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Addressing Architecture & Fashion:

On Simulacrum, Time and Poché

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirement for the degree

Master of Arts in Architecture

By

Courtney Elizabeth Coffman

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Addressing Architecture & Fashion:

On Simulacrum, Time and Poché

by

Courtney Elizabeth Coffman

Master of Arts in Architecture

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Sylvia Lavin, Chair

Architecture and Fashion both interrogate tectonic logic, structure, formal technique, and the human body. Fashion successfully integrates Architecture into the production of new silhouettes, however, when Architecture attempts to operate in Fashion's modalities, it often falls short and succumbs to favor the monumental over the superfluous. Divided into three parts exploring the simulacrum of the knock off, shifting production speeds, and the residual space of poché, brief detours through canonized histories lend theoretical insight to contemporary architecture and its chatter with fashion. Close reading and the comparative method are thoroughly used in order to place seemingly dissimilar objects together and effectively stimulate a visual dialog. My attempt is to explore alternative overlaps between these two fields of study, find their common clichés and implement a disciplinary swerve.

The thesis of Courtney Elizabeth Coffman is approved.

Dana Cuff

Michael Osman

Sylvia Lavin, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

To my *village*

Dad, Aunt Sandy, Lucy, Nikki, Marcela, Nate, Kristi, Colleen, the OtR Crew.

and Jamie.

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Consuming Consumption

In a world of copies, replicas, and knockoffs, systems of performance are at work in the replication of form. These forms may look similar at first glance, but the way in which they perform is what makes each instance distinctive and propels the future discourse of architecture and fashion. The following research is an attempt to produce an interdisciplinary exquisite corpse of sorts, bringing together several authors to produce an a-historical image of the hierarchical systems and modes of cultural reproduction at play, yet typically not associated with form-making in architecture and fashion.



Figure 1: *Log* 17's ephemeral graphics + accompanying lenses

Deemed “The Superficial Issue” by guest editors Mark Foster Gage and Florencia Pita, *Log* 17 asked contributors to engage in casual, cross-disciplinary

conversations in order to produce a collective interest in new forms of architectural thought and criticism. Gage and Pita articulate the importance of this dialog as “the surveillance of seemingly trivial chatter frequently yields more significant bodies of information.”¹ Known for his collaboration with brands like Nike, Absolute Vodka, and Kidrobot, street artist-turned-name-brand toy designer, Tristan Eaton uses Log’s typically blank cover as the site to start the thematic chatter.² (Fig. 1) 3-D glasses accompany Eaton’s bursting graphic in order to view the metaphorical depth contained in the cover’s explosive flash and puff of blue smoke imagery—a semantical discourse with Gage’s “Observation on the Blues” monologue excerpt from *The Devil Wears Prada* found among the journals pages.³ (Fig. 2)

Portrayed by Meryl Streep and based and on *Vogue* editor-in-chief Anna Wintour, character Miranda Priestly’s rattles off a discursive contemporary history of the color cerulean to a naïve intern who chuckles at the necessary rigor required in choosing between two seemingly similar belts. What transpires in the monologue performance is a demonstration that the discipline of fashion is a top-down hierarchical structure of duplication and reproduction, where the perpetual myth of name-brand designers (or authors) and big-name editors at well-know publications inherently influence the collective mass. The surface layers of a ‘superficial’ field have now deepened into issues of economics and social constructs. Michel de Certeau postulates modes of

¹ Gage, Mark Foster, and Florencia Pita. "The Zero Degree of Ideology." *Log* 17 2009. 8.

² The customer can customize Eaton’s wildly popular Munny toy, which also happens to be sold in MoMA’s gift shop.

³ A parallel can be made between Eaton’s Cover Story graphic and the selective “Superficial” issue title with Sylvia Lavin’s *Flash in the Pan* theorization: “on architecture’s eternal conflict with the temporary: on architecture’s love for the up-to-date and its inability to reconcile this desire with building’s obligation to endure.” <http://www.grahamfoundation.org/grantees/3944-the-flash-in-the-pan-and-other-forms-of-architectural-contemporaneity>.

consumption as a cultural operation system, one that forms a sociological stance of the user-as-performer of everyday practices. Certeau's exploration was rooted in studying pop culture and its modes of consumption as a way to distinguish the image cultural producers—the Miranda Priestley's of the world—bestow into everyday practice and the “the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization,” as facilitated by consumers-or naïve interns.⁴ Thus, when Priestly illustrates to her intern how the subjective individual is engaged in a hidden performance within a system of production, she reveals an established hierarchy of curatorial rigor and specificity:

That blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs and so it's sort of comical how you think that you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry when, in fact, you're wearing the sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room.

⁴ Certeau, Michel. "General Introduction." *In The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1984. xiii.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BLUES



MERYL STREEP (MIRANDA PRIESTLY), IN *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA* (FOX 2000 PICTURES, 2006). IMAGE COURTESY OF FOX 2000 PICTURES AND MERYL STREEP.

Stuff?

Oh, okay.

I see.

You think this has nothing to do with you.

You go to your closet, and you select, I don't know, that lumpy blue sweater because you're trying to tell the world that you take yourself too seriously to care what you put on your back.

But what you don't know is that sweater is not just blue.

It's not turquoise.

It's not lapis.

It's actually cerulean.

And you're also blithely unaware of the fact that in 2002 Oscar de la Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns. And then I think it was Yves Saint Laurent – wasn't it – who showed a selection of cerulean military jackets. And then cerulean quickly showed up in collections of eight different designers. It filtered down through the department stores, and then trickled down into some tragic Casual Corner where you undoubtedly fished it out of some clearance bin. However, that blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs. It's sort of comical how you think you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry, when, in fact, you're wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room, from "a pile of stuff."

– Miranda Priestly, portrayed by Meryl Streep in *The Devil Wears Prada* (as observed by Mark Foster Gage)

Figure 2: The cerulean sweater monologue in Log 17 "Observation on the Blues"

The monologue demonstrates the cultural production of the consumer derived from a semiotic system, such as the color cerulean and the notion fashion is a self-referential system. Roland Barthes explored the semiotic structures depicting fashion in magazines in his text “The Fashion System.” His objects of study were French fashion periodicals dating from the late 1950s, a representation of the surge in fashion journals—possibly foreshadowing the crisis of the author in the 1960s. Barthes introduced a reference key comprised of graphic symbols as a means to translate and classify the linguistic and object driven fashion codes. He identified two fashion-coding systems: “the first is the one presented to me as photographed or drawn—it is image-clothing. The second is the same garment, but described, transformed into language...this is a written garment.”⁵ Between the plastic system of image-clothing and the verbal system of written garment, Barthes examined the latter for its ability to simultaneously carry and resist language. Fashion historian and theorist Ingrid Loschek notes that Barthes’ text “was the first large-scale analysis of a nonlinguistic sign system (fashion)...[he] explains the existence of a vestimentary linguistic code.”⁶ Embedded within fashion’s linguistic code is the all-encompassing binary system of being culturally “in” or “out.” To further deepen the scope, incorporated in the fashion code are three subsystems—technological, iconic, and verbal—each type is translated by different modes of representation, called *shifters*, which include moving from image to language, from real to language, and from the real to image.

⁵ Structure is described as “an autonomous entity of internal dependencies,” Barthes is quoting L. Hjelmslev’s *Essays in Linguistics*, 1959 in Barthes, Roland. *The Fashion System*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.

⁶ Loschek, Ingrid. *When Clothes Become Fashion: Design and Innovation Systems*. Oxford: Berg, 2009. 13.

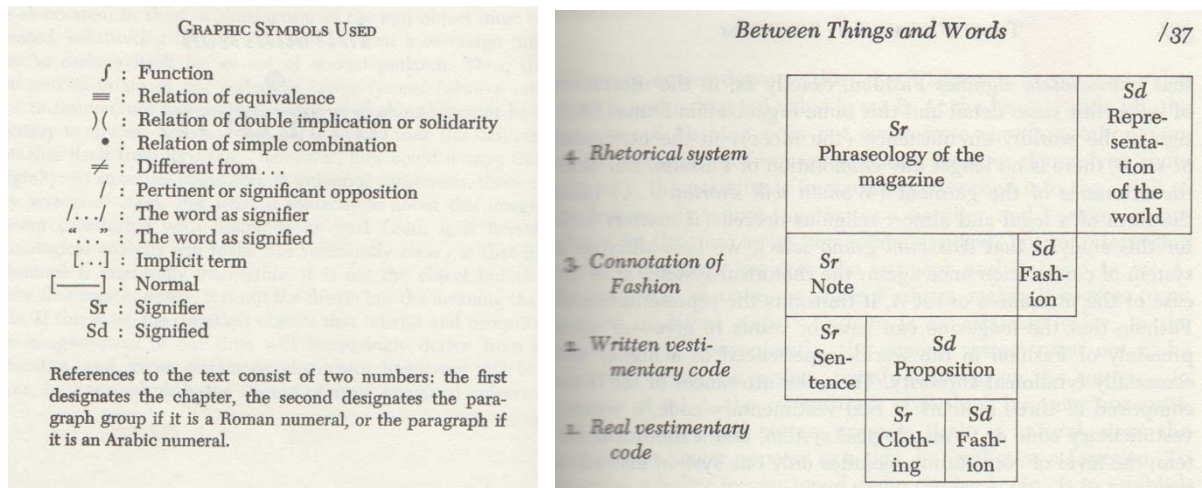


Figure 3: Semiotic diagram examples from *The Fashion System*

By codifying and classifying fashion into these sub-structures, Barthes systemized fashion from the ‘everyday’ context of the fashion magazine—an object tailored by editors and mass-produced for consumption—into an autonomous language of semiotics.⁷ (Fig. 3) He performed this transformation by avoiding brand names or designers in the fashion magazines studied, allowing only the tag lines and catchphrases of fashion to be read as the “written garment,” where only diagrams of syntax are provided for the reader.⁸ The last sentences found in the *Appendixes* demonstrated

Fashion dissolves the myth of innocent signifieds, at the very moment it produces them; it attempts to substitute its artifice...its culture, for the false nature of things; it does not suppress meaning; it points to it with its finger.

Barthes’ text was published only one year after Robert Venturi’s 1966 *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, but it’s easy to see the blatant finger pointing in fashion can also be found in Venturi’s projects at this time, like the Guild House (1960-63).

⁷ Discursive semiotic studies had emerged approximately ten years prior to Barthes first (French) edition of *The Fashion System*.

⁸ Barthes extensively studied *Elle*, *Le Jardin des Modes*, *Vogue*, *L’Echo de la Mode*, and the occasional weekly Fashion section in local periodicals.

Highlighted a decade later in “Ugly and Ordinary Architecture or the Decorated Shed,” Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown analyzed Guild House and Crawford Manor using the comparative method to theorize the emergence of semiotics in architectural discourse. They describe Guild House as an example of “Ugly and Ordinary” architecture, communicative in its form and its use of an architectural ‘sign.’ Guild House gained contemporary relevance over Modernist architecture because it could situate itself within the historical iconography of architecture:

Its identification does not come through explicit, denotative communication, though literally spelling out “I am Guild House,” but through the physiognomy of its pure architectural form, which is intended to express in some way housing for the elderly.⁹

It appears that the common thread between fashion and architecture at this period relied on Barthes’ notion of a plastic system (image) and the verbal system (lexicon). The couturiers of the late 19th and early 20th century were rapidly disseminating into lifestyle brands, where expert fashion advice no longer was passed directly down from designer to client. Haute couture’s elegant superfluity slowed down in the post-war economy as prêt-a-porter clothing gained popularity, a result of women in the workplace; custom tailored pieces were being replaced with mass-produced clothing.¹⁰ Famous designers began cross-pollinating with other fields and it was at this

⁹ Venturi and Scott-Brown state: “When it cast out eclecticism, Modern architecture submerged symbolism. Instead it promoted expressionism, concentrating on the expression of architectural elements themselves...Modern architecture’s expression has become a dry expressionism, empty and boring.” See “Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, or the Decorated Shed.” *Architectural Forum*, 135.4 (November 1971). 67.

¹⁰ I would liken this to Siegfried Gideon’s essay on the fashioning of posture and the corresponding evolution of furniture—the elimination of upholstery and the upholsterer—was not so much about writing a history as much as the conditions under which these new forms were produced. Thus, *The Devil Wears Prada* monologue not only demonstrates the cultural production of a consumer derived from a semiotic system, such as the color cerulean, but also mechanization of cerulean as a phenomenon. “Anonymous

time, beginning in the 1960s, that major fashion houses began to archive their own research, processes and collections. A large part of this movement to assemble an archive was the byproduct of the institutionalization of fashion collections. Former *Vogue* editor Diana Vreeland outfitted various art museums with fashion exhibitions, framing the objects not by encyclopedic systems established by the museum-as-institute, but instead by color-scheme and the everyday social engagements with fashion like “daywear,” “cocktail,” and “evening clothes” as presented in the 1984 show “Twenty-five Years of Yves Saint Laurent.” Presented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹¹ Cerulean may not have been present in this exhibition showcase, but the systems of capital and consumption were already in place.

Retrospective shows, like Vreeland’s *Twenty-five Years of Yves Saint Laurent*, perpetuate the myth of the designer—elevating the author as icon. Contributing to the exhibition catalog, socialite and former *Vogue* guest editor Marella Agnelli described Saint Laurent’s iconic status as having successfully transcended between high and low fashion culture:

To Saint Laurent goes the credit for creating the look (or should we say the essence) of our time, and also for being one of the first, if not the very first, to reproduce that look, like a work of art, in order to make it accessible to a wider public...fashion took a big step into the future, leaving behind the remote, elitist character it had had in the past.¹²

History.” *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. 2-11.

¹¹ *Yves Saint Laurent* exhibition at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; December 14th, 1983- September 2, 1984.

¹² Saint Laurent, Yves and Diana Vreeland. *Yves Saint Laurent*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art. 1983. 34.

One such example of Agnelli's observation is demonstrated in Saint Laurent's 1965 fall/winter collection, which included the infamous Mondrian dress. The Met was gifted an "original" garment by Mrs. William Rand in 1969 and a serial number stamped on the neck tag authenticates the wool dress as an original Saint Laurent garment, likening itself to a run of fine art prints rather than haute couture. The shift dress became a hit for its color blocking and flattery of female form through geometric abstraction. A close examination of the dress pattern—Barthes would deem the *principal shifter* in moving from the technical to the iconic garment—identified the once linear geometries of Mondrian were exploded apart only to be reassembled on the body as compositional line and color plane, a reverse strategy to neoplasticist modalities. Transcending media and mediums, the wool dress moved from the runway in Paris to the glossy cover of *Vogue* magazine, then eventually onto the transparent, tissue-paper home sewing patterns. The image of YSL's Mondrian dress became just as iconic as its creator and any given retrospective Saint Laurent exhibition will inevitably feature the garment because of its identifiable status. As objects assimilate into popular culture, notions of authenticity come into question; how does a museum visitor distinguish between a home-sewn dress and the original YSL runway piece if the tag serial number is hidden on the mannequin display? (Fig. 4) The boundaries between "high" and "low" become blurred and new tools are required to understand the coded fashion object and its operations within this codified system. (Fig. 5 & 6)



Figure 4: The handwritten and the stamped YSL Mondrian dress serial number tag



Figure 5: Modeling the objet d'art, Mondrian in mass media on the cover of *Vogue Paris* 1965



Figure 6: the “Vogue Paris Original” home sewing pattern with YSL autograph; pattern directions states “Yardage: not suitable for stripes or plaids,” the Vogue and YSL brand names are eliminated for the Simplicity home sewing pattern

The department store simultaneously emerged alongside the civic museum, the resulting distinction between retail and exhibition space became obscure, where both typologies understood the larger public in terms of an audience to be institutionalized. Two subjective conditions resulted from fashion exhibitions: the everyday citizen could experience and become literate among the elite within the walls of the museum by visually consuming “high” art culture, and the bourgeois museum audience could physically touch—or purchase—the objet d’art in the department store.¹³ A major figure in stitching together the museum and the department store was Diane Vreeland, whose collaboration with The Met brought one million visitors along with a heavy institutional critique, a topic of recent debate in museums today. Hired as a consultant-curator for the Costume Institute, Vreeland was hired on with confidence from Met official Ted Rousseau, but met with skepticism by other Met staff members, viewing her position as one to gain the museum publicity; a Met administrator divulged that Vreeland “knows fashion and who wore it but she doesn’t know *history*.”¹⁴ Today, fashion exhibitions are embedded with branding and outside sponsorship since many museums cannot afford—and will not prioritize budgets—for a fashion, costume, or textile exhibition. In addition to criticism regarding corporate sponsorship, museums are also scrutinized by patrons who do not find the content of a fashion exhibition to be culturally as relevant as the historical fine arts that should be displayed in museum institutions.

¹³ Museum collections were transitioning from private collections of patrons to public institution; likewise department stores were operating for the collective mass, versus the former ateliers of the wealthy.

¹⁴ Silverman, Debora. *Selling Culture: Bloomingdale's, Diana Vreeland, and the New Aristocracy of Taste in Reagan's America*. New York: Pantheon. 1986. 106.

In 2007, Chief Curator Paul Schimmel organized © MURAKAMI, a retrospective traveling exhibition that featured the work of Japanese artist Takashi © MURAKAMI at MoCA in Los Angeles and later at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 2008. In addition to the ninety objects comprising the show, Schimmel proposed Louis Vuitton store in the museum as part of the exhibition, a showcase to highlight the juggernaut collaboration between © MURAKAMI and Louis Vuitton's creative director Marc Jacobs beginning in the spring 2003 collection. "The shop project is not a part of the exhibition; rather it is the heart of the exhibition itself," © MURAKAMI disclosed, "it holds at once the aspects that fuse, reunite, and then recombine the concept of the readymade. The Louis Vuitton project brings to life a wonderful new world." He further elaborated that the inclusion of the pop-up boutique within MoCA would "incorporate the 'act of selling' into the exhibition as a performance; which I believe is a scandalous act unthinkable at any other art exhibition."¹⁵ (Fig. 7) Adding fodder to the scandal was the pop-up shop that accompanied the Brooklyn show, but to understand these collaborative collaborations between capitalism and museum institutions, a detour to Seoul must be made.

¹⁵ Noted in an email correspondence to Louis Vuitton's chief executive Yves Carcelle; the Louis Vuitton boutique inside of the museum earned \$1.4 million and sold 214 © MURAKAMI pieces. The sale proceeds went strictly to Louis Vuitton and not to MoCA.



Figure 7: Luxury versus bootleg: the hybridized museum-retail experience in Los Angeles and Brooklyn



Figure 8: Park's exhibited "Fake" fake speedy and "Fake' fake speedy" tote for *Wake Up Andy Warhol*



Figure 9: Compiled "Fakewear 02, 04, 01, 03" online bags: "Prohibited for sale" and Eva Herzigova with Marc Jacobs shopping for the *real* handbag in the back-alley © MURAKAMI exhibition gift shop

In 2006 Seoul hosted the exhibition *Wake Up Andy Warhol* at Ssamziegil, a retail district in the Isadong area.¹⁶ The exhibition mission asked participating artist to consider Warhol's modalities of replication, including his venerated work with mass-produced objects that allowed the art object to oscillate between high and low brow. The exhibition prompt asked each participant to produce a run of 100 art objects for the show with the intention to sell, or help proliferate art into the marketplace. Korean product designer Zinoo Park collaborated with graphic designer Namyoung An on *Perfect Fake*, a pop-up shop featured in the exhibition. Park's idea was to purchase real Louis Vuitton Speedy 30 bags and screen print the word "FAKE" onto each bag. (Fig. 8) The bags were then duplicated as a graphic image to be screen-printed on cheap canvas tote bags which emulated this newly branded Fake LV Speedy 30 bag and referenced the monogram found on Louis Vuitton's \$1,700 "That's Love LVOE Canvas bag," which ironically suggests the composition of YSL's own brand identity. *Perfect Fake* was in the Warhol tradition, kitschy and superficial, however, concepts of authenticity and consumption were deeply embedded in the *knock off* culture prevalent today. What proved even more successful about *Perfect Fake* were the replica bags produced by counterfeit productions: fakes of the fake/real gained popularity. The project was no longer about reproducing the mass-object in the vein of Warhol, but instead, it was about reproducing his original theoretical idea—the conceptual mass-reproduction.

The Brooklyn Museum opened the © MURAKAMI retrospective just two years after *Wake Up Andy Warhol*. Unlike the backlit shelves and delicate glass cases of the

¹⁶ In conjunction with "London's 100% Design" events from October 25, 2006 to January 25, 2007.

MoCA LV boutique that confused exhibition space with retail space, the Brooklyn Museum's pop-up shop proved to be a performance more than a boutique. Upon entering the forecourt to the museum, visitors passed by west-African street vendors played by scouted-and paid-actors who sold 'counterfeit' handbags from derelict stalls, complete with ratty awnings and tarps splayed on the ground. Only months after a citywide crackdown on counterfeit luxury products, the pop-up shop replicated the thrill of the hunt while additionally propping up the seedy underbelly of the bootleg transactions as a display in its own nature. All displayed merchandise in front of the museum was legal, as attendees shopping the back-alley set were not actually handling and buying fakes, but full-price Louis Vuitton products.¹⁷ In the context of the sidewalk bag performance, Barthes systematic and rational approach to fashion has now become completely self-referential. It is at this autonomous juncture that the sign-signifier's lack of authenticity--what is the original object and what is the copy—lacks clarification between what is ideologically real and fake.¹⁸ (Fig. 9)

The real, the fake, the real-fakes, and the fake-reals all can be attributed to the tools used by today's consumers. The magazine, department store, and museum are no longer the consumption site for fashion, but have been replaced with Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter, blogs and apps. The top-down structure expressed in the Cerulean Sweater monolog has been inverted to a bottom-up approach, where the mass of multi-

¹⁷ The faux, back-alley bootleg vendors lend to a contemporary comparison of displaying actual people as the exhibition itself, such as the Crystal Palace's primitive and its "exotic" inhabitants.

¹⁸ "Real or Fake?" as fashion's 'new' binary system to replace Barthes' "In or out?"

platform digital media leads to the high consumption of images on a daily basis and an produces the economy of copies, knockoffs, and doppelgangers.¹⁹

The Architectural Association's 2011 Graham Foundation Grant was awarded to the publication *Architectural Doppelgangers*, edited by Sam Jacob and Ines Weizman. The project dissected the role and place of the copies, replicas, and fakes by postulating questions including:

Does the myth of the doppelganger haunt the discipline? Does architecture's imminent death signaled by encountering its doppelganger? Does its doubling create an evil twin? Conversely, might architecture find a productive relationship with the culture of the copy?²⁰

The research project sought out copies of iconic architecture—the 'one-off' building as reproducible architectural object. A year later, at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale, *Architectural Doppelgangers* lead to "The Museum of Copying," an exhibition designated itself a museum housed in the Arsenale. The "Museum" comprised of four components: "Architectural Doppelgangers"—which explored the locales of various iconic knock-off buildings, "Book of Copies"—a compilation of photocopies produced by San Rocco and 60 other contributors, "Repeat Yourself"—an examination of architectural copywriting and international ownership laws surrounding Adolf Loos' projects, and "The Villa Rotunda Redux"—an installation and remake (or copy) of the famous Palladian villa.

¹⁹ The saturation of various modalities changes the value/use? While reaffirming its iconicity.

²⁰ <http://www.grahamfoundation.org/grantees/3989-architectural-doppelgangers>

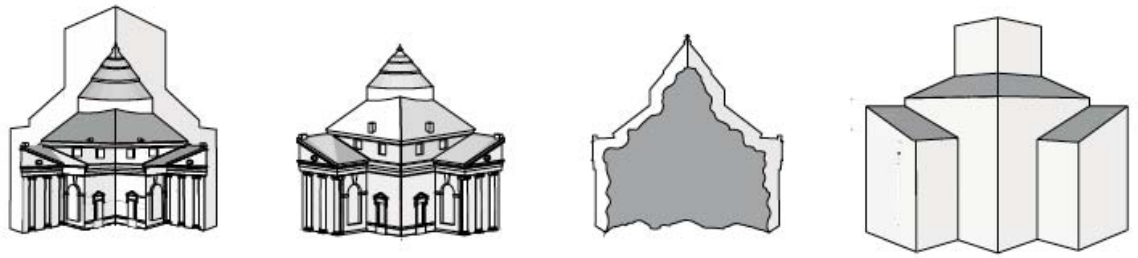


Figure 10: (inverted) copies-as-disciplinary swerve

It is here at the site of The Villa Rotunda Redux that the seemingly superficial issues of fashion and the knockoff hold common ground with the discipline of architecture. FAT director Sam Jacob describes,

There is a history of copies of the Villa Rotunda that have been important staging posts for architectural culture. We hope to extend this history and explore how copying something is, strangely, a way of inventing new forms of architecture.²¹

It could be said that the proliferation of Villa Rotunda copies in architecture Jacob describes had previously operated in Warholian modalities and what FAT is presupposing are operational modalities similar to the knock-off as a disciplinary swerve to historical forms of reproduction. (Fig. 10 & 11) The syntax of the copy and the replica may be able to produce new architectural types, but the objects themselves run the risk of two extremes, either the form is diluted completely or fully loaded with semiotic meaning and history—the byproduct result of consuming a system of consumption.

²¹ http://www.fashionarchitecturetaste.com/2012/08/villa_rotunda_redux.html



Figure 11: FAT, Villa Rotunda Redux, 2012

On Time: Fast & Slow

"We discussed our aim to create a Pavilion that was casual in attitude, not too heavy, to fit the temporary nature of the brief." Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron and Ai Weiwei

"It's a glamorous protest - no to fast fashion; no to stitching." Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren

The overlaps between contemporary architecture and runway fashion have peaked recent institutional interest and demonstrate material applications and practices between these two fields run parallel. Concepts of time and consumption, however, have yet to be explored beyond the superficial level of metaphor between architectural object and fashion garment. General disciplinary observations suggest that the temporal length attributed to architecture and its production is one of status, while fashion constitutes speed through its rapid seasonal cycles. In order to challenge these temporal clichés, two case studies were selected to represent a compensatory apparatus for each respective discipline, they are the 2012 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Herzog & de Meuron with Ai Weiwei, and the 2010 Spring/Summer collection "Cutting Edge Couture" by Viktor & Rolf.²² (Fig. 10 & 11) Preferred for potentially latent qualities that exhibit or exude temporality and status in systems of display, these two case studies explore speed through materiality and the inevitable continuity of the object in the marketplace.²³

²² In an AA lecture Series, Mark Cousins discusses *cliché*: "often comprised of two distinct qualities," the first as "something too often repeated, that it would become worn out" and the second "had an element of pretension about it." As provocateurs of architectural discourse, it is necessary to critically ask what is cliché, why and to what system(s) does it claim; Cousins postulates "Can we have architectural clichés?" *The Poetics of Cliché*. Perf. Mark Cousins. AA School of Architecture. Architectural Association Inc., 27 Jan. 2012. Web. Spring 2013.

²³ Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei's Serpentine Pavilion was open to the public from June 1st to October 14th in London's Kensington Gardens, it happened to correspond with the 2012 Summer Games



Figure 10: The finished looks of "Cutting Edge Couture" and the Serpentine Pavilion

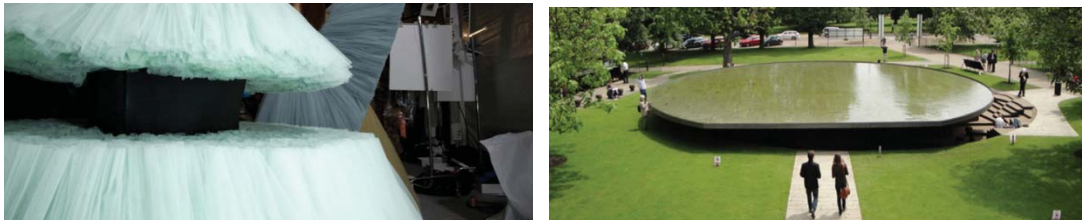


Figure 11: Parallel effects in composition and gestural displacement of dress and ground

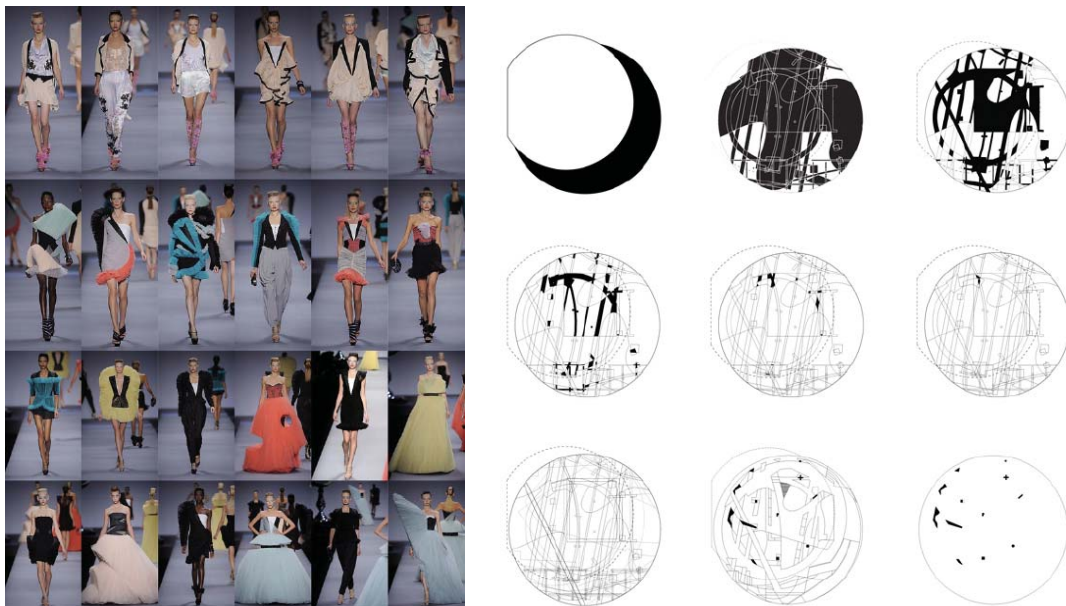


Figure 12: Procession and progression

and the Cultural Olympiad, also in London. Viktor & Rolf's Spring 2010 collection, "Cutting Edge Couture," debuted in the Jardins des Tuileries during Paris Fashion week in October 2009.

The systematic logic of a Prêt-à-Porter runway show is typically choreographed so that each look lends to an overarching narrative of the collection, culminating in the most expensive and labor-intensive pièce de résistance, the evening gown. Once the last look has exited the catwalk, models high step one-after-the other down the runway in a final procession. This parade not only designates the end of the collection showcase, it also warrants the audience to view each garment as part of a cohesive whole in an aesthetic system. It is the processional that demonstrates the parti of the collection, and after the models have made it backstage once again, the designers face their audience and take a bow. Infamous for challenging and redefining the fashion system and concept of what constitutes a fashion show, Viktor & Rolf keep the processional antics to a minimum in their Spring 2010 collection since the garments themselves prove to be spectacle enough.²⁴ The show is approximately 13-minutes in length and comprises of 36-looks beginning with slightly constrictive day dresses, then the garments relax into silky separates, which mature into volumetric cocktail dresses, and finally propagate in tectonic evening gowns. (Fig. 12)

Viktor & Rolf's collections often seek a balance between juxtapositions as demonstrated by the 2010 Spring/Summer collection where the designers intentionally clash masculine and feminine, hard and soft, solid and void. The canon of couture fashion is exploited while they deconstruct and reconstruct the iconic feminine

²⁴ Two iconic Viktor & Rolf collections in which the traditional fashion show procession was challenged includes the Spring/Summer 2006 collection "Upside Down." Comprised of inverted garments, the processional order of the show began with the last look and ended with initial "first" look. The infamous "Russian Doll" collection for Autumn/Winter 1999-2000 was a staged performance of authenticity as Viktor & Rolf dressed a single model layer after layer to produce a nested Matryoshka, exposing the audience to common back of house production operations. Evans, Caroline, Susannah Frankel, Jane Alison, and Ariella Yedgar. *The House of Viktor & Rolf*. London: Merrell, 2008. 88-97, 172-7.

silhouettes of Dior's "new look" and piecemeal it together with remnants of a tuxedo.²⁵ Rolf claims that "in order to communicate, we have to use clichés and icons..."²⁶ The legibility of the "gown" and "tux" fragments signify an a priori condition of "whole" and designates the act of chopping as a means to establish the objects within the canon, historically and technically, while simultaneously maintaining a critical stance through material execution. (Fig. 13) Jean Baudrillard states:

To become an object of consumption, an object must first become a sign...consumption is the virtual totality of all objects and messages ready-constituted as a more or less coherent discourse...an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs.²⁷

After the Spring 2010 show, parallel narratives manifested in press interviews and fashion editorials. Conjuring pop-culture imagery of Leatherface and the reworking of his victims flesh for a mask, Viktor & Rolf's "Cutting Edge Couture" collection became known as "The Amsterdam Chainsaw Massacre," a result of the designers reportedly bored and shaved tulle patches from the evening gowns that were reappropriated for the cocktail and day runway looks.²⁸ "With the credit crunch and everybody cutting back, we decided to cut tulle ball gowns," Rolf validated their form making a result of the

²⁵ "The New Look" captured the forgotten feminine silhouette of couture ateliers, fallen to the ease of ready-to-wear; Dior's idealized dress form emerged postwar (1947) and injected couture back into the Parisian fashion scene. It must also be said that Viktor and Rolf's trajectory for their fashion house was to operate as haute couture and they communicate this vision by assimilate into the paradigm of couture fashion shows with one-off pieces. On their recent acceptance in April by the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture, see Diderich, Joelle. "Viktor & Rolf Returning to Couture." *WWD*. Condé Nast, 22 Apr. 2013. Web. Spring 2013.

²⁶ *Viktor & Rolf: Because We're Worth It*. Dir. Femke Wolting. Perf. Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren. *Submarine*, 2006. DVD.

²⁷ Baudrillard, Jean. *The System of Objects*. London U.A.: Verso, 2005. 218.

²⁸ For the final walk-through, Viktor & Rolf lead the procession with the most tangible, piecemeal garment to demonstrate the conceptual technique. The show's nickname stuck after an editorial piece in *Dazed & Confused* magazine: "In A Season When Fashion Houses Are Playing It Safe, Maverick Designers Viktor & Rolf Took On The Credit Crunch With Their Thrillingly Impractical Mutilation Of Tulle;" see Shillingford, Katie. "The Amsterdam Chainsaw Massacre." *Dazed & Confused* February (2010).

economic climate during a time when many fashion houses scaled back material quality and quantity.²⁹



Figure 13: the a priori “ball gown” and “tuxedo” remain legible in the reconstructed forms

Similar to Viktor & Rolf’s material and formal pastiche, Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei’s 2012 Serpentine Pavilion uses the former traces from the event’s brief 11-year past to produce a singular object. Initiated in 2000 as an alternative (temporary) structure to the banal pop-up tents during the Serpentine Gallery’s renovations developed into an annual program in Kensington Gardens. “One criterion is that we are looking for architects who have made a significant contribution to the field through the uniqueness of their architectural language,” Serpentine Director Julia Peyton-Jones asserts, “Another condition is that they haven’t built in this country.”³⁰ Given the trio’s

²⁹ Phelps, Nicole. "Viktor & Rolf Spring 2010 Ready-to-Wear Collection on Style.com: Runway Review." *Style.com*. Condé Nast, 3 Oct. 2009. Web. Autumn 2013.

³⁰ Coincidentally, there is a strong correlation between the architects who participate in the Serpentine Gallery program and those who win a Pritzker prize, see Jett, Megan. "Infographic: The Serpentine Pavilion 2012 Update." *ArchDaily*. ArchDaily, 8 May 2012. Web. Spring 2013.

previous collaboration on the 2008 Beijing National Stadium for the Summer Olympics, the selection of Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei to design the 2012 Pavilion appeared to be an obvious curatorial decision. The Olympic stadium became elevated to a recognizable public icon as the architectural object abstracted to a logo and nicknamed the Bird's Nest; with their previous collaboration heavily saturated into the cultural milieu, Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei wanted the Serpentine Pavilion to gravitate towards an *anti-object*. "Instinctively, we tried to sidestep the unavoidable problem of creating an object...could we try to achieve something that was 'non-object'?"³¹ As with the majority of conceptual projects, the documentation of process proves to perform the task of "object" more so than its own materialization, which explains the abundance of fast, gestural drawings and diagrams by Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei. (Fig. 14) With the exception of the formal diagram-cum-construction document, this anti-object modality reinforces the pavilion's documented drawings. (Fig. 15) More akin to a napkin sketch, the pavilion drawings suggest that the design process for an anti-object did not happen behind a desk, but rather around a dining table as pictured in a snapshot of all three designers enjoying a meal. Here, the napkin sketch diagram operates both in the realm of paper architecture and as a disposable object—a strong parallel to fashion's fast consumption of objects.

and Jodidio, Philip. *Serpentine Gallery Pavilions*. Köln: Taschen, 2011. 14.

³¹ Herzog, De Meuron, and Weiwei, *Herzog and De Meuron + Ai Weiwei: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012*. London: Köenig, 2012. 52.

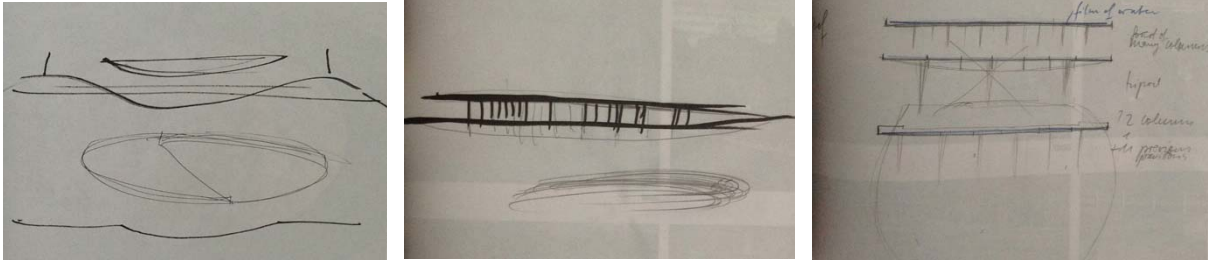


Figure 14: fast sketches of the *anti-object* pavilion implore ephemerality

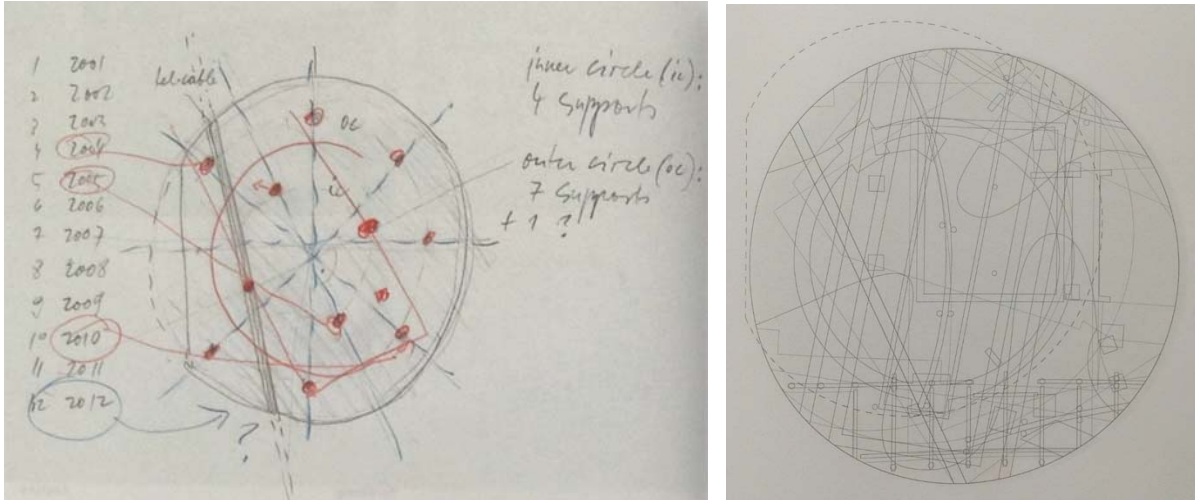


Figure 15: pattern-making with the traces of former pavilions

“The Pavilion design is very important in our fundamental approach, which is a re-thinking of what a pavilion actually is...if you don’t do this radical questioning then you end up in endless repetition,” Jacques Herzog explains.³² Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei examined the Pavilion site and during the initial phases of their underground concept, they discover the structural remains of pavilions’ past. The interpretation of time through the architectural ‘dig’ begs for veneration and operates as a post-critical critique; Sylvia Lavin reveals

burying half of their structure below ground and devoting much of their effort to excavating the foundations of all previous Serpentine pavilions, perhaps

³² Ibid., 95.

suggests that pavilionization is approaching a state of self-referential exhaustion.³³

Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei's anti-object perpetuates Walter Benjamin's exhaustive quote "To live is to leave traces," yet the designers think of the project in terms of producing a factual fiction, a visceral object. The pavilion's forgotten indexes initiate a process of documenting the former and determining a new landscape within the circular frame of the roof.

By studying the history of this small patch of grass, and outlining the footprints and foundations of previous Pavilions, we could reveal their ghosts. The Pavilions don't remain physically, but their traces do, like a readymade, or like buried treasure.³⁴

The as-found structures were then abstracted into a new tectonic system—the column. (Fig. 16) Eleven columns pierce four-feet below grade, each representing a past pavilion and a twelfth column to designate the 2012 pavilion—slanted as if the roof just slid back to reveal the ruins below—but unlike the accessible and legible forms of Viktor & Rolf's garments, the Serpentine Pavilion proves a challenge to understand the object as whole without a close examination of the diagrammatic plans and processes.

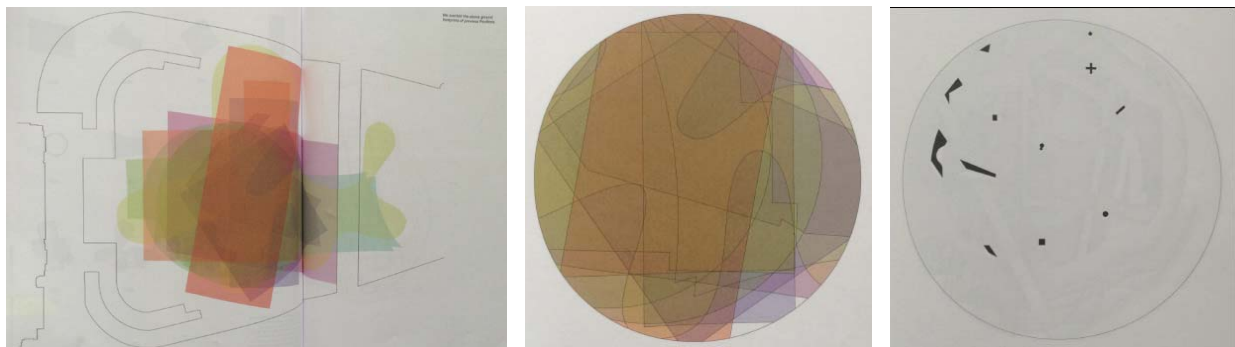


Figure 16: extrapolating twelve columnar orders through excessive overlap

³³ Lavin, Sylvia. "Vanishing Point." *Artforum* October (2012).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

In addition to the palimpsests of the 2012 Serpentine Pavilion and the 2010 Spring runway show described, experimentations in each case study push the boundaries of fast and slow by redefining material qualities. Viktor & Rolf use extraneous amounts of tulle in their show to play with the body's silhouette and scale. They set the stage by flanking the runway stage right with a giant, rotating Swarovski-crystal globe and an over-sized podium with Pop singer Róisín Murphy belting out disco-inspired tunes at stage left, lending to a chic superclub vibe over a stuffy runway show. Outfitted in a massive tulle cape, Murphy's form suggests a neoclassical bust against the stark white backdrop. The integrity of the transparent and airy fabric is exploited for its structural qualities and produces a hard graphic edge to the garments. As each model glides down the runway, Viktor & Rolf's pastel tulle creations strike a pose: tectonic solids within a still-life composition.³⁵ The pavilion features cork as its dominant material. The choice in selecting a naturally renewable material dissolves notions of a permanent architecture, as cork is known for its short lifespan and need for replacement.³⁶ The olfactory and acoustic benefits of the material lend to a certain atmospheric effect of being embedded within the earth among the ghosts of the pavilions past. Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei's ruins are soft and the fabricated cork stools littering the subterranean landscape become mobilized based on programmatic need. Cut and cladded on site, the cork is not the only site-specific feature of the 2012

³⁵ Invented in 19th century Britain, Bobbinet-or tulle-is comprised of a hexagonal weave, a lightweight, netted fabric that yields strong a structural logic.

³⁶ Cork is also known for its elasticity and fire-resistance--two qualities most other tectonic materials cannot typically boast—and it venerates the material selection process for a temporary pavilion.

Pavilion—the circular roof contains a pool that collects rainwater and at times of low precipitation, it can be completely drained and used as a programmatic stage.

When Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei submerge the pavilion into the ground and float the shallow roof-pond slightly about the datum, the water table exists on new ground and the former pavilion traces buried below have now been excavated. The 2012 pavilion lowers the entire roof to the torso so that visitors may observe the changing London sky while the water-slab conceptually slices their reflected bodies when viewed inside the pavilion, reminiscent of Viktor & Rolf’s 2010 spring finale look. This doubling and slicing effect elicits two historical precedents, Mies van der Rohe’s 1929 Barcelona pavilion, where the use of water butterflies Georg Kolbe’s *Alba* statue, and “Steel Human Body” by Charles Ray. Both precedents reduce the body as a mere part to the art object whole. (Fig. 17)



Figure 17: the fragmented body in the 2012 pavilion, the final runway look, and “Steel Human Body”

Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei’s initial design phase explored how an anti-pavilion could manifest and the form it would assume. The conceptual challenge in this project was not about accommodating the constant gallery programs scheduled—including poetry readings, concerts, film screenings, and conversations—but to produce

an architectural object that can leave a trace or memory of its existence.³⁷ The designers “soon realized that a completely underground Pavilion without any physical expression about ground wasn’t possible,”³⁸ they continue to explain, “we found that this authorless quality could be best expressed in familiar volumes, pure geometries and platonic forms.” Using platonic solids, however, is a bit precarious especially when the pyramid is considered for a temporary pavilion. In his essay “The Obelisk,” Georges Bataille explains that the pyramid is the most static form of architecture and that the Obelisk located in the Palace de la Concorde, where Louis XVI was guillotined, stands in for histories past and re-establishes order.³⁹ The 2012 pavilion interrogates how its form might challenge existing systems of order and establish new systems to conceal the purpose of the original objects of the former pavilions and the Kensington Garden grounds. The pavilion engages in the site as it locks into the ground and acknowledges the neighboring Gallery building with a beveled edge to the disk roof.⁴⁰

Inevitably, the annual Serpentine Pavilion is disassembled and sold to a collector. Under certain conditions, it is pre-sold for the initial construction costs required and such was the case for the 2012 Pavilion funded by Usha Mittal, the wife to Steel-

³⁷ Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist annually organize the Pavilion’s culminating event; 2012’s “Memory Marathon” comprised of a series of round-table discussions on the previous eleven Serpentine Pavilions, including MVRDV’s unbuilt 2004 concept. Jodidio, Philip. *Serpentine Gallery Pavilions*. Köln: Taschen, 2011.

³⁸ Herzog, De Meuron, and Weiwei, *Herzog and De Meuron + Ai Weiwei: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012*, 54-5.

³⁹ “If one considers the mass of the pyramids and the rudimentary means at the disposal of their builders, it seems evident that no enterprise cost a greater amount of labor than this one, which wanted to halt the flow of time,” see Bataille, “The Obelisk” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, 215.

⁴⁰ The water-roof’s continuous circular form provides a *true* Round Pond for the park, versus the softly squared 18th century ornamental lake located on the garden grounds.

Tycoon Lakshmi Mittal.⁴¹ Beyond the monetary assistance of private collectors and donor funding, Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei produced a limited number run of silk-screened drawings, porcelain recreations of the cork stools, and collectable porcelain disks of the pavilion’s archaeological landscape priced at £8,000. (Fig. 18) In the same vein as a minted commemorative coin program, each collector’s item guarantees a certificate of authenticity, given the post-production objects can be purchased online and shipped to directly to private residences. The Mittals have yet to announce when and where they might reassemble their own piece of bespoke architecture, the afterlife of the Serpentine Pavilions often remains a mystery, as do the “anonymous” owners.⁴²

The screenshot shows the 'Culture Label' website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'CULTURE LABEL' logo, 'SHOP FOR THE ARTS' tagline, and social media icons (Facebook Like, 11k). The main navigation includes 'What's New', 'Magazine', 'Brands', and 'Trending'. Below this, there are category links: 'ART / LIVING / WOMEN / MEN / GIFTS'. A search bar and utility links ('SIGN IN', 'MY BASKET (0)', '£ GBP') are also present.

The main content area features the title 'Herzog & de Meuron, Landscape 2012' and a sub-header 'IN OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH SERPENTINE GALLERY'. A 'Click to zoom' link is positioned above a large image of a circular porcelain disk. The disk is a light-colored, hand-sculpted relief of a pavilion structure.

To the right of the image, the product details are listed:

- Limited edition of 10**
- Hand-sculpted, painted and fired porcelain*
- Made using traditional methods in Jingdezhen, China*
- 25 cm diameter x 2.5 cm height*
- Edition of 10, each uniquely stamped and numbered*
- Accompanied by a signed certificate of authenticity*

 A link to 'Read the full description >' is provided. Below this, a 'Delivery & Returns' dropdown menu is visible. The price is listed as '£9,600.00' and the quantity is set to '1'. A prominent purple 'ADD TO BASKET' button is located below the price. At the bottom of the product section, there are social sharing options: 'Add to wishlist', 'Tweet 0', '+1 0', 'Like 0', and 'Pin it'. A 'Reviews (0)' link is also present.

Figure 18: available for online purchase: a porcelain pavilion

⁴¹ That same year, Mr. Mittal also funded the Anish Kapoor ArcelorMittal Orbit tower for the Olympic Park.

⁴² Otero Verzier, Marina. "Tales from beyond the Grave." *Domus*, 12 Nov. 2012. Web. Spring 2013.

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Viktor and Rolf (Dutch, founded 1993)

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 Culture: Dutch
 Medium: synthetic, silk
 Dimensions: Length at CB: 64 in. (162.6 cm)
 Credit Line: Purchase, Friends of The Costume Institute Gifts, 2011
 Accession Number: 2011.9

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- Netherlands (7,658)

When

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Hollbrunn Timeline of Art History

Fullereren

Figure 19: institutionally archived: a gown from the 2010 ready-to-wear collection

Just one year prior to their 2010 spring collection, Viktor & Rolf were the first fashion house to launch a web-based runway show as a result to the floundering economy. Despite the quick and temporal nature of a web-only show, the designers produced a porcelain doll outfitted in the finale look for their archive. The use of the fashion doll maintains historic roots as a disciplinary object for the field of fashion. Originating with Charles IV of France's wife, Queen Isabella, the first fashion show was in 1391 where dressmakers presented the monarchy with fashion dolls outfitted in

miniature reproductions of their creations. The fashion doll was a mode of representation and a method of circulation for designers through the late 18th century.⁴³ Although they do not attribute their historical significance as the first fashion models, Viktor & Rolf implement the use of fashion dolls into their own practice as a means to slow down the need for fast fashion and to understand the complexity of their garment creations. Horsting states “at the time, we felt the need to show our work as one entity, and we were looking for a way to do that—to sort of take the speed of fashion out of it and show the ideas in a different way.” Snoeren also mentions that “the atelier is proud of the dolls because they’re made in-house and they require so much work on a small scale—almost more work than the real clothes!”⁴⁴

In addition to their dolls displayed in exhibitions, Viktor & Rolf’s full-scale, fashion show garments are often purchased for departmental archives alike The Costume Institute at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Fig. 19) Ideological complexity arises when institutions are unable to accompany the acquisitioned garment within the larger part of a complete collection. The dislocation of the dress (the part) from the collection (the whole) interrogates what is at stake if one of Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei’s architectural diagrams of the former pavilions were to be excluded in their final design, does the pavilion come undone conceptually? The pavilion’s silk-screened drawings and porcelain disks integrate into systems of consumption, while the gown is selectively

⁴³ Tolman, Ruth. *Fashion Show: Guide to Fashion Show Production*. Bronx, NY: Milady Pub., 1976. 4-7. Everett, Judith C. and Kristen K. Swanson. *Guide to Producing a Fashion Show*. New York: Fairchild Publications, 1993. 5.

⁴⁴ Bernard, Katherine. " Studio Tour: Viktor & Rolf’s Amsterdam Workspace." *Vogue.com*. Condé Nast, 2 Mar. 2013. Web. Spring 2013. Evans, Caroline, Susannah Frankel, Jane Alison, and Ariella Yedgar. "Introduction," *The House of Viktor & Rolf*. London: Merrell, 2008. 10-20.

purchased and cataloged into an archival back-of-house, only to be circulated for the occasional fashion exhibition. The irony here between the fields of architecture and fashion and between the case studies examined is that the architectural object manifested under the institutional conditions only to later enter the market for private collectors and the runway garment produced for commodity resists closets and instead is procured by the institution.



Figure 20: the last-look: curated authors

Capturing the essence of the run-through processional and the one finale look, the precedent authors are editorialized in distinctly staged photos that capture both the two case studies and the two respective fields at large. (Fig. 20) Imagined as a dramatized hands-on event, Viktor & Rolf massacre a ball gown littering tulle across the floor of an 18th century period room, placing the ball gown silhouette within a continuum of typologies and metaphorically referencing the market as the blades which cut down decadence. Their shaving of the tulle tower parallels Herzog & de Meuron and Weiwei's casual press-release picture in which they are also constructing a tower of wine glasses

over a casual meal. The surrounding objects comprised in the image foreshadow the features of the 2012 Pavilion: a relief on the back wall resembles the design's subterranean "landscape," and the water bowl among a table of plates suggests the reflecting roof-pond. The two images express the authorial bow of each discipline, fashion clenches onto history and institutions for stasis and architecture loosens up to dissemination and the market for temporality.

Residual Architecture & Dress

Poché is currently gaining contemporaneity in practice and theory even though its most influential period was the Ecole des Beaux Arts.⁴⁵ Considering poché is a canonized convention of reading and drawing the architectural object, few seminal texts have been written solely on the topic, yet poché exhibits spatial qualities—subtractive and sculptural—suggesting conceptual overlaps between architecture and fashion. A brief examination of poché during its historic pinnacle in the 17th and 18th centuries at the Ecole des Beaux Arts reveals typological evolution in architectural form through the execution and use of poché as a means to sculpt programmatic function resulting in social and cultural shifts as specifically demonstrated in the French hôtel. Concurrent with the formal transformations to the hôtel plan is the shift in French fashion silhouettes: the building façade misinformed the plan and produced incongruence in the much like the court-dress concealment of the body's natural form. Variations on poché are introduced by contemporary architecture and the resulting nuances reappropriate the canonized poché of the Beaux Arts through material technique to reactive these residual spaces between walls.⁴⁶

In the most reductive term, poché is the space concealed by the thickness of walls; and in pragmatic terms, it refers to the blackening of structural elements in plan and suggests solid form while simultaneously expressing voided space. Historically,

⁴⁵ Contemporary interest in poché is seen in the work of OMA, SANAA and Bureau Spectacular and also, in recent academic studio classes exploring Object Oriented Ontology, where poché appears present in each project as a means to obfuscate.

⁴⁶ Modernists edited Poché out of the architectural plan as a reactionary, ideological stance against the Beaux Arts' modes of representation.

poché derives from the Ecole des Beaux Arts as novice students inked—or blackened in—an existing plan drawn by the precisely trained designer. In *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture*, architect and historian Michael Dennis catalogs the evolution of the French hôtel of the Baroque, the Rococo, and the Neoclassical movements.⁴⁷ The French hôtel proves to be an object of interest because the emerging hôtel typology occurred during a time of national and political change, as reflected in the architectural shift from the freestanding country chateaus and villas of the monarchy to the embedded urban hôtels of the emerging bourgeois. Typologically, hôtels share parti walls with adjacent neighbors and contribute to defining the urban edge and streetscape—a manifestation of democratic society. This new democratic form also meant political advancement in the architectural plan—poché transformed from the mere space between walls to a dominant organizational feature—local symmetries shifted into asymmetrical composition and activated the residual wall spaces as programmatic circulation. The pochéd asymmetrical hôtel plan proved to be an experience of convenience and accommodation, a critique on the formality of the monarchy’s processional architecture, which often upheld Palladian ideals in form and plan.

Ranging from a massive urban scale down to the individual hôtel fireplaces, Dennis formulates four types of poché during 17th and 18th century. (Fig. 21) Similar to the Noli map of Rome, “Urban Poché” contributes not only to the façade of the hôtel, but also to the urban fabric of the city. “Primary Poché” blurs the distinction between the

public space of the street and the private space of the hôtel, such as the cour d'honneur and the porte-cochere, where the social rituals of private life are openly placed on display. "Secondary Poché" collapses public and private and develops the hôtel's main circulation of receiving rooms, vestibules and stairs. Lastly, "Tertiary Poché" is the most privatized of the four types, consisting of servant corridors and closets, as Dennis states:

This system of hierarchical levels of poché and designed discontinuity not only allows the identity and closure of each of the spaces, sometimes down to the smallest of dressing rooms, but also wastes very little space with literal poché, or thick walls, to resolve awkward joints.⁴⁸

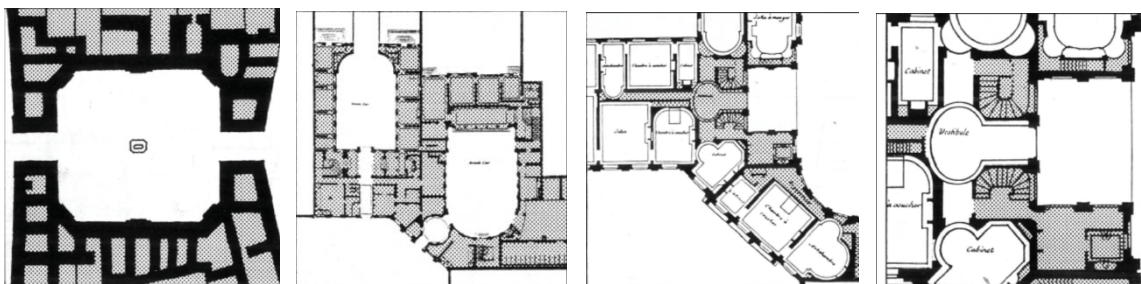


Figure 21: Dennis' four hierarchies of poché: Urban, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary

Dennis fleshed out these four categories through his close reading of Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassical hôtel poché and how each style typologically operates within his hierarchical system. Baroque hôtels are read as highly contextual to their location within the city, demonstrated by the heavy urban poché of the plan. Interior rooms are clustered together and united through the use of enfilades, emphasis is placed on procession and coherent circulation is maintained with accompanying service spaces. The Rococo typology "increased emphasis on the individual encouraged, even required,

⁴⁸ Dennis, Michael. *Court & Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1986. 91, 95.

a new type of hôtel---one better suited to the needs and aspirations of the emerging society...⁴⁹ The resulting Rococo hôtel plan preferred public to private, a product of lifestyle, and was articulated as a pavilion within the confines of a garden—the hôtel within the city. In regards to public and private, Rococo interior spaces evolved into hyper-specific and choreographed rooms that made use of residual *poché* to carve out unexpected programmatic spaces. According to Dennis, “this seemingly innocuous innovation was actually of fundamental importance vis-à-vis a changing attitude toward personal privacy, and, ultimately, as a technique of modern planning.”⁵⁰ The ability to exploit the residual spaces of the rococo plan by masking the façade of the idiosyncratic hôtel yielded a delightful incongruence: interior legibility is concealed from the exterior and only experientially revealed as demonstrated in the Rococo hôtels of *Juste-Aurele Meissonier*, the discipline’s guiltiest-pleasure at that time. Rationalist scrutiny from the forthcoming generation of architects and their purist ideologies shunned the short-lived Rococo for its opulent frivolity and thus, the production Rococo hôtels and its architects, conceded to the emerging Neoclassical hôtel plan, a reflection of the rapidly changing private and intellectual sphere.⁵¹ (Fig. 22)

⁴⁹ Ibid. 96.

⁵⁰ An architectural exemplar in this technique of carving out residual space is Jules Hardouin Mansart, who Dennis describes as a “a talented but slightly reactionary Bauhaus student.” Ibid. 97, 114-116.

⁵¹ “With the Enlightenment came a significant shift in this set of relationships, as man stepped out of the center to take a position of equality with other bodies in a rationally ordered natural world.” Philosophers attacked the rococo for lacking rational reason—like Diderot’s *encyclopédie* (categorized all aspects of life into one system) Two Manuals/publications highlight the systematic hôtel: J.-F. Blondel’s “De la distribution des maisons de plaisance et la decoration des edifices en general” (1737 & 1738) and C. -E. Briseux’s “L’Art de batir des maisons de campagne” (1743) Ibid.126.

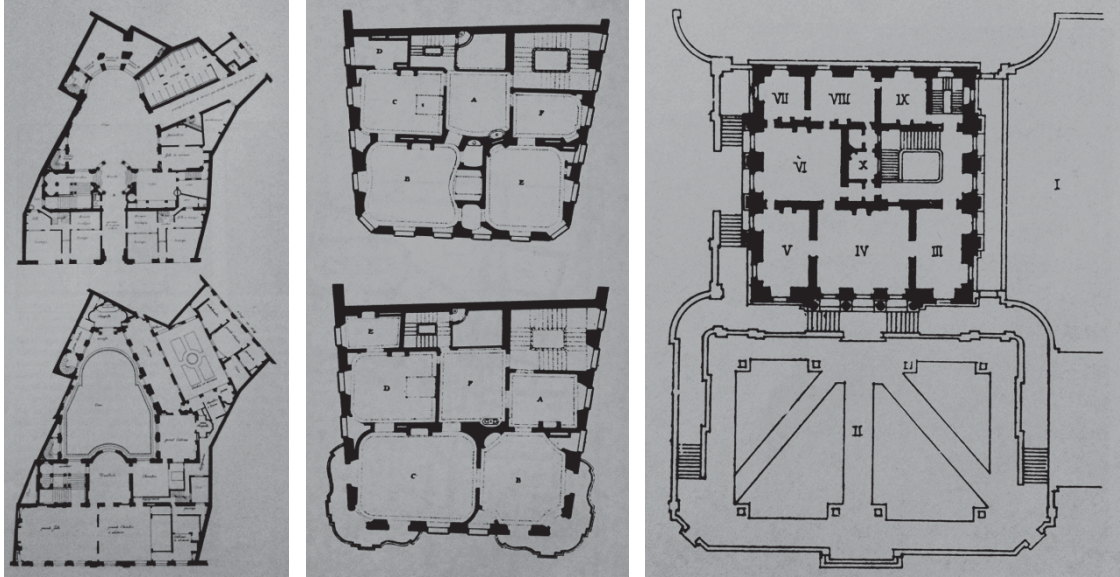


Figure 22: Three exemplary hôtel plans from the Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassical periods

Neoclassical hôtels emphasized accuracy not only in programming as systems of convenience were explored and deployed, but also aesthetically as the formal characteristics of historical precedents were being reproduced and consumed by the new generation of architects through circulated publications on archeological excavations of classical architecture and monuments from the ancient world.⁵² Dennis demonstrates the historical importance of the neoclassical hôtel and its subsequent spatial qualities as a synthesized typology of the baroque and rococo:

The Baroque hôtels of the age of Louis XIV, had impressive exteriors but lacked sophisticated interior planning; that the Rococo hôtels associated with Louis XV made great advances in convenient internal arrangements, but at the expense of external development; and, finally, that the architects of the late eighteenth century were able to combine the virtues of the two previous eras while eliminating the shortcomings, thus making the Neoclassical hôtels of the last period into “masterpieces” of domestic architecture.⁵³

⁵² “This fresh view of the past, plus the romantic Romanism of Piranesi and his demand for *tabula rasa*, contributed to a wholly new idea of history—to the self-conscious *use* of history as well as the scientific *study* of history.” Ibid. 126

⁵³ Ibid.13

Concurrent with the evolution of architectural poché is the shift in 17th and 18th century fashion and the exaggerated silhouettes that emerged with the aid of armatures and bolsters. The structural capacity of early armatures, such as the 16th century farthingale, allowed for the hipline to expand into Elizabethan bell-shaped silhouettes. The French reinterpreted this structural technology into oblong shaped skirt; they also minimized the English bum-roll bolster and opted for a petite, less cumbersome armature. The new bustle armature allowed for a fuller skirt over the derriere and allowed the fabric over the former round, caged volume of the farthingale to drape. Commonly stuffed with down feathers, bum-rolls softly upholstered the body, however, cork was a cheaper alternative available and it hardened bodily exterior into haptic forms. Hips continued to extended outward as Panniers—the super-armature—exaggerated the frontal view of a court dress while flattening the front and back bustles of the bum-rolls and farthingales. (Fig. 23) Curator and writer Harold Koda describes the excessive nature of these armatures for *Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2001 exhibition:

In the eighteenth century, formal dress was so closely associated with Versailles and the French court that it was universally described as the *robe à la française*. . . In its most formal configuration, the *robe à la française* presented a particularly wide and flattened profile accomplished by enlarged panniers. . . a woman so garbed had to pass through a doorway sideways.⁵⁴

Consequently, the formalist of court gowns were incredibly two-dimensional and elicited an obvious misreading of the natural form, suggesting poché beneath layers of supple silk.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Koda, Harold. *Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001. 117.

⁵⁵ On the elliptical panniers: "Extreme versions, usually reserved for the most formal occasions, created a narrow, flattened silhouette that demanded acute spatial perspicacity." Ibid. 78.



Figure 23: Full and flat: the exaggerated silhouettes of *robe à la française*

The interiors and corresponding furniture during this period transformed to accommodate not only the fuller gowns, but also the social occasions elicited by their use and the necessary poses required when wearing such elaborate garments. In 2006, only five years after *Extreme Beauty*, Koda and fashion curator Andrew Bolton paired up for *Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century*. Set within The Metropolitan Museum of Art's French Decorative Arts rooms, the exhibition combined period costumes, furniture and paintings from both The Costume Institute and The Met's permanent collection to produce a fresh dialog among the various objects and institutional departments. Historian Mimi Hellman describes the cohesive nature of these extravagant interiors and costumes as highly curated and loaded with social intention:

...the intimacies of the interior played out not only between people but also between people and the furniture that surrounded them. Objects such as chairs and tables were active protagonists in an elaborate game of cultivated sociability. Through their luxurious materials and strategically designed forms, they

facilitated a process of alluring self-presentation and elegant communication that was central to the formation of elite identities.⁵⁶

Each period room displayed the spectacle of court life, the everyday pomp-and-circumstance, and the necessary choreography required to occupy these spaces; stuffed chairs functioned as pedestals for displaying the décolletages of well-postured and masquerading bodies. The domestic objects within The Met's period rooms are described in the exhibition catalog as

extensions of the body, part of a wardrobe that, could turn the activities of elite existence into dances of artful persuasion. [...] The elite body was thus doubly disciplined by fashion, shaped by both its decorative dressing and its decorated environment.⁵⁷

The frivolous period of the extravagantly wide *robe à la française* ended approximately in the 1780s in conjunction with the rise of the neoclassical movement's the preference for simplicity over excess and Rousseau's return to nature. Paradoxically, the moment that architecture became rational and demanded seriousness, so too did the formal gowns and their corsets come undone. Simply draped in muslin with little structure and no armature, the silhouette of neoclassical fashions suggested freedom in contrapposto.

Architect Bernard Rudofksy valorized the image of the antiquity's natural form, a bold move during the height of the mid-century modernist movement. He theorized the transformations in fashion silhouettes as indicative of the zeitgeist. His extensive research culminated in books, exhibitions, and a brief stint as a fashion and shoe

⁵⁶Koda, Harold, and Andrew Bolton. *Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006. 15.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 23

designer.⁵⁸ For the *Extreme Beauty* catalog, Koda describes the ever-changing nature of fashion and the resulting effect on the natural body in Rudofksian terms:

Fashion has practiced extreme strategies to portray shifting concepts of the physical ideal. The physical areas of the body have been variously and strategically adjusted. They have been constricted, padded, truncated, or extended to achieve fashion's goal through subtle visual adjustments of proportion, less subtle prostheses, and, often, deliberate physical changes.⁵⁹

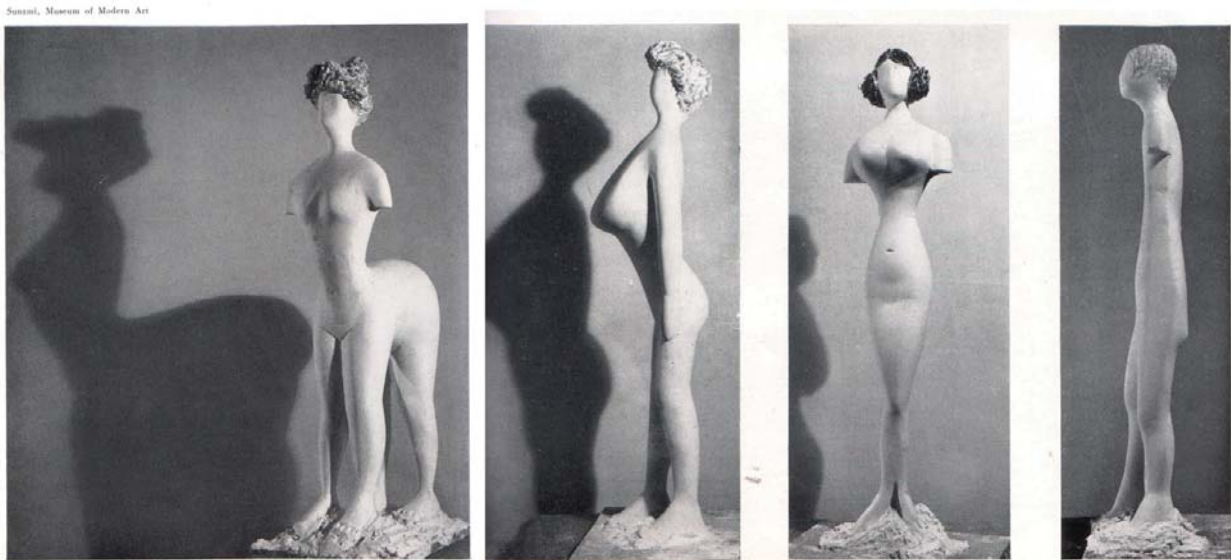


Figure 24: The “Body Idols” silhouettes of 1875, 1904, 1913, and 1920

Rudofsky’s 1944 *Are Clothes Modern* exhibition occupied The Met’s first floor galleries and was categorized into smaller collections such as “The Unfashionable Human Body,” “The Desire to Conform,” and “Body Idols.” The categorical sub-titles suggest Rudofsky’s own rational perceptions of the body and the role of fashion, as he accepted the a priori condition of clothing containing a representational system of sexuality. In “Body Idols,” friend and sculptor Costantino Nivola produced four plaster

⁵⁸ Rudofsky’s fashion design endeavors include Bernardo Separates and the widely popular Bernardo Sandals. Guarneri, Andrea Bocco., and Bernard Rudofsky. *Bernard Rudofsky: A Humane Designer*. New York: SpringerWien, 2003.

⁵⁹ As accessed in the exhibition description on The Met’s website:
<http://www.metmuseum.org/research/metpublications/Extreme_Beauty_The_Body_Transformed>

casts of various female silhouettes to demonstrate Rudofsky's theories about the distorted, dressed female form—as if the figure biologically conformed to characterize the fashions of a given period. (Fig. 24) “Body Idols” demonstrated the brutish nature and consumption of fashion’s abnormal human form as “our civilization keeps alive the fascination for monsters and, at the same time expresses disdain for the normally built human body...The specimen of past days fascinate us with their zoological garden variety rather than with their erotic charm,” claimed Rudofsky.⁶⁰ The four sculptural figures were showcased on podiums in chronological order along a corridor wall as point lights casted harsh shadows behind on the museum wall, to further emphasize the exaggerated and monstrous silhouettes through abstraction. Their distorted forms catalog a brief history of fashion: the bustled farthingale figure of 1875 required an additional set of legs for structural stability, the top-heavy and buttoned-up 1904 Victorian dowager figure developed a mono-bosom, the hourglass figure of 1913 slimmed down to one leg under a hobble skirt, and the androgynous flapper of 1920 flattened out to a single plane.

In addition to the forms explored in “Body Idols,” Rudofsky offered four critical iterations of the shoe: a typical foot, a cobbler's wooden last, a man's shoe, and an atypical foot, all of which offered “an exemplary demonstration that what we wear is not conceived for the shape of the human body.”⁶¹ (Fig. 25) Through his examination of

⁶⁰ Rudofsky, Bernard. *Are Clothes Modern*. Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1947. 49.

⁶¹ The shoe is considered to be a loaded object in the context of Adolf Loos' immoral shoes as discussed in *Ornament and Crime* and *Why a Man Should Be Well-Dressed*. Rudofsky claimed “Today's shoe boxes ought to carry the warning: WEARING OUR SHOES MAY BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH.” Guarneri, Andrea Bocco. and Bernard Rudofsky. *Bernard Rudofsky: A Humane Designer*. New York: SpringerWien, 2003. 71-4.

human form and the enclosure of fashion, new conceptions of spatiality and the body emerged in Rudofsky's work. He believed that utopian ideals could manifest in clothing and focused on a way to aestheticize a natural lifestyle by simplifying forms and constructing pieces with multiple wear combinations. As a result of his progressive ideologies on clothing, Rudofsky's ready-to-wear collection was a first in 'one-size-fits-all' garments for modern women.⁶² In a press release for *Are Clothes Modern*, The Met declared,

it is the hope of the Museum that the exhibition, by stimulating a re-examination of the subject, may have a beneficial effect on dress comparable to that already accomplished by the modern analysis of function in the field of architecture.[11]



Figure 25: From *Are Clothes Modern*, the natural foot and the shoe; shoes from the Fall 2009 Comme des Garçons ready-to-wear collection

It is at the intersection of Rudofsky's satirical sculptures and his self-prescribed separates, where poché gains contemporaneity. Similar to Rudofsky's "Bernardo

⁶² Bernardo Separates, Bernardo Bareskins, and Bernardo Sandals

Seperates” clothing collection, Rei Kawakubo’s early Comme des Garçons’ garments allowed for improvisation with multiple openings and endless options for wear, requiring in-store ‘how-to’ demonstrations for clients by trained sales staff. The flexibility of these pieces represented the nomadic and urban nature of Comme des Garçons as a brand and it elicited a deeply political statement: “a tactic to liberate female dress from 'omniscient male narrator.’”⁶³ Kawakubo’s signature look—the 'impoverished aesthetic'—first debuted as an all-black runway show that strictly focused on form. The choice in a monochromatic collection was not merely simplifying a color palate to call close attention to detailing--it was a rebellion to the couture ateliers that dominated the canon of fashion, its disciplinary history, and the territory of the female body. Maintaining their legacy to the couture origins the 17th and 18th century, the dominant ateliers during the early 1980s placed emphasis on craft, customization and materiality of a garment. Kawakubo, however, concentrated on complexity in pattern making and structure over surface, which required a physical body for garment assembly. Kawakubo “abandoned representational fashion and introduced the notion of clothing as wearable abstraction.”⁶⁴ Abstraction was no longer about form, but also about gender and identity; the early collections were ballooning, oversized garments that swallowed the body and obfuscated the sinuous lines conjured up by cinched waists. The early Comme des Garçons collections begin to suggest parallels to the Beaux Arts poché in the spatial operations of solid and void rendered in all black.

⁶³ Thurman, Judith. *ReFUSING Fashion: Rei Kawakubo*. Detroit, MI: Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 2008. 58.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 71.

The 1997 Spring/Summer “Dress Meets Body, Body Meets Dress” show engaged the most violent attack on the female body and remains one of Kawakubo's most powerful runway collections.⁶⁵ (Fig. 26) Kawakubo’s runway collection spawned several nicknames—“Lumps and Bumps Collection” and “Quasimodo”—as she dramatically stuffed the garments to blur any distinction of what is the *actual* versus the *idealized* form with “body-hugging pieces in stretch gingham that were deformed in unsettling places...with bulbous tumors of down.”⁶⁶ Koda depicts the collection:

Kawakubo’s design underscores the fact that the uneasiness precipitated by her aesthetic does not simply derive from its distortion of the natural form but rather from the asymmetry she introduces. But even in its deformity, her faintly monstrous restructuring of the natural body is nowhere near the exaggerated scale of the painted gowns that were in vogue in the eighteenth century.⁶⁷

Similar to the 17th and 18th century gowns and armatures, Kawakubo’s prosthetic deformations were devised of various materials including goose down padding, foam inserts and inflatable panels. Yet, unlike the historic gowns, Kawakubo opted to include pocket seams so that each pad could be removed as desired—a modern novelty that permitted customers the choice to excessively upholster themselves or simply leave the pockets empty to reveal the body’s natural form. Thus, the collection produced a literal translation of poché—or “pocket”—and activated the body as the site of poché, begging the question, which panels *should* be stuffed?

⁶⁵ According to Joffe, the inspiration for the collection came out of Kawakubo's disgruntled reaction “at seeing a GAP window filled with banal black clothes.” Here, her own sensibilities of all-black fell victim to fashion cliché, so she reacted. “Adrian Joffe Interview.” *Wallpaper* Magazine: Design, Interiors, Architecture, Fashion, Art*. N.p., 14 May 2007. Web. 29 Nov. 2012.

⁶⁶ Thurman, Judith. *ReFUSING Fashion: Rei Kawakubo*. Detroit, MI: Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 2008. 59.

⁶⁷ Koda, Harold. *Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001. 113.



Figure 26: "Dress Meets Body, Body Meets Dress" by Comme des Garçons

Known for his collaborations with avant garde artists and architects, modern dance choreographer Merce Cunningham recognized the formal beauty in Kawakubo's Spring collection. He perceived Kawakubo's lumps-and-bumps to be extensions of the modern body: a poncho over a book bag, a child strapped to a parent, or a cyclist with a sling bag. Cunningham commissioned Kawakubo to design both the costumes and the set for his 1997 production "Scenario."⁶⁸ Previously, the standard costume for the dance company was a form-fitting unitard that varied only in color or patterned prints. Kawakubo's costumes were the first to break Cunningham's costume tradition as their improvisational nature upheld the dance company's own performance modalities, noting "the costumes emphasized how dance distorts and extends the body in unnatural ways."⁶⁹ Cunningham choreographed "Scenario" with Kawakubo's costumes specifically in mind; he opted out of dress rehearsals until opening night, to which Cunningham instructed his dancers, "if a costume allows you to only go so far, you work with that...In

⁶⁸ This was not Kawakubo's first collaboration with a dance company; in 1983, she designed the costumes for Molissa Fenley and Dancers production of *Hemispheres*.
<http://www.molissafenley.com/view_works.php?id=51>

⁶⁹ Clearwater, Bonnie. Merce Cunningham: Dancing on the Cutting Edge. North Miami: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007. 27.

a great big overcoat you don't move the same way as in a bathing suit."⁷⁰ A duality emerged in the performance as the dancers were limited from carrying and extending their choreographed lines due to the cumbersome garments—the expectations of how a dancer's body should move through space challenged and perplexed the audience. The constricted poses and movements were abstracted as the costumes consisted of three color variations setting the scene in solid black, primary red, and a patterned mix of bright green gingham and periwinkle referee stripes.⁷¹ The solid colors emphasized volumetric mass and left appendages disconnected in space. Contrary to the solids, the patterned costumes emphasized the curvaceous forms and produced a colorful mesh that fluctuated as the dancers intersected with each other, merging the individual volumes into one pulsating mass. (Fig. 27) "I was interested in the defiance and fusion of the dancers within a limited and fixed white frame. I didn't want a 'stage' feeling, but more like a room..."⁷² claims Kawakubo on the *Scenario* set collaboration with designers Takao Kawasaki and Masao Nihei. The modest all-white stage conjured images of the white-box gallery—a subtle architectural framing device—and a consciousness product-placement move, as Kawakubo described:

The defiance of fusion of the dancers with in the confines of a limited white space! What would happen? The emptiness of the stage and the restrictions of the movements due to the shape and volumes of the costumes! Would something totally unexpected be produced? The results are unpredictable. We can only await chance and fortuity.⁷³

⁷⁰ Trebay, Guy. "Stretching It." *The Village Voice* [New York City] 21 Oct. 1997: 24.

⁷¹ The color selection is fully loaded as a homage to Kawakubo's own repertoire reading the canon of *Comme des Garçons*: beginning in monochromatic black, then the rejection of black (as cliché) and the proclamation 'red is the new black,' culminating in Kawakubo's recent pops of color from the 2007 runway.

⁷² Walker Art Museum. *Dance Works III: Merce Cunningham / Rei Kawakubo*.

<<http://www.walkerart.org/calendar/2012/dance-works-iii-merce-cunningham-rei-kawakubo>>

⁷³ Vaughan, David. *Merce Cunningham, Fifty Forward: "from Ocean to Ocean"* CD-ROM Produced by Cunningham Dance Foundation, 2005.

The set was lit with harsh fluorescents and assaulted the dancing bodies, creating hard shadows suggestive of Rudofsky's "Body Idols" sculptures.



Figure 27: Merce Cunningham's *Scenario* feature Comme des Garçons



Figure 28: *Dance Works III: Merce Cunningham / Rei Kawakubo* installation at the Walker Art Museum

The stark performance stage was recently recreated for the exhibition *Dance Works III: Merce Cunningham / Rei Kawakubo* at the Walker Art Center.⁷⁴ (Fig. 28) Similar to the audience orientation in the theater *Scenario* debuted, a white wall framed the bulbous, body-less costumes in space and demanded a full-frontal approach. The space of the museum visitor, the iconic costumes and the stark wall suggested a complex collapse of space as the voluptuous dresses were flattened to sinuous curves against the two-dimensional space of the wall-as-frame, giving way to graphic representation of poché.

If the architectural desire of 17th and 18th century poché produced a reading of pleasure, one that seduces through the misregistration between the exterior façade and the internalized plan, then it can be concluded that contemporary poché no longer seeks seduction through opaque obscurity, but through the modernist trope of transparency. Dennis describes why the disconnection between façade and plan can be linked to the social shifts occurring during 17th and 18th centuries in his description of the cultural climate during the Rococo:

The Rococo period...made of personal privacy, of secrecy, of intrigue, of personal experience almost the highest aims of life, dressing them gaily and luxuriously, but in ways designed to emphasize their quality. Rococo architecture became an architecture of intrigue...People began again to demand private lives. By the end of Louis XIV's reign this longing for personal lives and personal privacy had become universal. A complete revolution in social life occurred. People were suddenly interested in individuals and individual relationships, in intimate conversation. Wit began to take the place of eloquence.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ October 4, 2012 – March 24, 2013, Medtronic Gallery, Curator: Betsy Carpenter

⁷⁵ Dennis, Michael. *Court & Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1986. 91.



Figure 29: Contemporary poché: the transparent poché of Rei Kawakubo and SANAA

While Kawakubo's pochéd garments are suggestive of 17th and 18th century fashion in the use of exaggerated silhouettes, and her use of solid black for her early collections make her an obvious link to the hierarchical poché plan of the Beaux Arts, however, her most recent use of diaphanous fabrics unload meaning and demonstrates the social and cultural shifts of contemporary society and further likens her work to contemporary architectural poché.⁷⁶ SANAA's 2006 Toledo Museum of Art uses transparency to confuse distinction between a wall, a room, or poché, lending slight difficulty in navigating the plan of the building. Similarly, selective pieces from Kawakubo's *Lumps* collection uses sheer materials stuffed with padding so that the form of the natural and the sculpted body are simultaneously read, the commonly hidden, structural systems at work under garments are exposed. (Fig. 29) Kawakubo's acknowledgment of historically exaggerated forms produced by the bustle and farthingale is recontextualized as she reveals the spatial complexities between body and armature with contemporary assembly techniques and transparency. A bold gesture is made that can only be indicative of current culture and societal cues by

⁷⁶ The use of transparent fabric as a condition of the contemporary and disignation of social shifts, versus the French silk brocade gown's dye patterns, weft-and-weaves, and ornamental detailing to distinguish a tradition of craftsmanship and the hierarchical stratification of court.

Kawakubo evocating historical forms and augment the body while uncovering it for public exhibition, parallels SANAA's fetishized and hermeneutically sealed poché-as-display, no longer rendering poché an instance of residue, but the quintessential moment of provocation.

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