low, dark ceilings peppered with spotlights and floor-to-ceiling mirrored walls encased the main gallery full of fifteen candy-coloured ball gowns, some of James' most well-known and masterfully engineered works in silk faille, satin, velvet, cotton, wool, and tulle. Among those included were works influenced by nineteenth-century silhouettes, erotically infused pieces, demure experimentations in dressmaking, as well as an example dating from his early career in Europe. Dramatically illuminated and spread throughout the space on low, round pedestals, they gave the viewer an intimate look at every dress in three dimensions. The nature of this display inherently encourages analysis, and as one circled a gown to examine folds, seams, and shapes from front to back, robotic arms with light projectors did the same, directing the viewer's eye to areas on the garment where separate projection screens further analysed and explained the construction of each dress layer by layer, unravelling skirts and deconstructing bodices into abstract shapes to show Charles James' genius approach to cut and form. This novel display and teaching tool by the exhibition designers Diller Scofidio + Renfro, an interdisciplinary architecture and design firm, was consistent throughout the exhibition.

It was impossible not to gaze into the looking glasses installed on either side of the main gallery and not see one's reflection alongside an infinite landscape of Charles James dresses. There were dresses, dresses, and more dresses, but also one continuous line of quotes from the designer etched in pale white into the glass and hovering in the darkness. Upon first glance into the mirrors, the viewer saw James' philosophies literally embedded into the clothes. 'Brancusi has his medium; Picasso, Faulkner, Shostakovich, theirs,' one quote said, 'mine happens to be cloth.' James' words were given importance and used as a design element throughout the exhibition, strewn across the designer's sartorial gifts like ribbon, tying the show together in a lovely package.

Charles James: Beyond Fashion contained too many gifts to name, but one of special note was the designer's famous Clover Leaf dress, two examples of which occupy centralised

positions in the main gallery (Image 3). A one-of-a-kind version of the design in pink silk faille, copper shantung, and black silk lace was designed for Josephine Abercrombie, the only daughter of a Texas millionaire, while its black and white iteration was created for Mrs William Randolph Hearst Jr, to wear to the Eisenhower's inaugural ball in 1953. That same year the dress also saw the coronation of Elizabeth II in London. Weighing in at ten pounds, but supposedly comfortably balanced on the hips when worn, the gown is breath-taking in its sculptural beauty.

Image 3: 'Clover Leaf Ball Gown,' by Charles James, in pink silk faille, copper silk shantung, black silk lace with ivory silk, 1953. Gallery View, First Floor Special Exhibition Gallery, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009, gift of Josephine Abercrombie, 1953 (2009.300.784), image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Past the largess of the first floor's main gallery, the exhibition continued in the new Anna Wintour Costume Center. Walking through the museum to the next gallery gave the exhibition flow a bit of a disjointed feeling; however, the quality of its contents more than made up for any Charles James withdrawal that viewers may have encountered on their journey. Murmurs of James' voice welcomed arriving visitors through looping audio clips in the Costume Center's stairwell, while an enlarged 1952 portrait of the artist by Michael Vaccaro spanned an entire wall. In it, James peeked from behind a dress form holding the under-structure of an upcoming creation. The items in this gallery displayed examples of daywear and evening designs that illustrated four particular aspects to the designer's process and work, 'Spirals and Wraps,' 'Drapes and Folds,' 'Platonic Form,' and 'Anatomical Cut.' These were

displayed on a cruciform shaped platform, and viewers ambled their way around a path that emphasised the designer's evolution and scope of production.

Though the glamorous formal gowns he created for the stylish elite were his most well-known works, James' signature lines and architectural forms were evident in his daywear. Startlingly modern in his exploration of spirals and wraps, an early design from 1932 for the contemporary urban woman, the 'Taxi Dress' in a ribbed, black wool knit, was intended for the wearer to easily slip on and off while en route in a cab. In addition, his carefully considered touch in green-grey silk satin brought to life the ingenious Figure-Eight Dinner Dress (1939), with two sides of fabric attached to a waist piece spiralling around each leg. A swath of delicately draped evening and cocktail dresses from the 1930s and 1940s and folded suits and coats from the same period evoked both Western and Eastern artistic themes, classical sculpture, and Japanese origami. An array of coats and dinner suits showing James' virtuosity with form and cut were also on display.

Towards the end of his life, James moved the centre of his work and living space to the Chelsea Hotel in Manhattan, where he meticulously stored his personal archives and other ephemera related to his long career. He died alone, largely forgotten; known as a difficult man, James had few friends and planned for no succession after his death. This group of items was donated to The Met in 2013 by his last assistant, Homer Layne, making the museum's Charles James collection the most comprehensive grouping of one designer's works in the world. The exhibition's third space, the Carl and Iris Barrel Apfel Gallery, housed examples of James' early beginnings. On a rear platform, a display of the designer's attention to all of fashion's aspects, including children's wear, undergarments, and accessories including his early works as a milliner in the 1920s, were displayed alongside various dress forms of his own design. Against pale walls, a picture rail wrapped the entirety of the space. On it sat drawings in ink, graphite, and shoe polish on paper from the 1960s, and paper patterns, scrapbooks, and storyboards for his planned autobiography. One of the cheekiest of these archival papers was a facsimile titled, 'CLIENTS WHOM I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO DRESS....SOMETIMES COULD HAVE BUT DID NOT.' Edited over a ten year period from 1960-1970, the list included the names of famous women and men along with his reasons for wanting to dress them or not. Underneath David Bowie's name, he noted, 'Androgynously beautiful,' under Greta Garbo's, the explanation, 'Need I say?' These notations were as sly and concise as one of his dress seams.

Despite the fact that Charles James' many plans and notes for his own autobiography went unpublished after his death in 1978, the designer has finally gotten his due, not only with the exhibition *Charles James: Beyond Fashion*, but with a catalogue of the same name, out this year by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and published by Yale University Press. In its prologue, penned by the American couturier Ralph Rucci, the author puts into words the enchanting physicality that I felt when viewing James' work for the first time. He describes the world and work of Charles James as driven by the artist's own vision rather than by trends. Perhaps the magic in his works is that they look like clothes, but are not merely garments; the end result, as Rucci expresses, come to life in three dimensions while never ceasing to celebrate a woman's shape.

Possibly more than any designer exhibition The Met has shown, the Charles James retrospective displayed the garments as art, works just as sculptural, architectural, carefully considered, and meticulously crafted as the Greek and Roman marbles in the nearby galleries. Add to that its innovative and didactic approach to display, which stood as a compelling example of fashion exhibitions in the twenty-first century. With its accompanying social media, lectures, workshops, tours, and the amount of visual/audio resources and study material online, the perfectionist designer himself would have been impressed with the curators' attention to the

maintenance of his legacy. As he himself once said, 'Forget all you know and learn something every day.'

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The Glamour of Italian Fashion 1945-2014

The Victoria and Albert Museum
5 April 2014 – 27 July 2014
Curated by Sonnet Stanfill
Catalogue: ***The Glamour of Italian Fashion since 1945***
Sonnet Stanfill, ed.
London: V&A Publishing, 2014,
250 pages, £25 (paperback), illustrated
ISBN: 978-1851777914

Image 1: *Fashion Show in Sala Bianca*, photo by G. M. Fadigati, 1955.

The Glamour of Italian Fashion 1945-2014, curated by Sonnet Stanfill at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, focuses on a retrospective of Italian fashion design from the end of the Second World War to the present day. As I entered, I noticed the opening statement to the exhibition etched into a marble style facade, giving a material nod to the style, quality, and substance of what was to come. To the left of the entrance, two skirt suits from 'about 1939' presented an example of typical Italian fashion during wartime: simple, practical, and frugal. The Mark of Guarantee label inside the jackets indicated that the guidelines of the fascist regime's utility scheme were followed in the making of the suits. This understated opening to the exhibition provided the viewer with some historical background to the sartorial style of wartime Italy through the suits' stark contrast with what the exhibition became in the next gallery: the post-war return to Luxury, with a capital L.

Image 2: Installation Image of *The Glamour of Italian Fashion 1945-2014*.
Photo © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

History tells us that throughout Europe and the United States, there was a palpable hunger for fashion after years of wartime deprivation, and the focus of this part of the exhibition was on how the Italian fashion scene erupted, sating that hunger, thanks in large part to the business enterprises of Giovanni Battista Giorgini. Well-travelled, knowledgeable about the fashion industry, and from an ancient aristocratic Italian family, Giorgini saw the potential for Italian fashion to sell, first in the North American market and then internationally. Many of the eleven gowns on display in the first gallery were included in Giorgini's first presentations, the first being held in his own home in February 1951 and subsequently in the Sala Bianca, or White Hall, an opulent gallery in Florence's Pitti Palace. Images from one of these shows, dominated by the extravagant Sala Bianca chandeliers, flanked the room, creating a sense of occasion within the gallery space (Image 1). Programmes, invitations, and some photographs from the shows were also displayed A detail that demonstrated Giorgini's promotional flair

was the notebook given to the fashion show guests, each page inscribed with the logo of a different fashion house, thus enabling buyers and the press to organise their notes.

The eleven gowns were breath-taking (Image 2), no doubt requiring thousands of hours of work in the ateliers that remain the heart of Italian couture. I was particularly taken with the opulent satin and silk chiffon Simonetta evening gown (1952) and further impressed to read that the Duchess Colonna di Cesaro, known simply as Simonetta, was imprisoned during the war for her anti-fascism; she was clearly a spirited, strong woman, as well as a talented designer. Another dress that caused me to pause for some time was the Roberto Capucci silk cocktail dress with silk velvet stole from 1957. The sculptural shape and effect of multiple layers created a sense of drama, frivolity, and, crucially, excess, in celebration of 1950s freedom after wartime restrictions.

Carosa's metallic quilted cocktail dress (1958-1959) in silk satin stood out for anticipating the futuristic style of the 1960s, and showed a more conceptual side to post-war Italian fashion than one typically imagines. Finally, I saw a dress with which I am personally familiar: a Sorelle Fontana 1950s evening gown in silk satin with Chantilly lace. A demure gown, I had selected for a shoot a few years ago. In 2010, I was privileged to have access to the whole Sorelle Fontana archive, a treasured afternoon of insight into a chapter of Italy's fashion history. The story of the Fontana Sisters is like a modern fairy tale of three sisters working together to create a brand that made them world famous. In fact, their story was just one of many female entrepreneur designers, and I was struck by the number of very successful female designers in Italy at this time. In this section of the exhibition, female designers dominated.

The first part of next gallery addressed the theme 'Dressmaker and Client.' The information panel told the visitor that in the 1950s nearly 80 percent of Italian wardrobes were made by hand, celebrating all aspects of Italian fashion that have contributed to its reputation for glamour, not just couture. What was clear in this gallery was that high quality textiles and craftsmanship were intrinsic to this particularly Italian notion of glamour. Naturally, people feel good in clothes tailored to fit them or, in other words, tailoring and a good working relationship with a dressmaker who understands how to cut goes a long way towards a glamorous look.

The 'Hollywood on the Tiber' section was curated to encapsulate the excitement of the 1960s in Italy and particularly the impact of the film industry and its stars on the developing Italian fashion scene. Projected onto walls on either side of the room were a montage of film shorts and photographs of Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, and Anita Ekberg. This period is credited with the birth of the paparazzi. It was easy to see why in these fast-paced, buzzy trailers. Both *Roman Holiday* (1953) and, a decade later, *Cleopatra* (1963) were shot in Rome's Cinecittà studios; their high profile stars Audrey Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor were frequently photographed in Italian fashion during this period. Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960) was perhaps the most iconic film for portraying twentieth-century Italian glamour, popularising the Italian suit wardrobe as well as the more overtly sexy look of Ekberg, particularly in the much copied Gattinoni black strapless gown worn for the famous scene at the Trevi fountain. These films and the paparazzi shots of the stars 'off duty' wearing Italian fashion made the rest of the world sit up and take note. It is now part of fashion folklore that the shoe designer Salvatore Ferragamo famously organised paparazzi to photograph Elizabeth Taylor when she shopped in his store.

The 'Hollywood' display continued with Valentino and his signature Valentino 'red' which encapsulated the 1960s and 1970s in Italian fashion and popular culture: styles at once exciting, passionate, and fun (Image 3). The same is true for the pink palazzo pyjamas, designed by Princess Irene Galitzine (1963). For me, the slim pants and boxy tunic with emerald coloured beads and gold braid necklace embellishment are the ultimate in laid-back glamour, relaxed without being self-consciously so. Jacqueline Kennedy was said to have worn

Galitzine's palazzo pyjamas for informal entertaining. If Kennedy, the ultimate American fashion icon, had adopted the style, it was a sure sign that Italy's designers had made their mark on Western fashionable society.

Image 3: Installation Image of *The Glamour of Italian Fashion 1945-2014*.
Photo © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

As the exhibition moved on to the 1970s, the economic power of Italian fashion at this time becomes evident. The Italian government's decade long Made in Italy campaign championed not only Italian fashion but also cinema, art, food, tourism, and design. There was an energy in the pieces in this room, a youthfulness and dynamism that was provided by the influx of exciting brands flourishing during the 1970s which capitalised upon Italy's textile production industry. I was excited to see pieces by Krizia, Benetton, Missoni, and Biagiotti, amongst others.

The exhibition demonstrated eloquently that by the 1980s Italian fashion was firmly established. (Giorgio Armani, king of the 1980s suit, graced the cover of *Time* magazine in 1982.) Italian had become a by-word for luxury and quality, particularly in textiles and leather goods. The exhibition highlighted the work of Gucci, Roberto Cavalli, and Versace in their experimental uses of leather and suede in the 1980s as well as Bottega Veneta's distinctive 'intrecciato' woven design, recognisable (without a logo) only to those in the know.

Max Mara was a great example of ready-to-wear success from this period. The emphasis of the brand was on quality materials, and a camel coat became a company classic in the early 1980s. The editorial image displayed alongside the garment from the *Vogue Italia* October 1982 issue shows a quintessential 1980s business woman: rushing to work, wearing the camel coat, sunglasses, handbag on shoulder, classic coffee and pastry in hand. The coat is as classic as espresso.

Many of us still want our luxury fashion items to be made in Italy. The provenance reassures us that our money is well spent. In a more immediate way than the luxurious fashions from the past, the final room celebrated contemporary Italian fashion in which we can invest now. This space felt different from the rest of the exhibition, more futuristic and with a vaulted ceiling, organ music, and a film screen that resembled the elongated shape of a church window, creating an atmosphere that can only be described as a space for worship. If there were a fashion priestess in the room, she would have been wearing the Valentino Autumn/Winter 2013-2014 gold lace cassock shaped gown, featuring panels of mythical creatures. Valentino's current creative directors Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli have firmly established themselves and the design house in the most contemporary couture arena.

There was a single wall dedicated to fashion imagery. The images were difficult to see in the dimly lit room, and the few displayed there felt like an afterthought. I would have liked this aspect of the exhibition to have been more substantial, given that Italian fashion media is so important in the concept that this exhibition explores. *Vogue Italia* is known for being one of the more innovative and daring *Vogue* magazines in terms of editorial imagery. Brands such as Versace, Prada, and Gucci have provided some of the memorably glamorous fashion images of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Benetton also springs to mind as having a huge legacy in terms of advertising imagery, though perhaps not necessarily in terms of 'glamour.'

The exhibition closed on a serious and somewhat sombre note: a documentary film screened in the final room in which prominent persons from within the Italian fashion industry talked frankly about what the Made in Italy label meant to them. This series of interviews with established figures such as Franca Sozzani and Angela Missoni, as well as some younger designers like Fausto Puglisi, Maria Grazia Chiuri, and Pierpaolo Piccioli, offered a poignant opportunity for reflection after visitors had revelled in this celebration of one of Italy's most important industries and exports. In drawing attention to the sometimes tough reality of sustaining a fashion label, it was a reminder that the fashion industry is not just about glamour, it is also about people and their skill, vision, and hard work, the outcomes of which play a vital role in shaping our cultural identity.

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William Klein

FOAM, Amsterdam
29 December 2013 – 12 March 2014
Catalogue: *William Klein: FOAM Magazine 37*
Marloes Krijinen, ed.
Amsterdam: FOAM Amsterdam, 2013,
220 pages, €19.50, illustrated
ISBN: 978-9070516321

In the opening scene of the photographer and filmmaker William Klein's first feature film *Who Are You, Polly Magoo?* (1966), an unnamed designer presents an avant-garde

collection consisting of sheets of metal contorted and cut into geometrical shapes that are then bolted onto the models just prior to the runway walk. The models complain and one is even injured by the sharp edges of her garment. As the first model appears on the catwalk, the crowd is silent and seems uncertain about how to react to these decidedly unconventional designs. Then, a fashion editor exclaims 'Magnificent!,' which prompts the others to echo her approval and applaud while a pseudo-ecclesiastical non-diegetic score completes the scene. The fashion editor joins the male designer after the show's conclusion and compliments him, saying that he has recreated the contemporary woman. Bystander accolades follow and the designer, flanked by the eponymous American model, explains that he seeks to dress the woman of the nuclear age. The scene ends with a playful, New Wave-like freeze frame and an iris-in edit.

A clip of this famous scene was included in the final section of the Amsterdam photography museum FOAM's recent retrospective of the photography, art, and film of the innovative William Klein. In many respects, this scene effectively framed the exhibited works and the themes that ran throughout this retrospective. On the one hand, particularly for the twenty-first century viewer who has come to expect the medium of fashion to challenge the boundaries of sartorial conventions, the scene portrays the artist as a visionary who is able to see beyond the banal dictates of reality. On the other hand, the scene satirises the reality of the fashion industry as a fundamentally superficial cultural endeavour. Throughout this film as well as throughout the Klein retrospective, the same sort of commentary on the tension between the harshly realistic and the unapologetically imagined was asserted and developed in the work of this iconoclastic artist.

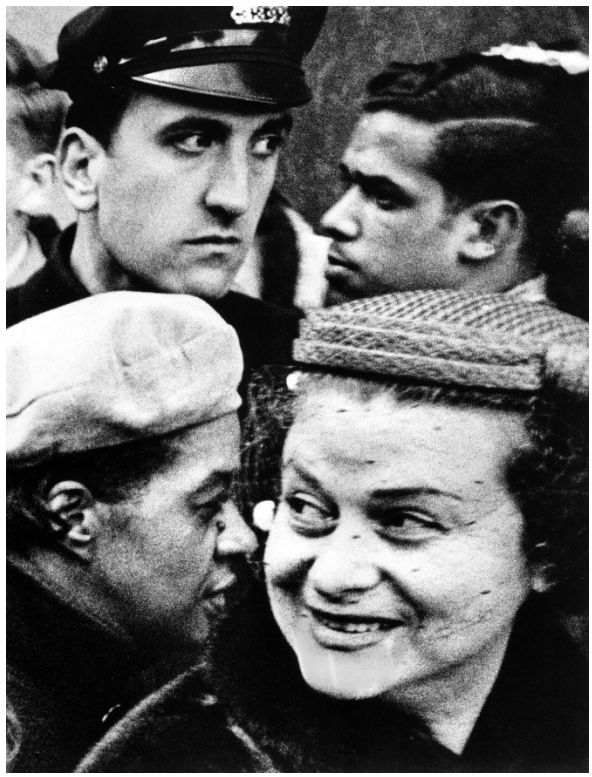

Image 1: *4 heads*, New York, 1955 © William Klein, courtesy FOAM, Amsterdam

For the William Klein retrospective, which ran 20 December 2013 – 12 March 2014, FOAM's entire gallery space was exceptionally devoted to the works of this legendary artist. In chronological order, the earliest works in the exhibition were examples of Klein's abstract photography (1952-1954) which he pursued following the completion of his military service in the Second World War. During this time, Klein definitively moved to Paris, studied art at the Sorbonne, and ultimately worked in the studio of one of his great influences, the artist Fernand Léger. Some of Klein's impressive black-and-white images had appeared in the 1954 Salon des Réalités Nouvelles (Salon of New Realities) exhibition. In a rather brusque transition from the graceful lines of his abstract photographs, the exhibition then moved to several series of rooms in which images taken from Klein's photography books concentrated on specific cities: New York (1954-1955), Rome (1956), Moscow (1959-1961), Tokyo (1961), and the world premiere of his most recent photos of Brooklyn (2013). The New York room, taken from the powerful and controversial book *Life is Good for You in New York: Trance Witness Revels* (1959), additionally featured the short film *Broadway by Night* (1958) and was the most striking and impressive of the city studies included in the retrospective. From these ostensibly realist photographs, one moved to the room devoted to Klein's fashion photographs, created during his association with *Vogue* (1955-1965). The editor Alexander Liberman had seen some of Klein's abstract photographs and invited him to contribute regularly to the influential fashion magazine, the results being just as groundbreaking and controversial as his city studies had been. The next section of the exhibition displayed examples of Klein's mixed media from the late 1990s and early 2000s. These works consisted of contact photographic prints (some of previous, well known urban and fashions images) on which Klein had painted abstract shapes and graffiti-like splashes. The exhibition concluded in FOAM's library space with a video program that included clips from his feature films *Who Are You, Polly Magoo?* (1966) and *Mr. Freedom* (1968) as well as his documentaries like *Grands soirs, petits matins* (*Big Nights, Little Mornings*, 1968) dealing with the May uprising in France, *Loin de Vietnam* (*Far From Vietnam*, 1967), and *Muhammad Ali: The Greatest* (1969), among others.

In the annals of twentieth-century photography, as the FOAM retrospective effectively illustrated, William Klein is difficult to categorise because he was a groundbreaker in two seemingly divergent realms in the medium: street photography and fashion photography. Following Klein's overtly modernist flirtation with abstract photography (in this respect, recalling the photograms of the 1920s and 1930s by artists like Man Ray, Christian Schad, and László Moholy-Nagy), his aesthetic radically changed in the New York photographs, becoming unabashedly and brutally realist. While Klein's street photography was often compared to that of Robert Frank's in works like his photobook *The Americans* (1959), but also bringing to mind photographers like Henri Cartier-Bresson and Weegee, his brand of realism is at once gritty, chaotic, and mordant, verging on the vulgar and the grotesque as can be seen in *4 heads* from 1955 (Image 1). It is notable, however, that the realist aesthetic of these city images is rendered by an evident manipulation of the medium in terms of the use of wide angle lenses, blurred focus, canted angling, radical cropping, and so forth. Although none of Klein's later work in advertising was included in the FOAM exhibition, his interest in that medium is evident in the New York photos as advertising signs, sometimes positioned as ironic commentaries on the human subjects, loom prominently in the backgrounds of these images. As documents of the contemporary human condition, Klein's New York images certainly demystify the places that they depict, fundamentally challenging the ideologies behind many self-representational strategies of 1950s America. It is, therefore, not surprising that Klein had trouble finding an American publisher for his groundbreaking yet shocking New York photobook, ultimately publishing it in 1959 with Éditions Seuil in France.

In marked contrast to the harsh and stark world of Klein's photographic cityscapes, his fashion photography is much more elaborately composed, explicitly theatrical, and ironically playful. Klein most often placed his models in real settings, but the city as represented in these photographs is a different place in aesthetic and existential terms when compared to the world of his street photography. The photograph *Simone + Nina, Piazza di Spagna*, which had appeared in the April 1960 issue of *Vogue* and was a highlight of the retrospective's room of fashion photographs, effectively illustrates a number of salient methods and themes that characterise Klein's approach to fashion photography (Image 2). Two models, both smartly dressed in black and white striped Roberto Capucci dresses, pass each other on a pedestrian crosswalk. While the dresses of the two fashionably attired women are alternately dominated by black and white, the models are similarly styled with hats, gloves, and earrings. Not only do the two women seemingly reflect each other in their dresses and styling, but the stripes of their dresses are also graphically echoed by the geometric shapes painted on the pavement, an effect intensified by a flattened-out perspective rendered by the use of a long camera focal length. On the curb, the severely cropped heads of waiting pedestrians frame the image as though they are a theatre audience watching a mini-drama unfold. The woman in white has stopped and turned to look at the woman in black who, nonplussed, continues on her way without the slightest acknowledgement of the attention she is receiving from the other woman or the onlookers to this scene. Fashion, Klein conveys here as elsewhere in his *Vogue* photographs, is a world of performance and a self-absorbed one at that. Nonetheless, this sort of performativity and artifice is just as real as the urban imagery of his photobooks. They can transpire in the same spaces at the same times, despite the very different meanings they may convey for their participants or viewers. A similar sort of ironic layering of images runs throughout Klein's fashion photography, making a statement just as much about the fashion system as it is does about the representation of fashionable clothes.

In the history of fashion photography, the 1950s constituted a period in which prevailing aesthetics shifted away from seemingly unmediated images of beautiful people wearing beautiful clothes. Photographers like Richard Avedon, Irving Penn, Norman Parkinson, among others, immediately come to mind when we think of this evolution. The fashion photography of William Klein, as demonstrated by FOAM's impressive retrospective, fully participates in this general tendency. Just as Klein's New York images from the same period seek to demystify the romanticised iconography of that city in the American popular imagination, so too does his fashion photography provide a similar type of approach to fashion as a system of meaning and as an industry. It is true that critics and historians have been hard pressed to reconcile Klein's differing aesthetic agendas and firmly place him in the centre of this group of luminaries in the realm of fashion photography. For his part, Klein has alluded to this situation in a number of interviews, categorising himself as an outsider who, as a self-taught artist and photographer, had no real knowledge or respect for technique. In this fashion, Klein's photography, art, and filmmaking link him to the high modernist tradition with its insistence on a strong, oppositional authorial presence, resulting in works that challenge and reject at every turn the conventions and presuppositions of the medium in question. In the most provocative and surprising ways, William Klein's work makes us reconsider what fashion and art are in the world and what they may mean.

Image 2: *Simone + Nina, Piazza di Spagna,* Rome, 1960 (*Vogue*)
© William Klein, courtesy FOAM, Amsterdam

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Club to Catwalk: London Fashion in the 1980s

The Victoria and Albert Museum
10 July 2013 – 6 February 2014
Catalogue: ***80s Fashion: From Club to Catwalk***
Sonnet Stanfill, ed.
London, V&A Publishing, 2013,
112 pages, £19.99, illustrated
ISBN: 9781851777259

The *Club to Catwalk: London Fashion in the 1980s* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum focused on how the 1980s British fashion scene was populated by a new wave of cultural expressionists whose heady passion for club music, dance, fashion, and design inspired their unorthodox street style. The exhibition title implied a chronological presentation between two interconnecting narratives, and the opening text panel of the exhibition stated:

> London's unique fashion identity in the 1980s was a result of the fusion between club and catwalk. The risk-taking, young makers behind that new style remain some of the most influential figures in fashion today.

In actuality, the exhibition was split into two distinct parts and psychically separated, with the Catwalk section housed on the ground floor of the gallery, and the Club narrative displayed on the airy mezzanine level upstairs. This spatial separation served as a conceptual divide and created the impression for the audience of two smaller exhibitions with club and catwalk treated largely as two independent narratives. Curated by Claire Wilcox and the expert consultant Wendy Dagworthy, both sections, however, excelled in selecting key pieces by the bold designers of the day, pieces that succeeded in transmitting to contemporary audiences the original excitement and creativity of a young British fashion pack starting to find its shape, form, and definition in the world.

The Catwalk section was interpreted as official catwalk presentations and the unofficial catwalk of the street, and displayed how designers' offerings were represented editorially in newly established street style magazines. It had an outer wall of traditional glass presentation cases running around the outside, and within the centre of the space visitors were directed in an anti-clockwise direction. Presentation cases were organised according to key designers, moods, or themes.

The opening case showed an ensemble comprising a witty orange inflatable plastic rain jacket with ears and a tail by Michiko Koshino (c. 1985-1987), styled with three-tongued trainers by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood from the 'Witches Collection' (Autumn/Winter 1983-1984). The mood of this outfit was one of sartorial liberation, youthful exuberance, and British street culture, as depicted in the text panel:

> London's thriving fashion scene attracted designers from all over the world. Japan-born Michiko Koshino opened her store in Covent Garden in 1981, selling street and biker inspired wear. With a resident DJ and mixing tables, it felt more like a nightclub than a clothes shop.

Display cases were dedicated to English Eccentrics designers such as Wendy Dagworthy (expert consultant for the exhibition), John Galliano, Willy Brown, and Chrissie Walsh. A notable case was dedicated to Katharine Hamnett, whose political slogan T-shirts were on

display, including a long-sleeved one stating ‘Thatcher Out’ (Image 1). The accompanying text panel presented Hamnett’s agenda.

Image 1: Silk T-shirt, designed by Katherine Hammett, 1984.

> We wanted to give people a voice. That was what my campaigning T-shirts were about. I thought that if I put my feelings on a T-shirt, that would be a way of getting my voice across.

This quote nicely contradicted the primary text panel at the beginning of the exhibition.

> British government actively promoted the industry. Fashion found a surprising ally in Margaret Thatcher, who declared, “Fashion is important because it raises the quality of life when people take the trouble to dress well, and it also provides employment for many, many people.”

The presence of Hamnett’s T-shirts reinforced her position in the 1980s as an individual young designer who found her social voice through the official and unofficial catwalk and went on to be an outspoken, democratic, and prominent member of the fashion elite.

Presentation cases dedicated to moods and themes included ‘Knitwear’ and ‘Tradition and Subversion.’ The second of these cases featured a collection of ensembles by a range of designers such as Joe Casely-Hayward and John Richmond, and were styled with accessories

such as Wayfarer sunglasses by Ray Ban (1980s), black suede shoes with bronze buckles by Patrick Cox, and copies of *The Face* style magazine from December 1982 and September 1985.

A major coup for the exhibition and one of the strongest cases showing the Club and Catwalk themes was devoted to the magazine *Blitz*. A monthly style magazine established in 1980 by Carey Labovitch and Stephen Tesler, *Blitz* covered fashion, pop culture, and media, and its innovative, exuberantly styled editorial spreads were legendary. On a text panel, the magazine's fashion editor Iain R. Webb explained its agenda: 'The pages of *Blitz* were intended to inspire readers to experiment with fashion rather than go shopping.' The presentation case showed some of the jackets produced as a result of an editorial brief that Webb set in 1986 for twenty-two ferociously talented designers to freely customise a Levi Strauss & Co. denim jacket. Jacques Azagury, Stephen Linard, Vivienne Westwood, and Leigh Bowery, amongst others, were included and of those jackets displayed in the exhibition, the DIY ethos was apparent. Zandra Rhodes's jacket (a remade version, the original was sold at auction) had a rich embellished treatment with the denim distressed and bleached and decorated with silk embroidery, machine stitching, plastic, mirror plates, and fabric paint. Alongside this case, was a screen showing lively archive film footage from The Prince's Trust auction in 1986, which featured the *Blitz* denim jackets being modelled on stage by the fashion model Marie Helvin, the singer Boy George, and the performance artist/designer Leigh Bowery, amongst others. This provided evidence of fashion as theatre, spectacle, and entertainment, as the actor Daniel Day-Lewis read poetry on stage and Leigh Bowery wore his own design – a jacket festooned with hundreds of gold safety pins – doing a mock fall to the audience's delight. The dynamism of this unique catwalk event was evident in the film footage and provided captivating evidence of the creative talent, freedom of expression, and hybrid nature of Britain's young cultural club, fashion, and music figures.

Upstairs from the Club floor, the space opened up with the high-domed ceiling of the gallery, and the circular mezzanine floor provided a dramatic platform for the club clothes (Image 2). The setting was ambient and inviting, encouraging the audience to walk freely around the floor. The dressed mannequins stood on open display black podiums edged with fluorescent neon electromagnetic strips. Red and white colour washes lit up the ensembles from above and below. The opening text panel introduced the narrative.

> The '80s saw the explosion of the London club scene. Specialist club "nights" offered opportunities for dressing up in the company of a like-minded crowd. Stevie Stewart explained that "each group of people, whether they were fashion designers, musicians or dancers, filmmakers living together and going out together, had a passion for creating something new that was almost infectious."

This symbiotic work/play relationship reminds the visitor of John Galliano's words in the Catwalk section, 'Thursday and Friday at St. Martins, the college was almost deserted. Everybody was at home working on their costumes for the weekend.' The Club section posited that the infamous London clubs provoked experimental ways of self-expression and cultish tribal behaviour, and that the resulting creative freedom helped to gain worldwide attention for designers such as Leigh Bowery, Vivienne Westwood, and Betty Jackson.

Image 2: Installation Image of *From Club to Catwalk: London Fashion in the 1980s.* © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The offerings in this section were again organised by key moods, themes, and designers influential in the 1980s club, music, and fashion scenes. A group of mannequins was dedicated to 'Body Map,' the fashion label founded by Stevie Stewart and David Holah in 1982. The mannequins displayed ensembles of form-fitting knits, stretch jersey layers, and textile prints by Hilde Smith from the Autumn/Winter 1984-1985 collection 'Cat in the Hat takes a Rumble with a Techno-Fish,' revealing a design aesthetic that was informed by both street fashion and club music.

The 'Hard Times' group and 'Customized' group of the Club section showcased the sense of enterprise and creativity involved in the making and working of a 'look.' As indicated by Galliano, the desire to dress for pleasure, excess, and partying revolutionised the club audience and created fearless and spontaneous ways of dressing. The stylist Simon Foxton's words on a text panel claimed: 'We all saw ourselves as suitably alternative.' This accompanied a mannequin dressed in a customised MA-1 jacket from the 1980s. A quote from *i-D* magazine summed up how to imbue a garment with kudos: '[when] garments like denim and MA-1 flying jackets became too popular, an artistic burst of customising soon turns them from a uniform back into a unique outfit.'

The 'Glam Fetish' section was one of the more glorious displays in the Club portion of the exhibition. The mannequins were styled in brightly coloured, fantastical ensembles, many of them original pieces from the 1980s. A particularly distinctive example was the gold ensemble (lent to the V&A by the designer Stephen Linard) comprising a gold leather jacket with large wing collar, long tassels that fell from the shoulders to the crotch, skull motifs stamped into gold buttons, a gold belt with metal studs and a paste jewel clasp, matched with matching gold leather trousers. The outfit was styled with black cowboy boots with white stitching and paste jewels that adorned the silver metal toecaps (unknown make, 1980s). Beside the mannequin was a text plate featuring an image of the front cover of the September 1986 issue of *The Face* magazine, with the title 'Hell's Angels, British Menswear Takes Flight.' The model wore Linard's jacket with added gold wings and costume jewellery, resembling a modern day Icarus. This was a powerful illustration how events in the clubs and the personal styling aesthetics of individuals would reach the public through the editorial medium of 1980s street style magazines.

At the rear of the exhibition, a neon 'Blitz' sign hung on a wall referencing the 1980s nightclub of the same name. Behind a short darkened tunnel, there were multiple screens showing a thirteen-minute short film featuring evocative scenes from club culture. The footage had been commissioned for the exhibition and compiled by the London-born DJ, visual artist

and producer Jeremy Hinton. Drawn from his original archival footage shot in the 1980s in London's most famous nightclubs (Taboo, Circus, Asylum, and Cha Cha), it offered an insight into the exotic and intoxicating adrenaline-fuelled club scene with its famous, infamous, and anonymous characters.

Altogether, the mezzanine floor of the exhibition showed how the explosion of a vibrant club scene was informed by talented, experimental, and resourceful designers who went on to become influential in the worlds of fashion, music, and wider culture.

To treat *Club to Catwalk: London Fashion in the 1980s* as an exhibition with two halves is to enjoy the best of both narratives – Club and Catwalk. A more unified exhibition space might have strengthened connections between the two themes and allowed a consistency in the presentational approach and audience experience. If a dedicated, suitable, and permanent fashion gallery space opens in the V&A in the future as proposed, it will surely help in enabling a more unified and multi-modal exhibition experience.

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Current and Forthcoming Exhibitions

Georgians: Dress for Polite Society

(The Fashion Museum, Bath, 25 January 2014 – 1 January 2015)

© Courtesy Fashion Museum, Bath & North East Somerset Council, UK

The Georgian period in English history is famous for its opulence and its social rituals of propriety, gallantry, and politeness. This exhibition, situated in the Georgian Assembly Rooms at Bath, conveys those values through original examples of men's and women's fashions from this portion of the eighteenth century. The highlight of the exhibit is a trio of women's wide-skirted *panniers* dating from the 1750s and 1760s. As an epilogue to the exhibition's display of over thirty original eighteenth-century ensembles and outfits, this show also includes recent fashions inspired by the Georgian period and created by contemporary designers like Anna Sui, Vivienne Westwood, Alexander McQueen, and Stephen Jones, among others.

Dress Codes: Revealing the Jewish Wardrobe

(The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 11 March 2014 – 25 October 2014)

In *Dress Codes: Revealing the Jewish Wardrobe*, the curator Efrat Asaf Shapira has chosen examples of nineteenth- and twentieth-century garments from around the world to illustrate the diversity yet coherence of Jewish clothing in the modern period. Including dresses, suits, wedding outfits, undergarments, and children's clothing, this exhibition offers a multi-dimensional perspective on the significance of Jewish dress in different cultures of the world as well as an insight into the ongoing influence of those styles in contemporary fashion trends.

Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love

(Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 27 April 2014 – 20 November 2014)

This retrospective about Patrick Kelly, the African-American designer, showcases his bold and often playful designs which attracted a great deal of attention in the fashion world in the late 1980s. Before his untimely death in 1990, at thirty-five, Kelly produced collections for five years in Paris that incorporated bright colours, striking forms, and whimsical embellishments. Inspired by the culture of the Deep South where he grew up, Jazz Age fashions as well as by important designers like Madame Grès and Elsa Schiaparelli, Kelly's creations ultimately constituted ironically subversive statements about fashion and race in late twentieth-century culture.

'Woman's Ensemble: Jumpsuit and Apron,' Fall/Winter 1987. Patrick Kelly. Promised gift of Bjorn Guil Amelan and Bill T. Jones © photo courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art

Wedding Dresses: 1775 - 2014

(Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 3 May 2014 –15 March 2015)

In the past two and a half centuries, the white wedding dress has become an important specialised garment in Western fashion, regardless of the socio-economic position of its wearer. In the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition, the history of the wedding dress (along with other bridal accessories) is explored with examples from such preeminent designers in the history of fashion like Charles Frederick Worth, Norman Hartnell, Charles James, Christian Lacroix, Vera Wang, and Vivienne Westwood, among many others. From its most traditional articulations to more recent departures from these conventions, the history of the wedding dress as demonstrated in this exhibition constitutes a cultural narrative that reveals significant shifts

in social institutions like marriage and religion as well as changes in individual preferences in matters taste and style.

Exposed: A History of Lingerie

(The Museum at FIT, New York City, 3 June 2014 – 15 November 2014)

With over sixty examples taken from the museum's permanent collection, this exhibition traces the history of women's intimate apparel over the past two hundred years. The selected objects represent the evolution of the woman's silhouette during this period, technological changes in the fabrication of lingerie, and the transformation of notions of propriety that have affected the form and visibility of the undergarment. *Exposed: The History of Lingerie* brings to light the extraordinary craftsmanship and luxuriousness that have often gone into the creation of these ostensibly intimate garments.

Fashion Victims: The Pleasure and Peril of Dress in the 19th Century

(Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto, 18 June 2014 – 1 June 2016)

This fascinating exhibition looks at the darker side of nineteenth-century Western dress as it examines the dangers of certain types of fashion worn by men and women. From constricting corsets and impossibly narrow footwear to toxic dyes and highly flammable materials, this exhibition retraces the real perils inherent in the creation and consumption of fashionable dress in a period when dressing elegantly was an important social practice for the dominant and rising classes.

Kimono for a Modern Age, 1900-1960

(Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, 5 July 2014 – 19 October 2014)

Kimono for a Modern Age, 1900-1960 examines the recent history of the Japanese garment during the Meiji (1868–1912), Taishō (1912–1926) and Shōwa (1926–1989) periods. The kimono has evolved from a traditional article of clothing to a more contemporary one that reflects industrial advancements (new, bright synthetic dyes, new modes of textile production) as well as new aesthetic influences (twentieth-century Western art movements, space exploration, etc.). As this exhibition demonstrates, much like Japan itself during the same period, the kimono has been characterised by a mix of traditional and modern elements in both its construction and use, becoming a globally created and worn garment.

Hollywood Glamour: Fashion and Jewelry from the Silver Screen

(Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 9 September 2014 – 8 March 2015)

Hollywood film of the 1930s and 1940s is generally regarded as the most glamorous period of its history. *Hollywood Glamour: Fashion and Jewelry from the Silver Screen* presents the elegant clothes and luxurious accessories from this period worn on and off screen by some of the medium's most glamorous female stars like Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, Marlene Dietrich, and Anna May Wong. With dramatic costumes by famous designers like Chanel, Adrian, and

Travis Banton, and sumptuous accessories by jewellers like Paul Flato and Trabert & Hoeffer-Mauboussin, this exhibition delineates the characteristics of a style whose allure remains an influential presence on the catwalks and the red carpets of today.

Killer Heels: The Art of the High-Heeled Shoe

(Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, 10 September 2014 – 15 February 2015)

The high-heeled shoe, from sixteenth-century Italian chopines to contemporary stilettos, has occupied a particular place in the popular imagination. *Killer Heels: The Art of the High-Heeled Shoe* explores the history and significance of this highly fetishised accessory of a woman's wardrobe. With examples from such noted shoe designers like Manolo Blahnik, Salvatore Ferragamo, Pietro Yantorny, André Perugia, and Christian Louboutin, among many others, this exhibition examines how high-heeled shoes can be, for the creator and the wearer, a fashion statement, an artistic expression, and a reflection of individual identity. Also included in this exhibition are six specially commissioned short films inspired by high heels.

Halston and Warhol: Silver and Suede

(Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, 18 September 2014 – 18 January 2015)

The travelling exhibition *Halston and Warhol: Silver and Suede* explores the personal friendship and the interrelationships between the works of two of twentieth-century America's most creative and provocative minds. The exhibition, which includes paintings, works on paper, clothes, and ephemera by both Halston and Warhol, highlights each artist's interest in celebrity culture, the role of modern design in contemporary life, and changing notions of beauty.

Die Krawatte. männer macht mode

(*The Tie: Men, Power, Fashion*,
Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum,
Landesmuseum Zurich, Zurich, 19 September 20141 – 8 January 2015)

From the seventeenth century to the present, the necktie in its various forms and styles has been a male and female accessory that reveals a great deal about its wearer's social position, identity, and sense of style. This exhibition, organised by Anna Lisa Galizia of the Swiss National Museum in Zurich, considers the different historical styles of neckties (for example, the Steinkirk, the short tie, the cravat. the Jabot, the Lavallière) and explores the social and cultural significance of this accessory in a variety of disciplines and periods. In addition to actual ties, this exhibition includes drawings, sketches, pattern books, fabric samples, literary texts, photographs, and film clips to illustrate the rich and varied history of the necktie.

Nadine Strittmatter, 2014, from the exhibition's series of portraits. © Photograph: Walter Pfeiffer.

Le Bouton et la mode

(The Button and Fashion, Le Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 25 September 2014 – 1 March 2015)

Based on a large collection recently acquired by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, *Le Bouton et la mode* examines the function and history of the button from the eighteenth century to the present. This exhibition includes examples of the work of artists who collaborated with fashion designers (for example, Jean Arp and Alberto Giacometti with Elsa Schiaparelli) along with buttons made by those who worked exclusively in the creation of this type of accessory. As this exhibition demonstrates, the button, whose styles have evolved in concert with the fashions of one period or another, can be a subtle aesthetic statement that goes far beyond its functionality as a fastener of clothing.

Death Becomes Her: A Century of Mourning Attire

(Anna Wintour Costume Center, the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 21 October 2014 – 1 February 2015)

In the nineteenth century, as the complicated etiquette of mourning extended from Europe's royal families to all classes in Western society, a subgenre of women's apparel quickly developed to accommodate the dictates of the social practices associated with it. The Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition *Death Becomes Her: A Century of Mourning Attire* examines the styles, silhouettes, fabrics, and accessories employed in the sartorial rituals of bereavement from 1815 to 1915. The evolution of Victorian and Edwardian mourning attire illustrates the constant negotiation in the creation and wearing of these clothes between the fulfilment of rigid social requirements and the desire to be fashionable.

'Mourning Ensemble,' 1870-1872, © photo courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fashion Icons: From the Collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs

(Art Gallery of South Australia, Sydney, 25 October 2014 – 1 February 2015)

The Art Gallery of South Australia in collaboration with Paris' Musée des Arts Décoratifs presents in this exhibition a comprehensive look at Parisian haute couture since 1947 when Christian Dior reenergised the industry with his New Look. From the lavishness of the 1950s French fashion to the minimalism of the 1990s and the hybrid styles of the twentieth-first century, the curator Pamela Golbin has chosen more than one hundred emblematic garments

created by some of the most mythic designers in fashion history to illustrate the variety and richness of Parisian haute couture in the contemporary period.

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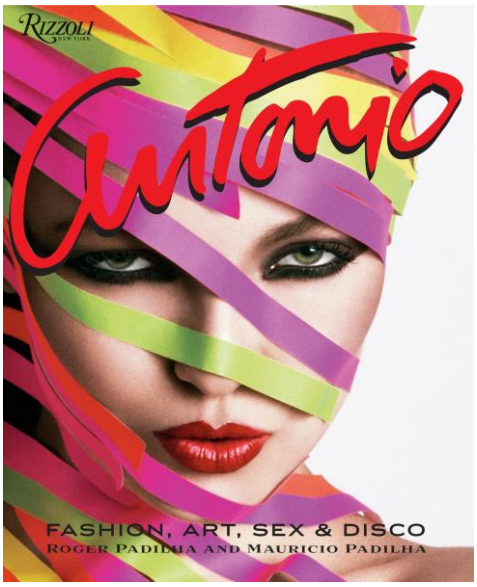
ISSN: 2045-2349

Book Reviews

Antonio Lopez: Fashion, Art, Sex & Disco

Roger Padilha and Mauricio Padilha
Foreword by André Leon Talley; epilogue by Anna Sui
New York: Rizzoli, 2012,
304 pages, $65.00, illustrated
ISBN: 978-0847837922



Courtesy Rizzoli © 2012

Roger Padilha and his brother Mauricio may already be familiar to some readers of this journal as the New York-based fashion publicists, creators of the fashion public relations agency MAO PR, and as the authors of *The Stephen Sprouse Book* (Rizzoli, 2009). *Antonio Lopez: Fashion, Art, Sex & Disco*, their second book, is an introduction to American fashion illustrator and artist Antonio Lopez (1943-1987), the circles he frequented, and the *la vie est bonne* atmospherics surrounding him. The Padilha brothers have signed on noted fashion designer Anna Sui for an epilogue where she reminds us how Lopez in a few strokes could capture his models' essence, always making them more beautiful than nature could have. Concerning Lopez's multifarious activities besides fashion illustration, Sui remarks that she loves the fact that one person was able to do all this. Nonetheless, *Antonio Lopez* only scratches the surface. For the full particulars on Lopez's life and work, one really needs to consult his own *Antonio's Girls* (1992), Juan Eugene Ramos' *Antonio 60, 70, 80* (1995), and Paul Caranicas' *Antonio's People* (2004), along with Lopez's *Instamatics: Antonio Lopez* (2011), which showcases Lopez as a photographer, and Alicia Drake's *The Beautiful Fall* (2006) which treats Lopez in the context of 1970s Paris and his collaboration with Karl Lagerfeld. *Antonio Lopez* includes them in a short listing of its sources. All of these books been consulted for this review.

Following an introduction to artist-prodigy Lopez's early years and education, *Antonio Lopez* is divided chronologically into three main sections, each of which is further subdivided into three chapters. The first section looks at Lopez's quickly bourgeoning career in the 1960s, and then focuses on his artistic response to the Mod look, the beats, the hippies, and psychedelia. The focus in the second section is on Paris, Club Sept, and Lagerfeld in the 1970s. The third section covers the 1980s and is devoted to New York, fame, and Lopez in the shadow of death from complications related to AIDS. Women (as well as some men) abound throughout. As a sort of bonus track, *Antonio Lopez* has selections from a diary that Lopez kept in 1978 as a visual record of his and Juan Ramos' days and nights in the city. These pages are

both psychologically and visually arresting for their self-conscious documentation of the by then well-known fashion illustrator as social animal.

Born in Puerto Rico on 11 February 1943, Lopez and his family moved to the Bronx, New York, when he was seven. *Antonio Lopez* touches on the mother's significance, but only just. Our other sources indicate that some of Lopez's deeper impulses – footwear fetishism for instance – originated with his seamstress mother. Lopez claimed that she was where he learned the gestures for his drawings – the feminine movement. Lopez's fellow Puerto Rican alumnus of FIT, Juan Ramos (1942-1995), co-creator of the ANTONIO trade name, was a consummate art director with a breadth of knowledge of art history as well as a deep understanding of the cultural and social movements of the day. Lopez openly admitted that Ramos' keen insights had often steered him in the right direction. A detail overlooked in *Antonio Lopez* is that Ramos was instrumental in promoting an active dialogue with academia, arranging for Lopez to give lectures and workshops over what would be the last ten years of his life.

Dispersed among reproductions of Lopez's drawings are photos of the artists, painters, musicians, models, journalists, and couturiers he had inspired and gained inspiration from. Together with photos of his frenetic recreational activities, it adds up to a whirlwind of impressions. While it seems that most of Lopez's discoveries leapt to the heights of fame and success, what is not so clear to the Padilhas – and they state as much – is just how directly Lopez may have been involved in each one's ascent. As a matter of fact, more than enough light has been shed on this by Lopez's own statements. Lopez made no secret of how he took the girls, introduced them, gave them a look, told them what to do, what not to do, made appointments with photographers, acting like an agent, and told them 'She's for you!' Interviews given by Lopez's former model-muses such as Jerry Hall and Grace Jones (which can be consulted in *Antonio's Girls*) give support to this pattern.

In 1964, Lopez introduced himself to Charles James (1906-1978). James, once considered America's first couturier, was by then in eclipse. Over the next five years, James and Lopez produced what some have regarded as perhaps Lopez's greatest contribution to the world of fashion: a visual record consisting of more than two hundred pastel drawings (now in the Chicago Historical Society) of James' many creations. The editor-at-large André Leon Talley has cursorily dealt with the Lopez-James collaboration in his foreword to *Antonio Lopez*, but the collaboration warrants a closer look. The fashion photographer Bill Cunningham has remarked that with James' transfiguration of the client, there was a Pygmalion-like reformation of the real body into a perfect Galatea. This might be compared to Lopez's re-creation of his model-muses, touched on above. Moreover, according to Cunningham, James was a link to many of the celebrated figures of the Belle Époque, with the wit to remember what he had experienced as a youth in London during the late Edwardian period and in Paris between the World Wars. Hence, James would have provided the disco era with a living link to that previous age. There was also the 'couturier-client marriage' aspired to by James, a necessary collaboration for invention, which, once again, can be likened to what Lopez sought with *his* model-clients. One is intrigued by the parallels, such as they are!

Commissioned by French *Elle* magazine in 1969 to sketch the Chloé collection, Lopez removed himself to Paris with Ramos, where they stayed for seven years. Lopez met Chloé's Karl Lagerfeld, who, according to Alicia Drake, recognised Antonio and Juan's immense creativity and saw in them an association that would enhance his position within the fashion universe. What would matter in the long run was that Lopez showed Lagerfeld a creative path of constant renewal which Lagerfeld then took up. *Antonio Lopez* emphasises that, when back in New York in 1975, meeting people in clubs like Studio 54 and socialising became an integral part of Lopez's life and art. While in Paris, Lopez had also clubbed and socialised as a member

of Lagerfeld's entourage of *Américains*. Perhaps this would have been a way for Lopez to break away from his role as illustrator being that of a strong, though silent *deus ex machina*.

Elements of Lopez's fashion illustration include a psychological dimension to the models depicted, a reportage feel, and the idea of an impossibly glamorous existence. There was an openly erotic quality to the illustrations, or as an admirer put it: 'You've made 'em hot.' To this, one should add his combinations of styles, and what critic Herbert Muschamp (1947-2007) once lauded as the melting-pot quality of Lopez's drawings. Lopez recalled that when he came to fashion illustration, it was very 'WASPy' and that he gave it a transfusion. Also noted in *Antonio Lopez* is the fact that Lopez originally had to contend with a disinclination to utilise models of colour in fashion drawings. Only outside of the States in Paris in the late 1960s could Lopez and Ramos use Puerto Rican and Black models without feeling the pressure of prejudice.

The fact that men found a place front and centre in Lopez's drawings and were treated as equals to their female counterparts is also brought to our attention in *Antonio Lopez*. Here, it is assumed that it was somehow inspired by his sexual preferences which included both men and women. What explains the changeover in the late 1970s and early 1980s to explicit eroticism and bondage? It may well be, as suggested in *Antonio Lopez*, that Lopez seemed to be testing the boundaries of his eminent position in the fashion industry by exploiting taboos that turned the fashion magazine reader into a sexual voyeur. But might it just boil down to queer spectatorship, a voyeurism à la Warhol?

Not much is revealed in *Antonio Lopez* as to Lopez's actual working methods. Equally unexplored is his relative placement within the field of fashion illustration with respect to such master *illustrateur*s as Eduardo Benito (1891-1981) and René Gruau (1909-2004). Sources other than *Antonio Lopez* tell us that the living model was crucial to Lopez's ability to glean ideas from prior art, for he did not work from books or other reproductions except as the initial inspiration for a style. For Lopez, it meant intuitively and critically appraising what ideal potentialities of attraction there might be in a particular woman, then turning his ideal into a drawing, almost a caricature, but with a view to extracting that which is intrinsically, attractively, or beautifully eye-catching. In other words, it meant caricaturing beauty, then refining the caricature, thus imbuing it with the quality of something or someone extremely desirable. *Antonio Lopez* characterises Lopez as expertly experimenting with so many different styles that it seems as if his work had been done by a team of a dozen illustrators instead of just one. The Padilhas are by no means the first to remark on such chameleonic qualities. All this stylistic shape-shifting must have been with some object in view, possibly in order to better locate and identify the beautiful. And we may well ask how it can be that Lopez captured the zeitgeist of the times, as *Antonio Lopez* claims, when the style of his drawing changed so frequently! Lopez's ability to create and work in infinite styles gave him the rare opportunity to design campaigns for several fashion houses at once, so it was also a shrewd business strategy.

Lopez's early work revealed a bent towards fine art. His mini-skirted, so-called 'Léger ladies' – quotations from cubist Fernand Léger (1881-1955) to which *Antonio Lopez* devotes several marvellous pages of imagery – are what come most immediately to mind. Under Ramos' tutelage, Lopez ran the gamut of art movements and their representative artists from the Renaissance (Cranach the Elder), the Baroque (Tiepolo), Romanticism (Goya), Neoclassicism (Ingres), Realism (Boldini, Sargent, Hopper), Surrealism (de Chirico, Dalí), and Expressionism (Schiele), to various forms of Pop (ranging from Lichtenstein to Tom of Finland). *Antonio Lopez* registers only some of it. A full listing of Lopez's artistic influences is available at the Smithsonian Latino Center's virtual exhibition reference link. Lopez's illustrations from the 1980s, seen as the most conceptual of his career, are presumed by the Padilhas to reflect an aging Lopez's growing disinterest in commercial fashion as he contemplated his legacy. This takes no account of testimony which reaches back to a 1968 interview wherein Lopez had already expressed a sincere wish to be a painter-artist, working outside of commercial fashion.

The Italian fashion editor Anna Piaggi (1931-2012) would reconfirm many years later how Lopez wanted to shake off that image of commercial artist and only paint. It was a wish he tried to fulfil in 1981-1983 when collaborating with her on the avant-garde Milan-based Condé-Nast publication *Vanity*. There are positive indications of Lopez *never* having been fully satisfied with his role as a talented fashion draftsman.

The aim of this book, as Roger Padilha stated in an interview prior to its publication, is to introduce Lopez to a new generation. Does *Antonio Lopez* achieve its goal? In a most fundamental way, yes, insofar as its description of Antonio Lopez tallies with what is generally known about this highly talented, proficient artist and effervescent personality. With its visual smorgasbord of Lopez's art, *Antonio Lopez* cannot fail to attract a new, visually disposed twenty-first century audience. However, we do not gain much insight into Lopez's antecedents, inspirations, or techniques. We are given a fast-paced glimpse of Lopez's rambunctious social life and networking, but cannot discern how it cross-fertilised with his art. In short, *Antonio Lopez* functions best as an appetizer. Recalling the wholly inadequate way in which the crucial collaboration with Charles James was handled, we end up feeling slightly short-changed and disappointed at the Padilhas having thus passed up a prime opportunity to contribute with some further insights beyond what has already been said about this iconic figure.

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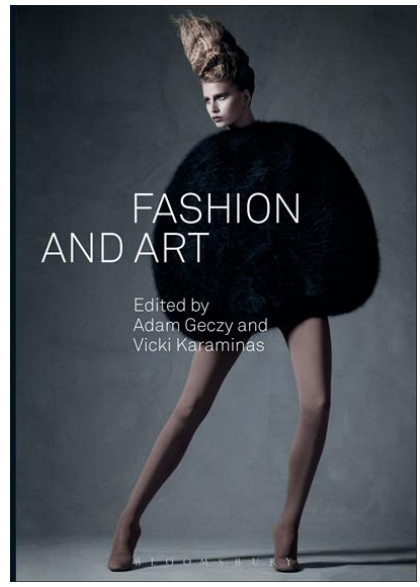
Fashion and Art

Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas, eds.
London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012,
224 pages, £27.99, illustrated with index
ISBN: 978-1847887832



© *Fashion and Art*, edited by Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas, Berg, 2012, by permission of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

In May 2011, The Metropolitan Museum of Art opened *Savage Beauty*, an exhibition of fashion designed by the recently deceased Alexander McQueen. The exhibition drew an unprecedented 650,000 visitors and generated widely publicised wait lines that trailed out of the building and stretched north along Fifth Avenue towards 86th Street. I was working in the Costume Institute at the time and enjoyed the enormous privilege of escorting friends and colleagues through the exhibition during rare moments of quiet before and after the museum was open to visitors. Time after time, my guests would parrot a revelation proposed by bloggers and journalists in their coverage of this powerful exhibition: 'Alexander McQueen wasn't *just* a fashion designer. He was an artist!' Intended as a compliment, this revelation privileged the cultural capital of Museum Mile over the commercial production of Fashion Avenue. As I ceaselessly harped to my guests, this bias undervalued McQueen's remarkable proficiency in his craft and his fluency in the traditions of garment construction to which the emotional power of his artistic vision was intrinsically tied.

Editors Adam Geczy, the art theorist, and Vicki Karaminas, the critical theory and cultural studies scholar, observe in the introduction to their compilation of critical essays, *Fashion and Art*, that the increasing prominence of fashion exhibitions in art spaces demands the development of a conscious discourse on the differences between the notion of fashion as the product of the fast-paced mass market and that of a rarefied commodity appropriate for display in a museum or an art gallery. The stated aim of *Fashion and Art* is to chart and analyse the complex interrelationships between the contemporary realms of art and fashion. Without *engaging* in the art and/or fashion debate, the selected essays examine its history, test its durability within existing theoretical structures, and acknowledge its contemporary manifestations – considering both its actors and audiences. Seventeen authors address sites of overlap in essays on Fashion, Art, Aesthetics, Modernity, Conceptual Fashion, Body, Beauty, Boundaries, Authenticity, Performance, Dressing Up, Clothing, Patronage, Painting, Image, Exhibition, and Curating.

The greatest strengths of this anthology are its volume and variety. Choosing an augmentative and supplementary approach rather than a revisionist one, Geczy and Karaminas present a broad range of perspectives intended to foster new possibilities for discussion. According to the editors' introduction, the individual authors in this collection establish that fashion and art function like basic coordinates in a varied, mobile, and complex aesthetic landscape. Without a legible framework of themes, however, the voices of the authors echo across the vast field of history, theory, and opinion into which the reader is dropped without a map. I determined my own organisational structure for the purpose of this review: the history of the artistic discourse, the history of the theoretical discourse, contemporary theoretical perspectives, actors and audiences, and curating.

1. The History of the Artistic Discourse

Three essays in the collection begin to establish the chronological evolution of the conventions and language that define fashion and art as separate entities engaging in dialogues of collaboration and opposition, rejection, and adoption.

The fashion historian and theorist Valerie Steele, in her essay 'Fashion,' begins with the nineteenth-century dressmaker Charles Frederick Worth, who donned an artist's beret and created the haute couture model. By asserting his own creative authority and authorship, Worth claimed the mantle of fine arts for fashion. In the early twentieth century, the designers Paul Poiret and Elsa Schiaparelli collaborated with painters and illustrators to create 'artistic' fashions. In her contribution 'Conceptual Fashion,' the design and fashion historian Hazel Clark argues that in the late twentieth century Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake, the Antwerp Six, and Martin Margiela employed conceptual art strategies in their collections by privileging ideas and self-reflection over appearance and resolution. Kawakubo herself, however, like many designers critically defined as artists, has challenged the notion that she made 'art.'

The fine arts movement's reciprocal interest in fashion is touched on by both Valerie Steele and Margaret Maynard. Steele notes that artists Gustav Klimt, William Morris, Josef Hoffman, as well as members of the Italian futurist and Russian constructivist movements, all designed alternative fashions for women. In her essay 'Clothing,' Maynard, a dress historian, follows the trajectory of art-driven dress design through The Wearable Art Movement of the 1960s. Evolving from the fibre arts' philosophical identification with traditional craft processes and the Women's Movement, The Wearable Art Movement challenged the fine arts community to view the body as an art space and paved the way for fashion designers to work in the avant-garde.

2. The History of the Theoretical Discourse

Among the methodologies that Geczy and Karaminas incorporate into this comprehensive collection are four essays that reflect on the historical precedence for a theoretical discourse on fashion and art.

According to the fashion theorist Efrat Tseëlon in 'Authenticity,' fashion was once an accepted part of the artistic program of court life but was later barred from fine art discourse under the direction of the free market which assigned the commercially valuable qualities of rarity and authenticity to art by defining it as a non-utilitarian, authentic, and original construction. Before the art historian Anne Hollander's seminal work *Seeing Through Clothes* (1978), fashion had also been excluded from the discourse of aesthetics, defined as a realm of disinterested contemplation where form was valued for its own sake. In her essay, 'Aesthetics,' the art theorist Llewellyn Negrin argues that Hollander's unquestioning application of Kantian ideals failed to sufficiently consider fashion by treating it as a disembodied form, severing its connections with the body and lived experience. Negrin makes a powerful statement in favour of fashion's multi-dimensional identity, one of a few in the collection that propose that fashion be valued on its own terms and not reduced to an underappreciated 'other' of art.

As the historian Morag Martin points out in 'Beauty,' an examination of the moral and aesthetic function of artifice in both art and fashion began as early as the seventeenth-century when the art critic Roger de Piles compared the makeup pot to the paint palette. This type of discussion continued in the nineteenth century in the writings of Charles Baudelaire when he wrote on the transcendent power of cosmetics. Noting the semiotician Roland Barthes' theory that the represented (as opposed to the real) garment links immaterial desire to material consumption, Adam Geczy argues in his contribution entitled 'Modernity' that the promise of

transcendence through cosmetics and couture remains central in contemporary discussion of the perceived similarities between modern fashion and modern art.

3. Contemporary Theoretical Perspectives

Two contributors take on the challenge of proposing novel theoretical structures for a new kind of discourse. In her essay 'Body,' the dress anthropologist Joanne B. Eicher contributes a new definition of the term 'dress' to the dialogue by considering it a type of nonverbal communication that adds value to human interactions through both time and space. Flexible and nuanced, this definition seems prepared to withstand cross-examination by both art and fashion. Less successful are Eicher's attempts to compare the disciplines' different approaches to representations of the human body. In 'Image,' Vicki Karaminas examines a new term to the discourse: 'fashionscapes.' Borrowing from Arju Appadurai's method for locating imaginary social planes that interact and overlap, Karaminas uses the term 'fashionscapes' to describe the digital transmission of fashion imagery, its global impact, and transformative properties.

Two contributors apply new methodological approaches to counter the habitual assumption that fashion is subservient to art, echoing Negrin's anti-aesthetics argument that fashion should be valued as a unique multi-dimensional entity. According to the sociologist Diane Crane's reading in 'Boundary,' when fashion transgresses social norms it does not intend to subvert commercial purpose and therefore cannot be called avant-garde art. Crane observes that the importance the fashion system places on economic consideration and utility during the production phase align it with the sociologist Howard Becker's typology for crafts. In the context of the craft rather than the 'art world' model, a shrewd business sense becomes a tool for maintaining creative independence, strengthening the potential output of a designer like Rei Kawakubo, for example. In her essay 'Painting,' the art historian Aileen Ribeiro recalls the art historian Stella Mary Newton's thoughtful endorsement for fashion studies in art historical analysis. Recognising that artists' depictions of life are informed by observations of the worn-experience of clothes, Newton created the Courtauld Institute of Art's widely respected program for the study of historic dress.

4. Actor and Audience

In response to the issues raised by *Savage Beauty*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art created a web-based forum for visitors to answer the question 'when did you first realize that fashion is art?' Visitors to the site referred both to their own wardrobes and to curator-organised gallery installations of designer fashions as they wrestled with personal feelings about fashion and art. Five essays in this compilation make it clear that the relationships between audience and artist lie at the heart of the intersections of fashion and art.

In his contribution 'Performance,' the director and theoretician of performance Herbert Blau shares memories of personal clothing and professional theatre costume experiments in a thoughtful and evocative acknowledgement of the role dress plays in both professional and personal explorations of character.

As Mary Gluck, the cultural historian, explains in 'Dressing Up,' in the first half of the nineteenth century, unconventional clothes and public performance were ideological gestures that the modern artist used to assert the continuing importance of art in a commercial civilisation. This 'bohemian' community adopted orientalist, oversized, and historic dress in a sartorial statement against the cheapening of art and literature by mass-production. In 'Patronage,' the historian of art and architecture Nicky Ryan describes Prada's recent highly publicised patronage of the arts as a similar ideological performance. The authenticity and exclusivity associated with the 'art world' underpin Prada's image-making strategy. By

commissioning Prada buildings from the star architect Rem Koolhaas and supporting Prada-themed projects by the artists Elmgreen and Dragset, the brand has maintained an aura of authenticity among consumers, without compromising its commercial model for growth. According to the art historian Nancy Troy in 'Art,' broad distribution through fashion reporting in *Harper's Bazaar*, *Town & Country*, and *Vogue* helped facilitate public acceptance of Piet Mondrian's stark neoplastic expressions shortly after his death. Twenty years later, Yves Saint Laurent adapted the artist's 1922 *Composition with Red, Yellow, Blue, and Black* for his Fall 1965 collection, thereby ensuring the work's iconic status in contemporary pop culture. In these models, the artist or designer seeks to establish a rapport with the audience based on admiration and respect.

The fashion historian and curator Alistair O'Neill's essay 'Exhibition' addresses the shifting value of the audience itself in an investigation of the gendered position of female visitors to the first international exhibition of industry and industrial products, the Great Exhibition of 1851, held in London's Hyde Park. Women audiences were marginalised, accused by the press of being distracted from more serious opportunities to learn the value of industry by merely 'shopping' the exhibitions. O'Neill argues, however, that a list of lost and unclaimed property generated over a two-month period in the Exhibition and reported by one ladies' magazine threatened the premise of the Great Exhibition as a high-minded project by underscoring the undeniable relationship between the commercial value of production and the aftermath of consumption. Composed largely of women's items, the list attests without a doubt to the critical contribution of a female audience to the popular success of the Great Exhibition.

5. Curating

In her essay, 'Curating an Exhibition,' Barbara Heinemann proposes another set of theoretical lenses through which to view the question of fashion and art. In the University of Minnesota Goldstein Museum of Design's 2008 exhibition *Where Art and Fashion Meet*, Heinemann defined five gallery spaces in which to explore these themes: 'Fashion Uses Art,' 'Art Uses Fashion,' 'Fashion Is Art,' 'Artful Handbags,' and 'Art, Fashion, and Consumerism.' Heinemann's juxtaposition in these gallery spaces of art and fashion objects neatly described many of the areas where art and fashion meet and overlap, inviting the museum audience to engage in this theoretical debate. As Steele proposes, fashion may be an art in the process of legitimisation. Or, as Negrin seems to suggest, fashion may expand and improve the art critical dialogue. *Fashion and Art* does not provide any answers to the question 'is fashion art?' but as Geczy and Karaminas intended, begins to establish the foundations for a model of discussion of the complex interrelationships between these overlapping disciplines.

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Briefly Noted Books

Gilded New York: Design, Fashion, and Society

Donald Albrecht and Jeannine Falino, eds. New York: Monacelli Press, 2013, 240 pages, illustrated with index, $50, ISBN: 978-1580933674.

New York's Gilded Age conjures up images of extremely wealthy socialites like the Astors, the Vanderbilts, and the Morgans hosting and attending elaborate events in extravagant mansions. This essay collection, published as a companion book for the Museum of the City of New York's exhibition *Gilded New York* and edited by Donald Albrecht and Jeannine Falino, explores how fashion and interior design became the ultimate signifiers of wealth and status in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New York elite society.

Fashion Media: Past and Present

Djurdja Bartlett, Shaun Cole, and Agnès Rocamora, eds. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 200 pages, illustrated with index, £19.99, ISBN: 978-0857853073.

The essay collection *Fashion Media: Past and Present* explores the ways by which various types of fashion media have evolved as a reflection of changes in the political landscape, the fashion industry, technology, and social practices. In the three sections of the collection, 'Fashion Magazines,' 'Painting, Photography, and Film' and 'New Media,' noted scholars in disciplines like visual culture, fashion studies, design studies, and communication provide insights into the changing nature of conceptions of ethnicity, gender, authorship, and taste in both the dissemination and reception of contemporary fashion.

(Re)Possessing Beauty: Politics, Poetics, Change

Sallie McNamara, ed. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014, 212 pages, illustrated, £19.99,
ISBN: 978-1848881259.

In the contemporary world, concepts of beauty are implicated in every aspect of our lives, yet one is often unaware of the power that they possess when it comes to our identities, our choices of clothes, and our notions of gender, sexuality, transgression, and otherness. This essay collection explores the ways by which individuals articulate, reflect, respond to, challenge, reject, or modify constructs of beauty, invariably revealing how beauty can be a powerful, destructive, and transformative force in one's life and one's sense of self.

Courtesy Inter-Disciplinary Press © 2014

The House of Worth: Portrait of an Archive

Amy de la Haye and Valerie D. Mendes. London: V&A Publishing, 2014, 160 pages, illustrated with bibliography and index, £35, ISBN: 978-1851777747.

The British-born Charles Frederick Worth, credited with the inception of the haute couture model in Second Empire France, established a fashion house whose business practices, like its sumptuous dress creations, were domestically and internationally imitated for many decades. The fashion historians Amy de la Haye and Valerie D. Mendes present the history of the House of Worth from 1890 to its eventual closing in 1956 by examining objects and documents contained in the Victoria and Albert Museum's enormous Worth archive. In the narrative that emerges from the photographs and written texts in *The House of Worth*, the role of women, power, and dress are explored in the context of the international marketing of this influential fashion house.

Le Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London

Hannah Greig. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 352 pages, illustrated with bibliography and index, £25, ISBN: 978-0199659005.

In *Le Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London*, the British history specialist Hannah Grieg analyses a period famous for the excess, extravagance, and frivolity in its elite social circles. From the world of government and law to those of public and private leisure, the author explores the concept of being fashionable that emerged in Georgian high society. Through her analysis, she shows how participation in fashion during this period, which meant far more than just being smartly dressed, facilitated a membership in the elite political and social circles of a changing society.

Vampire Culture

Maria Mellins. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 149 pages, illustrated with bibliography and index, £19.99, ISBN: 978-0857850751.

The visual media specialist Maria Mellins takes an ethnographical approach in *Vampire Culture* in order to provide a clearer insight into the contemporary popularity of the figure of the vampire and the subcultural practices that have developed around it. These practices include Goth fashion, the organisation of vampire-themed events like graveyard walks and fang fittings, and literary and media representations. With fascinating case studies drawn from London's vampire subculture, Mellins elucidates the connections and intersections in matters of gender, the body, dress, and media in this little-known alternative lifestyle community.

A Denim Story: Inspirations from Bellbottoms to Boyfriends

Emily Current, Meritt Elliott, and Hilary Walsh. New York: Rizzoli, 2014, 160 pages, illustrated with index, $32.50, ISBN: 978-0847842346.

The stylists and jeans designers Emily Current and Meritt Elliott, along with the fashion photographer Hilary Walsh, examine the reality and the mystique that blue jeans occupy in the American cultural imagination. This volume, surveying the representation of blue jeans in areas

of American popular culture like film, music, and fashion, includes many comments and testimonies from well-known figures in those areas. *A Denim Story: Inspirations from Bellbottoms to Boyfriends* ultimately shows how values like ruggedness, authenticity, style, independence, and self-confidence have been consistently associated with this quintessentially American garment.

Jazz Age Fashion: Dressed to Kill

Virginia Bates and Daisy Bates. New York: Rizzoli, 2013, 288 pages, illustrated, $50, ISBN: 978-0847841875.

Intended to coincide with the release of Baz Luhrmann's film adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, *Jazz Age Fashion: Dressed to Kill* examines the glittering and elegant sartorial culture of the 1920s. With chapters on sequined dresses, cocktail wear, bridge coats, opera attire, evening jackets, and house coats as well as extended commentaries on other aspects of dress like underwear and shoes, this volume illustrates the wide variety of fashions during the American Jazz Age, but also provides information on the materials, the elaborate craftsmanship, and new technologies that went into the creation of these stunning garments.

Avedon: Women

Joan Juliet Buck and Abigail Solomon-Godeau. New York: Gagosian Gallery/ Rizzoli, 2013, 200 pages, illustrated, $100, ISBN: 978-0847842810.

Courtesy Rizzoli © 2013

Intended to accompany the Fall 2013 exhibition of Richard Avedon's photography at the Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills, California, this extensively illustrated volume details the photographer's uncanny ability in his fashion work for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* to transform his female models through unconventional, dynamic, and revelatory ways. With essays by the writer and journalist Joan Juliet Buck and the art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau that comment on the photographer's craft as well as his images, this book demonstrates that Avedon was one of the most creative and influential artists in world of fashion photographers.

Exhibiting Fashion: Before and after 1971

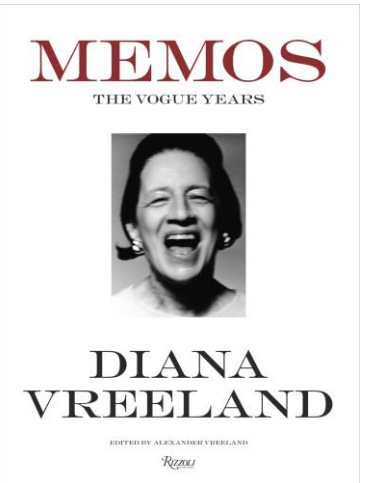
Judith Clark and Amy de la Haye. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014, 252 pages, illustrated with bibliography and index, $60, ISBN: 978-0300125795.

This book explores the evolution of curatorial practices that have characterised the fashion exhibition in the past several decades. Taking as a pivotal moment the seminal 1971 Victoria and Albert Museum's seminal show *Fashion: An Anthology by Cecil Beaton*, the authors demonstrate how this exhibition marked a shift in museological attitudes and practices, thereby forging a new relationship between dress, mannequins, and *mise-en-scène* when exhibiting fashion in the contemporary era.

Diana Vreeland Memos: The Vogue Years

Alexander Vreeland, ed. New York: Rizzoli, 2013, 288 pages, illustrated, $55, ISBN: 978-0847840748.

During her years as the influential editor-in-chief of *Vogue*, Diana Vreeland transformed the fashion magazine into a dominant voice in the industry, affecting the way women around the world dressed and thought about fashion. *Diana Vreeland Memos: The Vogue Years*, edited by Vreeland's grandson, provides a unique, behind-the-scenes look at this powerful woman engaged in the process of heading a publication that was one of the most important arbiters of taste and fashion in the second half of the twentieth century.



Courtesy Rizzoli © 2013

Fetish Style

Frenchy Lunning. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 176 pages, illustrated with bibliography and index, £17.99, ISBN: 978-1847885708.

Following in the same methodological vein as Anne McClintock's ground-breaking *Imperial Leather* (1995) and Valerie Steele's *Fetish: Fashion, Sex, and Power* (1997), the design specialist Frenchy Lunning examines the development of fetish clothing as a subcultural phenomenon and as a mainstream style in the past century and a half. In addition to case studies of contemporary fetish communities, *Fetish Style* explores the incidence of these styles in the world of high fashion at the end of the twentieth century. Lunning ultimately demonstrates both historically and theoretically the affinity between fashion and fetish systems.