

Summary

Dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of fashion from an academic perspective, the quarterly journal *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* views fashion as a cultural phenomenon, offering the reader a wide range of articles by leading Western and Russian specialists, as well as classical texts on fashion theory. From the history of dress and design to body practices; from the work of well-known designers to issues around consumption in fashion; from beauty and the fashionable figure through the ages to fashion journalism, fashion and PR, fashion and city life, art and fashion, fashion and photography — *Fashion Theory* covers it all.

In this issue's **Dress** section, we present the first part of selected papers from the international conference “Fashion Cultures, Identities and Crisis: Making, Wearing, Caring”, held by *Fashion Theory* in Yerevan on 1–2 June 2023.

Ellen Sampson presents *Why Wornness: Imperfection, Embodiment and the Radical Power of the Worn*. At the opening the 2018 FIT symposium — Fashion Unravelling, Sampson posed the questions: Why wornness? Why do worn things matter? Why should we, as makers, researchers, curators, and consumers attend to damaged and imperfect things? In the period since, there has been a resurgence of interest in damaged and imperfect garments which builds upon the earlier work of researchers such as Stallybrass, De La Haye, Palmer and Evans. This paper returns to these questions to present wornness at a critical tool — a way of approaching the complex intersections of bodies, sensations and things. Worn is an interesting word — both a verb and an adjective — with dual but interlinked meanings. A garment is worn by putting it on and using it, and, through this, it becomes worn, altered through use. Thus, worn and used clothes sit on the peripheries of conventional understandings of fashion, which is so often concerned with newness, with reinvention through the acquisition of goods. Often, the more a garment is worn, the less it relates to an original ideal — the less fashionable and more bodily it becomes. Thus, worn garments subvert conventional notions of glamour and desire by being appealing and powerful because, rather than in spite, of their imperfections. Taking the dual meanings of worn — the linked bodily experiences of wearing and the material outcomes of wear — as its starting point, this paper frames worn garments as a powerful site to critique and reframe understandings of value and connectedness in fashion.

Elizabeth Kutesko's paper *Fashion on the Devil's Railroad: The Materialities of Working, Wearing and Caring for Clothes in the Brazilian Amazon* is concerned with the relationship between fashion, time, global experiences of modernity, and the complexity of transnational relations within the context of early twentieth-century United States-Brazilian visual culture. The paper presents a set of glass plate negatives which document the global migrant workforce who helped to build the Madeira-Mamoré railroad deep in the Amazon jungle between 1907 and 1912. Taken by New York fashion photographer Dana B. Merrill, the click of the camera's shutter marks a literal pause in the working day. Merrill's intricate documentation of worn and weathered overalls and dungarees, cotton shirts, functional trousers, and utilitarian jackets is punctuated with occasional global accents, whether a Balkan waistcoat or an Indian turban, that cast light upon the geographic networks of industrial modernity. Nicknamed the 'Devil's Railroad' due to the vast numbers of workers who died from a catalogue of disaster and disease, the railroad was an American-Brazilian

venture intended to expedite the global exportation of rubber and other tropical commodities from landlocked Bolivia. The anonymous workforce elevated within these portraits had travelled to the Amazon from over 52 nations. They were exposed to all the elements, while responsible for the hard manual labour of culling the jungle, laying the tracks, building bridges and maintaining the right of way. Given the considerable dearth of everyday and working dress preserved in museum collections in the U.S. and Brazil, this paper uses poetry, diary extracts and memoirs to breathe life into the visual. Personal accounts of life in frontier societies such as the Madeira-Mamoré railroad and Panama Canal facilitate our understanding of the embodied and experiential memories of wearing, working and caring for clothes, but also highlight how salient aspects of dress were for social distinction and identity construction.

Co-written by **Batrice ‘Bee’ Arthur, Sonya Battla, Angela Jansen & Chepkemboi Mang’ira**, *The Global Fashioning Assembly: Decentralising Fashion Knowledge Creation and Sharing* draws on a shared presentation at the Russian Fashion Theory Conference in May 2023. As hosting communities of the first Global Fashioning Assembly (GFA) in October 2022, Bee Arthur (Ghana), Chepkemboi Mang’ira (Kenya), Sonya Battla (Pakistan) and Angela Jansen (Netherlands) shared their experiences of what it means to decentralise and decolonise knowledge creation and sharing about body fashioning. The GFA is a biennial online gathering of fashion coalitions from around the world initiated as a decolonial alternative to western-centric academic fashion conferences. Its hosting is passed on from one community to the next to disrupt conventional colonial power relations often at play in global gatherings and to ensure self-determination, self-governance and self-representation. As a collaboratively created event founded on collective ideation, decision-making and governance, each hosting community decides on its own content(s), format(s), participant(s), audience(s), language(s) and aesthetics according to its specific local fashioning system, creative challenges and/or socio-political struggles. In this article, the authors share their experiences and knowledge in shaping, organising and hosting the Assembly, while reflecting together on the coloniality of their fashion histories and the decolonial possibilities of their fashion futures. Unlearning modern/colonial formatting is challenging, confusing, non-linear and ongoing. The Assembly is driven by the conviction that systemic changes demand changing the framework of the ways global communities meet in difference, and acknowledging global inequalities based on the modern-colonial order that have been determining whose knowledge gets validated, and whose gets erased.

In *'My Dress Complex': The Fashionable Contexts of Virginia Woolf*, Olga Vainshtein discusses Virginia Woolf's relationship with fashion, and the evolution of the writer's own style and attitude towards fashion. Drawing on Woolf's diaries, photographs, and the descriptions of dress in her work, Vainshtein pays particular attention to Woolf's work with *Vogue* in 1925–1926. The paper traces links between Virginia Woolf's photo session for *Vogue* in 1924, and her story *The New Dress*. A detailed analysis is made of the changes in the writer's own wardrobe, for instance, the appearance of a dress from the French couturier Nicole Groult. Descriptions of dress in Woolf's work, Vainshtein concludes, follow a largely autobiographical pattern.

Talinn Grigor offers *Iranian "Tradition" and Fashionability in the 1974 "Costumes of Armenian Women" Exhibition*. On the evening of May 15, 1974, forty-two Armenian women posed in their sumptuous "traditional" dresses as models for a special viewing by Empress Farah Pahlavi of Iran. Organized by one of Tehran's rare feminist women's organizations, AWU — the 'Armenian Woman' Union — the five-day public "Exhibition of Armenian Women's Historical Costumes" was a byproduct of several years of volunteer work. AWU had poured its efforts into completing the steps ordinarily undertaken by a museum. By placing the history of the making and display of these "traditional" Armenian costumes in the broader context of the late Pahlavi culture of fashion and fashionability, this study explores how the doubly minoritized Irano-Armenian women deployed the discourse of domesticity and traditionalism of dressmaking, embroidering, and hat-making to interject Armenian women's agency into both Armenian patriarchal historiography and the Pahlavi "classi-cization of tradition" as an expression of nationalism and cosmopolitan modernity.

Ophelia Azizyan's *Knots of Identity: The Meanings of National Dress in Preserving Cultural Heritage and Identity* explores the importance of Armenian national costume in the preservation of cultural heritage and national identity. The study examines the significance of preserving the national costume during the Armenian Genocide (1915–1917) and the challenge of its preservation among representatives of the Armenian diaspora in the modern world. Armenian national costume comprises two main complexes: Eastern Armenian and Western Armenian. During the period of the Armenian Genocide, the Western Armenian complex was on the brink of disappearance, which prompted researchers and artists to work actively to preserve national dress. In the first half of the twentieth

century, the first academic works and books on Armenian national costume were created. One can also observe interest among artists in depicting national themes, especially the frequent use of dress as part of the national motif in paintings. During the Genocide, many Armenians were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in other parts of the world, taking with them only what they could carry. In many cases, this included traditional clothing that became a symbol of their identity and cultural heritage. Preserving national dress has become a key way for Armenians to maintain ties with their homeland, cultural heritage, and traditions. However, as the Armenian community becomes more globalized, the challenge of preserving national dress among the diaspora in the modern world becomes more relevant.

Linor Goralik presents her essay *“The Boy in the Buttoned Cardigan”: Vestimentary Expectations and Reality in the Late Soviet Emigration Space, 1988–1991*. In this paper, Goralik studies the memories of the last wave of emigrants from the USSR (1988–1991). The author talks to emigrants about the vestimentary expectations they formed concerning their future places of residence, and the reality which confronted them upon emigrating. Goralik looks at the factors she feels lay behind the divergence between expectations and reality, and the coping strategies her respondents turned to in that challenging situation. The essay is based on three hundred questionnaires filled in by emigrants in the course of Goralik’s research for this, and similar studies, and on in-depth interviews. The first chapter *“Are You a Fairy?” The Vestimentary Language of the Imagined “West” Through the Eyes of a Future Soviet Emigrant: From the “Language of the Tower of Babel” to “Creole”* looks at the late Soviet vestimentary language and how it relates to Western fashion, on one hand, and to earlier Soviet vestimentary language, on the other. Post-Perestroika reality gave rise, the author suggests, to a new language of dress, which many of its wearers found confusing. Still a Soviet language, it nonetheless became more connected with Soviet citizens’ inevitably distorted image of “Western” fashion, by the day. The second part of the essay is entitled *“Oh, to Understand My Beautifulness!” Personal Testimonies and Their Emotional Mood*. Goralik examines the emotional tone of her respondents’ answers as a testimony to vestimentary narrative’s ability — in this case, at least — to stimulate far broader discussion of unresolved traumas of late Soviet emigration. The author focuses in particular on trauma associated with gender, identity and social status. The third part of the essay, *“We Were Dressing the Wrong Woman”: Vestimentary Expectations of the New Reality, and Preparing the Wardrobe for Emigration*, represents

an attempt to examine preparations for emigration through a vestimentary prism. Among other things, Goralik looks at unsuccessful attempts to model future vestimentary situations in an unfamiliar new world. The fourth part, *“A Well-To-Do Fashionable Woman”: The “Emigration” Wardrobe Before Departure*, represents an inevitable chronological interlude. Here, Goralik focuses on the period just before the emigrant’s departure, sometimes as brief as three or four weeks. The new wardrobe has, by then, been assembled, and the future emigrant has the opportunity to show off to their old social circle in the old setting, but in new clothes. This vestimentary transformation may give rise to a host of other transformations, significantly raising the emigrant’s social status, bringing an entirely new social status, partially transforming the emigrant’s identity, leading to new relationships. Chapter Five, *“So As You Can See the Label”: New Vestimentary Reality in the Period Following Emigration*, explores how recent emigrants perceived fashion in their new reality, how they experienced their encounter with “real” Western fashion, how this impacted their sense of self, and what became of their carefully assembled wardrobes. In the sixth chapter, *“Through the Iron Looking Glass”: Possible Reasons for the Difference Between “Vestimentary Expectations” and “Vestimentary Reality” in Late Soviet Emigration*, Goralik strives to understand the factors causing the rift between the reality that was expected by late Soviet emigrants, and the reality that they encountered. These factors, the author argues, are not as obvious as one might think. The seventh part, *“Freeing Oneself for New Experiments”: Coping Strategies in Situations of Vestimentary Vulnerability*, focuses on the coping strategies used by emigrants to deal with the difficult emotions aroused by their personal vestimentary crises. The eighth and final chapter, *“Too Much, Too Painful” (By Way of Afterword): Parallels with the Vestimentary Situation of Today’s Russian Emigrants* acts as a brief afterword, in which Goralik draws parallels with the emigration of today, and its vestimentary practices.

Tatiana Dashkova presents *‘Carnival of the Leaders’: Political Transvesticism in Perestroika-Era Film and the 1990s*. Perestroika and the 1990s crisis years spawned a whole range of carnival practices involving the parodying and transvesticism of Soviet symbols and leaders, from Lenin and Stalin to Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Traumatic and tragic reflection gave way to a desire to “break away from the past, laughing”. Street markets, particularly numerous at that time, began to sell not only clothes, but matryoshka dolls of Soviet leaders, Soviet military uniform, badges etc. These were jolly times of new-found freedom. Sots Art put an ironic distance between itself and Soviet images, which it interpreted as kitsch. The

Pop-Mechanics show and rock groups ridiculed the Soviet “grand style”, getting to work conceptually on its ideological clichés. The Moscow State University Student Theatre staged Viktor Korkiya’s immensely popular acerbic play “The Mystery Man, or, I’m Poor Soso Dzhugashvili”. Later, the television programmes Kukli and Mult Lichnosti appeared, accompanied by Mikhail Grushevsky and Maxim Galkin’s parodies of Soviet and post-Soviet political leaders. Filmed before Perestroika, Tengiz Abuladze’s *Repentance* (1984) was one of the first films to address themes of transvesticism and tragic grotesque in the Soviet past. In the early 1990s, a range of films appeared which addressed leaders’ vestimentary and other transformations on a range of levels. The idea of leaders as “comic masks”, put forward so memorably in Leonid Gaidai’s comedy “Weather is Good on Deribasovskaya, It Rains Again on Brighton Beach” (1992), saw original interpretations in films such as Alexander Pavlovsky’s “To Hell with Us!” (1991), Viktor Makarov’s “Misfire” (1993), Vladimir Studennikov’s “Comedy of Strict Regime” (1992), and Mikhail Ptashuk’s “The Politburo Cooperative, or, The Farewell Will Be a Long One” (1992). The author delves into the ways in which dressing up as a leader alters people’s experience and opinion of themselves, how the mask “becomes the man”, dictating people’s actions, and how distinctions drawn by observers between “original” and “copy” impact strategies of behaviour and ideological choices.

Asya Aladzhhalova’s Vintage as a Means of Protecting Boundaries, Resistance and Protest looks at different forms of protest expressed through the wearing of vintage dress or reconstructed antique clothing. The practice of secondhand dressing is commonly associated with conscious consumption and protest, first and foremost against fast fashion. The author questions this assumption. Analysing a number of case studies, Aladzhhalova concludes that the wearing of vintage dress or custom-made historical replicas may serve to express protest against a whole range of things, from family arrangements to socio-cultural phenomena. Taken from blogs, the case studies provide examples of protection of boundaries by bloggers and historical reconstructors from Western Europe. Aladzhhalova also examines autoethnographic cases which shed light on the Moscow vintage scene, as well as a number of unintended transgressions.

In *Embroidering Identity: Affective Dimensions of Embroidered Clothes*, Galina Ignatenko looks at the role of embroidery in forming identity and building emotional ties. Textile work, Ignatenko suggests, becomes not only the keeper of the history of its creation, but an active participant

in provoking complex emotional responses such as nostalgia or sense of comfort. Ignatenko bases her study on principles of new materialism and affect theory, focusing in particular on the impact of material objects on human experience. Through her study of embroidered patterns and interviews with female embroidery school pupils, Ignatenko comes to view embroidery as a tool for communication, creative self-expression, and even social statement. Ignatenko's study stresses the complexity and importance of embroidery in today's world, where it acts as a powerful means of expressing individuality and creating identity.

In **Culture**, we once again turn to fashion and art and start with **Naomi Lubrich's** paper *Ceci n'est pas un chapeau: What is Art, and What Is Fashion in Degas's Millinery Series?* In the past decade, Edgar Degas' milliner series (1876–1910) received new attention thanks to a YouTube video by the Art Institute of Chicago and a joint exhibition in Saint Louis and San Francisco. A consensus has formed to interpret the works, which show milliners and customers contemplating hats, as artistic self-reflection, with the milliners standing for artists, and the hats for artworks. This article picks up where the research left off, adding to the interpretation of the works as artistic self-reflection insights on the history of palette pedagogy and literary sources so far not connected to Degas. It also adds a “why,” locating the analogy of hats and art in Degas' oeuvre, comparing it to that of his contemporaries, and contributing a pragmatic answer to the nineteenth century discussion: “What is art for?”

From the late **Djurdja Bartlett**, we offer *Nadezhda Lamanova and Russian Pre-1917 Modernity: Between Haute Couture and Avant-garde Art*. Nadezhda Lamanova was the only well-established Russian pre-revolutionary fashion designer who declared her loyalty to the new regime following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The juxtaposition of the extraordinary glamour of her pre-1917 designs with her dedicated post-revolutionary service to the Bolsheviks has contributed to Lamanova's mythical status in Russia, in which facts routinely mix with fictional accounts. Relying on a meticulous reading of pre-1917 arts and applied arts journals, as well as contemporary memoirs, the paper contextualizes Lamanova's pre-revolutionary fashion designs, and her personal life, within the social, cultural and artistic avant-garde of her times, thus offering a new reading of Lamanova's pre-1917 activities.

Alba F. Aragón contributes *Uninhabited Dresses: Frida Kahlo, from Icon of Mexico to Fashion Muse*. This article examines the shifting meanings of

Frida Kahlo's figure and the Tehuana ethnic dress known as her trademark look. It analyzes *Appearances Can Deceiving: The Dresses of Frida Kahlo*, the first exhibit of the artist's recently recovered wardrobe on view at the Frida Kahlo Museum in Mexico City from 2012–2014. Engaging the exhibit's suggestion that the artist casts a "spectral" image over contemporary fashion, this article inquires about the ways history inscribes itself on fashion despite its pretensions of constant innovation. The exhibit is examined in dialogue with Frida Kahlo's *My Dress Hangs There* (1933), an image that reflects on modernity and national identity through the tension between competing visions of femininity and fashion represented by Mae West and a disembodied Tehuana dress.

Nick Rees-Roberts contributes *Raf Simons and Interdisciplinary Fashion from Post-Punk to Neo-Modern*. Since the launch of his menswear label in 1995, Belgian designer Raf Simons has consistently caught the zeitgeist of contemporary fashion, supplying menswear with a range of styles, shapes, and symbols that articulate ideals of masculinity, influenced by European pop music, youth subcultures, mid-century fine art, modernist architecture, and interior design. This article examines the interdisciplinary relationship between Simons's designs and their contextual influences, documenting how his signature, first established in menswear, has been transformed through his womenswear collections for Jil Sander (2005–2012) and since 2012 for Christian Dior, where he has reinterpreted the house's couture heritage. Drawing on archive material at the MoMu Fashion Museum in Antwerp and the Dior Impressions exhibition at the Christian Dior museum in Granville in 2013, this article further argues that a cross-gender dynamic is perceptible in Simons's later designs, part of his formal or "neo-modern" preoccupation with shape, colour, and technology. The article concludes by suggesting that Simons's nomination at one of the most prestigious Parisian fashion houses and global luxury brands positions him as heir to the artistic and architectural strand of the couturier's legacy, making him instrumental in Dior's projection of its design heritage.

Soo Young Menart-Kim offers *Fragrance (Untitled) by Maison Martin Margiela: Between Artwork and Commercial Product*. With fragrance (untitled) by Maison Martin Margiela, the name reveals an inseparable bond with the greater MMM creative universe, which interweaves two states of being: that of artwork, and that of commercial product. The deal that is suspended between the soundbite "untitled" and the object "perfume" has truck with fresh concepts and novel representations, depending on what

semantic space is occupied by the name of the perfume: that of an image, an object, or a vernacular. As a particle of language, it is a moniker of perfume, rendering us aware of hidden meanings, including its overreaching universal nature, through a freely interpretative reading.

In this issue's **Events** section, **Asya Aladjalova** contributes her review of 'Moscovite: a Woman of the Soviet Capital in 1920–1930-s' at the Museum of Moscow (April 24, 2024 — August 25, 2024).

Olga Gerasimova offers her thoughts on 'Balenciaga Character' at Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum in Getaria, Spain (March 17, 2024 — January 31, 2025).

In this issue's **Books** section, **Maria Neklyudova** presents her review of *Fashioning the Dandy. Style and Manners* by Olga Vainshtein's. Anthem Press, 2023.