

B / A S

JOURNAL OF DRESS PRACTICE



FASHION + SURVEILLANCE

DRESS PRACTICE COLLECTIVE
MISSION STATEMENT

The Dress Practice Collective is a New School student-run organization aimed at joining elements of visual culture, fashion theory, design studies and personal practice through a variety of media. We hope to spark conversations and initiate collaborations between students, faculty and members of the greater community. The organization was founded in Spring 2013 for the purpose of presenting exhibitions, organizing workshops, and publishing original content.

FASHION
SURVEILLANCE



MASTHEAD

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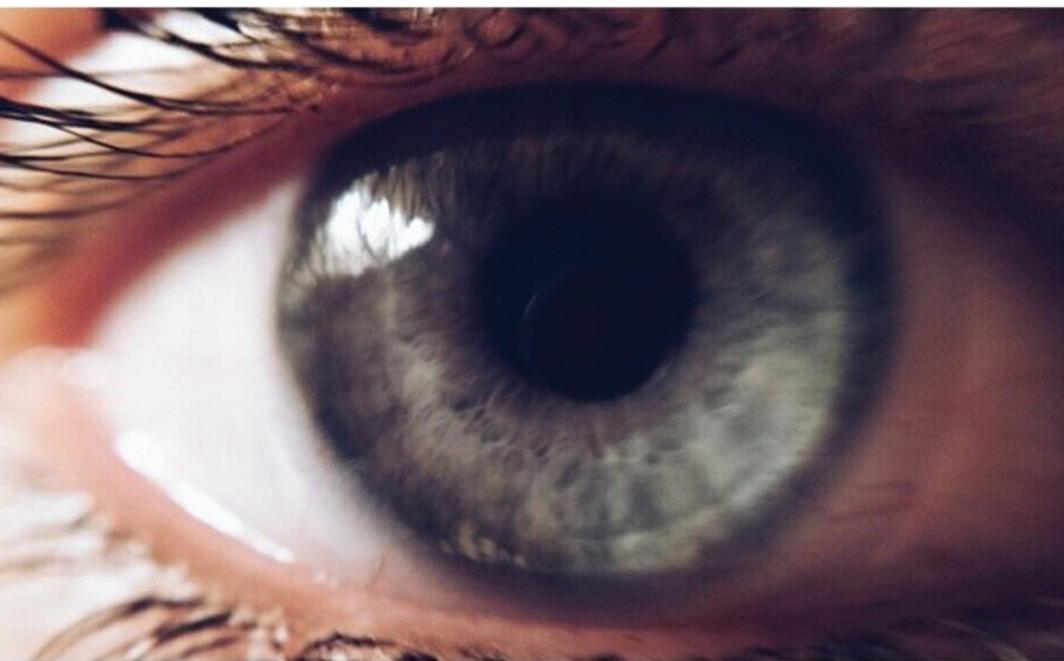
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CONTENTS

- 7 LETTER FROM THE EDITORS
Lauren Sagadore & Stephanie Edith Herold
- 8 CONTRIBUTORS
- 10 CAPTURING KATE: WATCHING THE MODEL
Aria Darcella
- 12 BRANDED BODIES: FASHION, SPECTACLE & THE
EVERYDAY
Harriette R. Richards
- 15 PARANGOLÉ: SENSORIAL DRESS UNDER
CENSORSHIP
Jade Bürger Macnee
- 18 VOGUE: SPOTLIGHT ON THE FASHIONABLE LIFE
Marley Healy
- 21 WATCH THAT MAN: DAVID BOWIE'S PERFORMANCE
OF ANONYMITY
Sara Idacavage
- 26 BIG BROTHER
Brian Swift
- 28 DYSTOPIAN FUTURES, DISRUPTIVE FASHIONS
Meagan Proctor Kavouras
- 31 DISCIPLINE THROUGH DRESS CODES
Karalyn Factor
- 34 NAVIGATING SHADES OF GREY: DRESS & THE
CONCEPT OF AGE APPROPRIATENESS
Eliza Dillard

- 38 IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS
Daniel Terna
- 45 POWER & PLEASURE: LOOKING, THE GAZE, &
CONTEMPORARY DANDYISM
Fenella Hitchcock
- 48 COSTUME CAPITAL & THE MIDDLE GROUND OF
SURVEILLANCE
Sharon Elkind
- 51 BURNING MAN: FASHION AT THE EDGE
Lauren Sagadore & Robin Falletta
- 61 CRIMINALIZING DRESS: STOP & FRISK IN NEW YORK CITY
Laura Jane Kenny
- 64 THE PROBLEMATIC PREGNANT BODY: CONTAINING &
FRAMING THE FEMALE BODY
Caroline McCauley
- 66 SEEING IN SPACE: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
DEPARTMENT STORE
Paula Alaszkiwicz
- 70 1432
Ammar Belal
- 81 FASHION MONITOR: SURVEILLANCE AS A FASHION SKILL
Nathaniel Dafydd Beard
- 84 REFERENCES & CREDITS

ON THE COVER
Preetha Nooyi wearing garments designed by Ammar Belal
Photo by Gabriele Giugni



Letter from the Editors

In January 2013, designer Adam Harvey presented his Stealth Wear collection. The collection presented 'anti-drone' garments featuring anti-thermal technology and camouflage, equipping the wearer to dodge even the most sophisticated forms of surveillance. While some might question the practicality or wider applicability of Harvey's collection, it rightfully acknowledges the rise and invasion of surveillance in our everyday lives, and represents an attempt to maintain the wearer's privacy. In a digital age characterized in part by pervasive data mining, street style 'drones' flying over New York Fashion Week and selfies plastered on social media, surveillance and self-surveillance have become a part of our daily lives on an unprecedented level. Where and how does fashion factor into being watched?

In our third issue, we asked contributors to consider the ways in which fashion and surveillance intersect. Writers, designers and artists, from here in New York to London and Australia staged a rich dialogue concerning dress practice, fashion, and multi-faceted modes of looking. Through a consideration of police practices, celebrity tailing, costumed performance and aging bodies their works probe the pressures that society faces in this surveillance age.

The journal you have before you is the product of hours of hard work and creative energy assembled by a team of dedicated MA Fashion Studies students at Parsons. We hope this issue will continue to spark meaningful conversations about fashion, visual culture and dress practice by presenting some of the pertinent issues surrounding surveillance in our contemporary society. Fashion, inherently visual, evidently plays a role in this leering game. It is up to the wearer whether to attempt to fly below the radar or catch the camera's omniscient lens.



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CAPTURING KATE

Watching the Model

By Aria Darcella

"Any photographer who says he isn't a voyeur is either stupid or a liar" - Helmut Newton

More than just capturing an image of a model, photographers are watching them through the lens. She moves for him, emotes, and poses, all while she is watched. Although he may give directions, their interaction is through the visual. We, as viewers, take the place of the photographer, watching the model in motion for us, our gaze placed upon her. Through media

a viewers' gaze goes further, seeing models across ad campaigns, editorials, and runway shows, experiencing the fashion and glamour secondhand. It becomes commonplace to see images of these models and celebrities on a daily basis.

In the SHOWstudio fashion film *The More Visible They Make Me, The More Invisible I Become*, Nick Knight takes the act of watching one step further by shooting Kate Moss through surveillance footage while various

other photographers and Moss herself chime in about her career.¹ Moss speaks about how odd it is that people know (or think they know) her based on the abundance of fashion images she has been in. Unlike a typical photo in which we take the position of the photographer, in this video the sense of removal is clear. We are watching Kate mediated through multiple levels of removal and are not directly interacting with her.

Knight's piece is not only an interesting commentary on how we keep tabs on celebrities but also on how the fashion industry in particular keeps us watching. In a shorter video project titled *Diamonds*, Knight shoots surveillance footage of Moss (which also appears in *The More Visible They Make Me*) on rotation while she has a telephone conversation with New York based artist Sarah Morris about her then-boyfriend Johnny Depp. The clip itself is a wonderful piece of '90s nostalgia but also encapsulates what Moss says of herself in *The More Visible They Make Me*. She does not need to explain who Depp is for us to know. And though their relationship ended nearly two decades ago, through images we are aware that Moss and Depp were at one time an "it" couple. All of this - a model discussing

her actor boyfriend while she poses in clothing - seems completely normal. The beauty of shooting this conversation through surveillance footage, and what Knight successfully highlights, is just how little interaction there is between the viewer and the viewed. We are so used to being passive viewers, it doesn't seem to matter if the person being viewed is aware of us watching. In an essay about *Diamonds*, Nick Knight revealed that he was inspired to do the project after becoming aware that he was being watched on surveillance cameras during a photo shoot when the camera controllers asked if he could make the model repeat an action.²

We track models across campaigns, and view them in different aspects, all the while paying close attention to the trends put forth by designers. Our eyes then wander to celebrities (which trends will they adapt?), and people on the street (which trends have actually caught on?). Though surveillance cameras on most city streets surround us, in the fashion world it is far more common to be captured by someone's personal camera. It seems that we are just as comfortable being watched as we are watching. +

BRANDED BODIES

Fashion, Spectacle, & the Everyday

By Harriette R. Richards

The fashion industry has always been a spectacular one. Designers are increasingly compelled to present dramatic showcases of goods, perpetuating an extravagant vision of a fashion life.¹ Simultaneously, the simple fact that we all wear clothes in public means that we are all implicated in the structure of the fashion-scape on an everyday basis.

One of the most discreet elements of the complex contemporary fashion spectacle, and one of the most interesting in terms of the relationship between the spectacular high fashion-scape and the everyday experience of fashion, is the role of the brand advocate. Rather than being officially recognized as a brand ambassador and

featured in advertisements for that brand, the brand advocate is far more unassuming. Most often a blogger, stylist, or model, the brand advocate is gifted with garments and accessories to wear as if they were pulled from their own wardrobe. For example, in looking at Australian-based blog *The Chronicles of Her*² we can see how brands are astutely and subtly advocated. By incorporating particular brands into her everyday outfits and personal style, the blogger acts as a powerful yet inconspicuous advertisement for those brands, and consumers are convinced that these brands are within reach of their own everyday fashion experience. Interestingly, the audience is most often unaware of the contract that exists between the appearance of the image and



the reality of the complex relations that lie behind it. The brand advocate thus acts an integral dimension of the capitalist fashion spectacle.

The significance of appearance in today's society cannot be ignored. It is not enough simply to have an object - one must appear with it; a tangible item is not as powerful as its image. With the multitude of recording devices available to us in the twenty-first century the capturing, presenting, and viewing of the good as image as apparent representation becomes an everyday experience. And if we consider how advanced technologies of surveillance have become through avenues such as social media and blog forums, we can also see just how deeply embedded the system of surveillance is within our everyday negotiations between dress, image and appearance. The spectacles of media culture and consumer society not only provide images and representations of very specific goods, but the surveillance technologies embedded in the media machine enable particular garments or accessories to appear in the screens of particular people, so that commercial influence is specifically directed.³

This example demonstrates how the fashion industry exerts

further influence over the concept of fashion in everyday life. While the brand advocate's influence is discreet and multifaceted, they remain engaged in the system that is directed by a complex surveillance system, one that is deeply political. French theorist Guy Debord suggests that "the spectacle is a permanent opium war..."⁴ a tool of pacification and depoliticisation. By presenting idealized images of tangible goods, the media spectacle constructs an imagined ground for individual expression, which is driven by the complex demands of a powerful consumer culture. The influence of this media machine, including the surveillance systems that operate behind the scenes of the public display, has a profound impact on the ways we negotiate our personal relationships with fashion and appearance.

The fashion industry, acknowledged as it is for its spectacular nature, is often recognised for its outward exertion of influence through advertising and media dissemination. As the brand advocate shows, what is not so widely acknowledged is the intricate, interwoven strands of influence that quietly yet largely impact our daily lives. +



PARANGOLÉ

Sensorial Dress under Censorship

By Jade Bürger Macnee

The military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985 provoked artists and designers to develop multiple artifices that expressed cultural and political freedom in ways the eyes of the state could not see. This regime

gained power through a coup d'état and governed the country in an authoritarian manner, in which every action against its ideals was monitored and persecuted. Many creative citizens went into exile during this repressive period.

The Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980) was among them. Even in a self-imposed exile, Oiticica continued developing his body of work, expressing a national countercultural spirit.

Oiticica's project "Parangolé", a series of works that challenged the boundaries between dress and art, was created before he left the country, from 1964 to 1968. The parangolé is an amorphous object that is transformed into a cape-like dress when placed over the body. Its structure is composed of juxtaposed rectangles of varied sizes, colors and fabrics that can only be revealed with the presence and movement of the wearer. The parangolé becomes an extension of the body, designed to float from the individual into the surrounding three-dimensional space.¹ Made of a wide range of materials such as cotton, plastic, nylon mesh, burlap and muslin, it was inspired by the clothing of scavengers, analyzing garments of those who lived on the margins of society. Oiticica's objective was to create an outfit that expanded the domain of the visual arts into lived experience. This was achieved once the wearer's movement was translated into living paintings.

As one of the major figures of Brazil's Neo-concrete

movement of the 1960s, Oiticica is recognized as an important contemporary artist. His works sought to eliminate the distance between art and spectator, most of his art could be completed with public participation. His aim was to create interactive and sensorial artworks of abstraction that extended into both the social and physical environment. The essence of his art is only revealed through the viewer's experience, as they become an active contributor.² With the series "Parangolé", he stimulated the participation of the public towards acts of cultural resistance. In 1965, Oiticica encouraged people from Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* (who had a history with carnival, music and dance) to wear parangolés in front of the bourgeois space of a museum.³ The performance displeased dictatorship authorities, as his ideas of experimental freedom challenged the realities of society under censorship.

Today Brazil is not under a dictatorship, however, it is experiencing new forms of social, political and technological surveillance that have evolved as a result of globalization. The concept of censorship is, in a way, recreated through new medias that survey everyday life. For example, search engines and their domains record activity of

individuals through behavior analysis. The trauma of the dictatorship years has led Brazil to inscribe constitutional laws against surveillance of private electronic information, as well as laws to protect identity and personal data. However, the absence of an office to supervise related illegal surveillance activities has brought Brazilian society to a similar state of vulnerability as happened in the years of military government. In this scenario, new ideas and narratives promoted by countercultural artists of the dictatorship era regain relevance as they bring to mind critical responses to the lack of governmental action in privacy concerns.

The aesthetic structures promoted by Oiticica's art can again signify a way to overcome the powerlessness that today's Brazilian population has. The parangolé produces a sensorial camouflage for the wearer. Dress is used to create new modes of experimentation in relation to the concept of liberty. With its mutable materiality, the parangolé allows the person wearing it to disappear from the watch of society, where empty beliefs fight over political and religious realities. By wearing a parangolé, the individual challenges existing

forms of dress and places himself in a position of political opposition. Oiticica proposes with the parangolé the extermination of frontiers of the fashionable body. By extension, the wearer also exists outside the frontiers of the surveillance machine. The sensorial experience that transforms the body, in this case through fashion, can also eliminate the effects of surveillance over the mind. The artist's intention behind "Parangolé" serves to emphasize the essence of man as an effective weapon in the battle against a collective prison formed by monitoring.

With Oiticica's creation, dress is imbued with deep meaning on a human body. It appropriates the character of man and transforms space, ceasing to be contemplative and instead becomes an active environment of circulation.⁴ The parangolé promotes sensorial autonomy and the expansion of individuality as it enhances body movement. Fashion becomes a manifestation of freedom once the symbiosis between body tissue and the textile fabric evoke the presence of man in his homeland. +

VOGUE

Spotlight on the Fashionable Life

By Marley Healy



N. S. E.

VOGUE
Christmas Gifts

DECEMBER 4, 1909

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PRICE 25 CENTS

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By the time the first issue of American *Vogue* was published in 1892, a number of publications catering to women's interests had already been in wide circulation throughout the nineteenth century. Magazines like *Harper's Bazaar* and *Ladies' Home Journal* already featured writings about women's fashion, allowing *Vogue* at its immediate inception to specialize more broadly in regional social happenings and trends rather than specifically reporting on fashion. In its early years, *Vogue* made casual reference to what fashionable people were wearing, opting to focus instead on what these people were doing.

Besides their entertainment value, many women's magazines originated from the belief that a large part of one's social success was measured by how well he or she adhered to contemporary fashions and etiquette. Therefore, being "in the know" was of paramount importance, and clothing was only the tip of the iceberg. *Vogue* endeavored to illuminate a contemporary fashionable lifestyle that was dually comprehensive, including both dress and recreation. Editorials included everything from social etiquette that had been observed in the public sphere to wedding announcements

and popular vacation destinations. In addition to its standard reporting, the "*Vogue* Society Supplement" was intended as a catchall account for extraneous notes regarding the activities of the social elite. This supplement kept an eye on various fancies categorized as Art, Gossip, and even Exhibits, pooling together everything from Vaudeville show reviews to details about the dress code of private dinner parties. The New Year's follow up supplement in January 1893, for instance, included a quip about Mr. John Furman whose, "party at the Spencer House... will furnish much fuel for pleasurable comment."¹

In *Vogue*, fashion extended beyond a preoccupation with stylish clothing to include generally accepted social norms that were in a constant state of flux. In 1928, photographer and long time *Vogue* contributor Cecil Beaton commented that "the fashionable methods of speaking, sitting, crossing the legs, smoking a cigarette, and holding a cocktail glass change as much as clothes and figures,"² acknowledging that no woman could reasonably keep track of every trend variance. Therefore *Vogue* interceded on her behalf with each issue, acting as a collated survey of what was most popular at any given moment in time. Up until the

mid-twentieth century, American fashion mirrored European styles. While the vast majority of *Vogue's* American readers were unable to travel to foreign destinations such as Paris and London, editors were sent to European fashion houses, particularly those in Paris, to photograph and gather data on the collections of well-known designers. Editors compiled information about trends in women's clothing they saw abroad and then assembled them all into a singular and comprehensive treatise that was issued monthly. Each issue was a compendium of fashion news that successfully navigated the coexistence of a relationship between the haute couture of Europe and ready-to-wear markets of the United States. Not only could *Vogue's* advice govern one's physical appearance, it could also dictate one's affectations based on those of the most pre-eminent celebrities.

Vogue quite literally became the arbiter of fashionable society, in the sense that the women who were featured in the publication encouraged its circulation. This meant that members of both American and European high society were under constant surveillance by not only each other, but also by the entirety of *Vogue* subscribers. The fashions,

guest lists, and gossipy details of debutante coming out parties, A-list Hollywood extravaganzas, and private soirees hosted by the eccentric rich were fodder for *Vogue* editorials, even through the twentieth century. In particular, Beaton's musings on these institutions are delightfully salacious. While these debutantes and society matrons were watching each other, *Vogue* was watching them.

By the time Condé Nast began publishing *Vogue* in 1910 the magazine had become almost entirely preoccupied with fashion and advertising, although the magazine never lost its penchant for highlighting societal information.³ The frequency of issues and increased circulation of *Vogue* allowed for the magazine to reach farther than the social circles of New York. Women from every corner of the United States were reading *Vogue*, which made the specific details about New York happenings irrelevant and challenged the publication to focus on a much bigger picture. As the publication grew and evolved, *Vogue* influenced more than daily dress practices; it became the canon by which fashionable life adhered to. †

WATCH

THAT

MAN

DAVID BOWIE'S PERFORMANCE OF ANONYMITY

By Sara Idacavage



In recent years, the term “recluse” has been used to describe David Bowie almost as much as “fashion icon” and “music legend”. His enigmatic presence over the past decade is certainly a stark contrast from his extremely publicized life in the early ‘70s, a time when media outlets on both sides of the pond were eager to report on the ever-changing details of the singer’s life and

appearance. Today, Bowie remains mostly unseen and unheard, after becoming increasingly reclusive since the mid-2000s following a heart attack in 2004 and making his last stage appearance (to date) in 2006. Rumors of his failing health became rampant as time passed, and, without any statements from the man himself, fans and critics began to assume that he had decided to retire. As the *Daily Mail* postulated, “Bowie, it seems, is happy to spend his Golden Years far from the public gaze he once craved.”¹ But, in a world obsessed with celebrity surveillance, can a star really stay relevant without showing their face? Moreover, is the shape-shifting performer truly embracing a reclusive lifestyle, or is this simply a different type of performance?

News stories related to Bowie from 2011 to 2013 are primarily focused on his “rare public outings”, from buying a book to grabbing lunch, catering to the public’s unrelenting desire for any bit of information about his mysterious existence. Each story makes special note of his relatively “normal” appearance and mundane wardrobe choices, including flat caps, wraparound sunglasses, grey overcoats, and tattered sweatshirts. A *Daily Mail* article published in 2012 states, “It is an anonymity that David Bowie

has increasingly come to love."² Various media sources have also reported that Bowie is trying to disguise himself with these types of clothing. However, back in September 2003, the singer told *New York Magazine*, "I don't go for the disguise thing [...] I suppose wearing jeans is the nearest I get to confounding expectations."³

According to dress historian Christopher Beward, "Bowie's body and wardrobe have always been scrutinized for prescient meaning."⁴ Other scholars and critics have suggested that, for Bowie, "fame lay as much in image as in music."⁵ Few would argue that the singer's image didn't contribute to the popularity of his music in the beginning of his career. Bowie adopted numerous looks ranging from "mod rocker" to "androgynous folk singer" before acquiring worldwide notoriety with his "Ziggy Stardust" persona, shaped by a mixture of Japanese kabuki theater and ambiguous sexuality. The performance of Ziggy reached new levels as he brought both the character's persona and its adopted costumes into his everyday life, complete with skin-tight leotards, bright platform boots, and the rest of the regalia that has come to define the Glam Rock look. Bowie famously "killed" the character of Ziggy Stardust on

stage in 1973, but would continue to formulate his performances with an emphasis on style for decades to come.

Both Chris Lee, writing for *The Daily Beast*, and Jay Ruttenberg, writing for *Fashion Projects*, have observed that Bowie has become "pop's missing man" whose "mark remains everywhere" as "he is nowhere" at once.⁶ Indeed, his image and influence have become increasingly ubiquitous as his actual public appearances have steadily declined. In September 2011, *The Financial Times* reported that "fashion has had a four-decade love affair with Bowie that's only getting stronger."⁷ This theory is proven by the long list of runway shows and magazine editorials that directly referenced Bowie's multitude of stylish personas that year, including collections by Céline, Lanvin, Dries Van Noten and two international *Vogue* covers. The list continues to grow as more and more designers cite Bowie's influence in their work to this day, including Raf Simons, who told *Style.com* in January 2015 that his latest couture show for Dior was inspired by his admiration for the singer, adding that he's "more than a man—an idea."⁸

In recent years, Bowie's



number of accolades has also drastically exceeded his public appearances, including the acclaimed *David Bowie Is* exhibition, which opened at the Victoria & Albert museum in March 2013. Currently touring the globe, the career-spanning retrospective has helped to solidify his status as an innovator in both fashion and music. Months before the opening, seemingly out of the blue, Bowie announced the release of his first album in ten years on January 8th, 2013,

ignoring typical record release protocol. The album received an enthusiastic response by fans and critics alike, leading him to win the Brit Award for "Best British Male" in 2014. According to *The Independent*, "his under-stated comeback, which returned an air of mystery and anticipation to an industry dominated by production-line pop and reality television stars, confirmed Bowie as music's last true enigma."⁹ Considering this, is it possible that his years of anonymity were

simply intended to build suspense for this dramatic comeback?

Geoffrey Marsh, co-curator of the *David Bowie Is* exhibition, attributes Bowie's recent anonymity to an artistic statement, explaining, "There are endless examples - ancient Greek theatre being just one - where performance is about not appearing." Furthermore, he attributes Bowie's period of "down time" to the fact that "he was very into the internet early on," suggesting that refusing to connect to the public was the only thing that he hadn't tried in his experimental career.¹⁰ Other critics have been quick to point out that Bowie is a "media mastermind", who has always been keenly aware of how to package his image for commercial use. Some believe that his "Houdini act" was certainly responsible for the success of his latest album, and, according to music writer Jesse Kinos-Goodin, "allowing his new façade of the sickly recluse to gestate" made the eventual release seem "all the more spectacular."¹¹ Whether or not his sporadic public appearances are calculated bait for the media, critics and scholars have noted that Bowie has always had a futuristic understanding of how entertainment will (and

has) progressed. Amongst these theories, one thing remains true: Bowie is quite aware that the public wants to watch him, and there is great power in controlling one's image.

After visitors walk through the *David Bowie Is* exhibition, examining every piece of his career through images, objects, and sound, they can purchase buttons in the gift shop with the phrase: "David Bowie is Turning Us All Into Voyeurs". Perhaps Bowie has become perfectly content with standing on the outer edges of the spotlight, letting us fill the light with the image of whatever we want him to be. In fact, if this is a performance, it may be one of his most interesting ones yet. †

BIG BROTHER

By Brian Swift

The “MCMLXXXIV” collection is inspired by my own reading of *1984* as a three-act play, in which the idea of rebellion is conceived, acted upon, and ultimately suppressed. The conversion of the title from Arabic numerals (1984) to Roman numerals (MCMLXXXIV) references the frequent reinvention and replacement of fact by the totalitarian government of Oceania. Act One of the collection suggests the beginning of a rebellion through slight distortions of commonplace eyewear frames. Act Two suggests a rebellion in full force, as the common shapes, colors, and materials used in eyewear production are rejected. Act Three suggests a rebellion suppressed, as the insurgents are forced to obscure their eyes through the use of tinted lenses.

The third act of the collection suggests measures of counter-surveillance, taken in response to the ease with which modern technology allows surveillance to be carried out. This piece is called “Big Brother,” taking its name from the figurehead of Oceania. In particular, this piece is inspired by the often-repeated slogan “Big Brother is watching you.” The ubiquity of high-resolution cameras allows us to photograph freely, and subsequently makes us less likely to notice or care if and when we are photographed in public. This nonchalance about being photographed could conceivably lead to someone being stalked or spied upon very easily. I designed the eyewear with the intention of obscuring the wearer’s face while allowing them to observe their surroundings. This empowers the wearer by protecting them from being seen or photographed without impeding their ability to do these things.

The photograph calls into question the power dynamic at play when we photograph strangers in public, and when we are photographed by strangers. The dramatic spotlighting, rigidity of pose, and obscuring of the face empower the figure. That said, the photograph questions this power as the figure is overwhelmed and outsized by a dark, looming shadow. This raises the question of whether the figure is genuinely powerful or whether another group or individual is only allowing them to have that power. +



DYSTOPIAN FUTURES, DISRUPTIVE FASHIONS

By Meagan Proctor Kavouras

In an interview with *HuffPost Live* in October 2014, legendary horror author Stephen King commented, "It's tiring to look and to say the world looks more and more like George Orwell's vision in *1984*..."¹ King is of course not the first to compare our present society to Orwell's infamous dystopia. Following the NSA scandal terms such as "Big Brother" and "Orwellian" have been bandied about in the media with alarming frequency. Many Americans fear an ever-expanding surveillance state, and for many around the world it has become a reality.

Now that we've matured into the digital age we become increasingly aware of the lack of privacy and security the digital age affords us. As technology continues to advance at a rapid rate, authors of speculative fiction repeatedly rework Orwell's vision of an omniscient surveillance state. These stories act as mirrors allowing us to see our own society from alternative points of view, but with the focus on technology it's easy to overlook the role of the body in the act of surveillance. The body and the systems of dress constructed to clothe it constitute a far more

complex form of surveillance that predates all existing technologies.

In her book *The Face of Fashion* Jennifer Craik defines fashion as a cultural technology in order to explore the relationship between fashion systems, self-presentation, and social conduct: "In this sense, fashion is a technology of civility, that is, sanctioned codes of conduct in the practices of self-formation and self-presentation. . . a fashion system embodies the denotation of acceptable codes and conventions, sets limits to clothing behavior, prescribes acceptable - and prescribes unacceptable - modes of clothing the body".² In short, clothing marks our identities on the body, where one adheres to the prescribed fashion codes within any given system, it is a sign of good behavior. Fashion becomes a "technology of civility" when it is used to monitor and regulate citizens' behaviors, and citizens who subvert the prescribed dress codes are easily identified as delinquents. In this way, fashion can also be considered a technology of surveillance.

Many authors of speculative

fiction acknowledge the large role clothing and dress practices play in surveillance. Let's take Margaret Atwood's now classic dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* for example. As in 1984, the characters in *The Handmaid's Tale* live in an omniscient surveillance state with strictly enforced dress codes. The United States government has collapsed after a terrorist attack kills the president and most of Congress. At the same time, a mysterious disease has left women across the country infertile. Amidst the chaos, a radical Christian movement called the "Sons of Jacob" rises to power and establishes a theocratic military dictatorship called the "Republic of Gilead." In this new Republic, citizens are assigned strictly defined social identities and color-coded uniforms that clearly mark their identities on the body. There are the "Commanders", members of the ruling class who wear black suits to signify their power; the "Wives" or the women married to the Commanders who wear blue dresses and blue veils; the "Marthas" the women who carry out domestic tasks in their dull green smocks and bib aprons; and the "Unwomen," women who are sterile and therefore useless to society or women who are deemed menacing for their refusal to adhere to their

new strictly-defined and strictly-gendered social roles (lesbians, feminists, activists, etc.). The "Unwomen" are cast out of the Republic and made to wear gray to signify their disobedience and nothingness to society. And then there are the "Handmaids," those somehow still fertile women whose sole purpose is to procreate with the Commanders and provide children for the Wives. Atwood describes the uniform of the Handmaids in great detail:

*"I get up out of the chair, advance my feet into the sunlight, in their red shoes, flat-heeled to save the spine and not for dancing. The red gloves are lying on the bed. I pick them up, pull them onto my hands, finger by finger. Everything except the wings around my face is red: the color of blood, which defines us. The skirt is ankle-length, full, gathered to a flat yoke that extends over the breasts, the sleeves are full. The white wings too are prescribed issue; they are to keep us from seeing, but also from being seen."*³

The modest uniform required of the Handmaids limits their individuality while causing them to become more visible and easily surveilled, making these uniforms a technology of civilian surveillance. Since their role in

this deeply puritanical society is of a sexual nature, their uniforms are a mark of shame not unlike the scarlet "A" affixed to Hester Prynne's chest in *The Scarlet Letter*. The Handmaids live in constant fear of the all-seeing Eyes, the secret police force of the Republic, and must take great care to make sure their appearance is in order so as not to attract their attention.

It's not difficult to see how these practices are mirrored in contemporary societies around the world. The Handmaids' uniforms evoke the burqas worn by some women. The hijab, the veil and headscarf more commonly worn by Muslim women around the world, is like the Handmaid's white wings in that both garments can be used to keep their wearers from being seen, when in reality they can serve to make their wearers more visible and more easily controlled. I would be remiss if I did not mention here that while in the West these coverings are generally perceived as tools of oppression, many Muslim women take pride in their coverings. Oppressive or not, burqas, hijabs, and other culturally mandated dress practices, such as the conservative clothing and bonnets worn by Amish women in the United States, constitute

a mandated uniform which can mark citizens and maintain civility.

Looking at speculative fiction through the lens of fashion studies highlights the relationship between clothing and surveillance and offers alternative perspectives on our own society. Many besides King fear that in the coming years our world will continue to morph into a version of Orwell's Oceania or Atwood's Republic of Gilead. Given the U.S. government's recent forays into legislating women's reproductive rights and access to contraceptives, is it too much of a stretch to think they might someday legislate what women can and can't wear? Is it possible that in the not-so-distant future we will all be wearing color-coded uniforms? +

DISCIPLINE THROUGH DRESS CODES

By Karalyn Factor

In 2012, Minnesota parents received an email from their children's high school principal asking them to stop their daughters from wearing leggings to class. The principal wrote that leggings can "be highly distracting for other students."¹ In the following years, a number of other schools throughout the country have instituted similar policies. Dress codes in schools often work to create an environment of surveillance, specifically on the female body. As the fashion industry continues to produce "sexier" clothing for younger and younger ages, a conflict arises between trends and dress codes.

The push towards dress codes in public schools recalls Michel Foucault's ideas on disciplinary power. For Foucault, this is a type of power that relies on surveillance rather than force, creating a disciplined body. This type of bodily-situated power is exactly what is being enforced through public school dress codes. Fashion theorist Jennifer Craik connects the concept of disciplinary power with clothing, stating, "Uniforms were perceived to produce better schools by

producing more docile bodies and better performing students."² She goes on to add, "Uniforms are all about control not only of the social self, but also of the inner self and its formation."³ This surveillance of dress eventually becomes internalized into surveillance of the self.

Most dress codes in the American public school system target girls differently than boys. It is not uncommon to hear of schools that are trying to ban girls' tight-fitting pants (such as leggings, yoga pants, and skinny jeans). Boys wearing tight pants are rarely, if ever, brought up. Instead, dress codes are concerned with the display of the female body. When dress codes do address male modes of dress it usually concerns the actual clothing items, and what they might symbolize. As written in the Red Bank Regional High School student handbook, "Wearing of gang apparel... is specifically prohibited... Any clothing that advertises or promotes alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia is strictly prohibited."⁴

These differences in dress

code regulations between male and female students could likely be explained by the constant hyper-sexualization of the female body. Save for the aforementioned section, dress codes address concerns of modesty. It states that items such as spaghetti strap tank tops, strapless tops/dresses, and halter-tops are not to be worn on school grounds. While no gender is specified, these garments are mostly worn by girls. Besides prohibitions of specific items of clothing, the Red Bank High School also implements the "finger tip rule" - the well-known decree that bottoms must reach below the fingertips of arms left at one's sides.

Thus, it is rather easily deduced that dress codes for girls are not actually meant to control clothing. What is really being controlled is her sexually perceived body. Fashion theorist Joanne Entwistle elaborates on the issue explaining, "Cultural association with the body results in women having to monitor their bodies and appearance more closely than men... codes of dress in particular situations impose more strenuous regimes upon the bodies of women... and subject the bodies of the women to greater scrutiny than men."⁵

Parents have limited control



over what their children wear in the public space of the school, yet it is mostly the parents who deem whether the outfits are decent enough for walking into class. One father describes an experience where he received a call stating that his 14-year-old daughter was in the office because her outfit was inappropriate.⁶ Upon arriving with a change of clothes, he found his daughter wearing an outfit that he found perfectly acceptable. The school principal told him that the problem concerned the skirt - it was a half-inch too short. In a photo (shown above) the skirt does not appear to be either excessively tight or revealing. The girl's knees are just barely visible

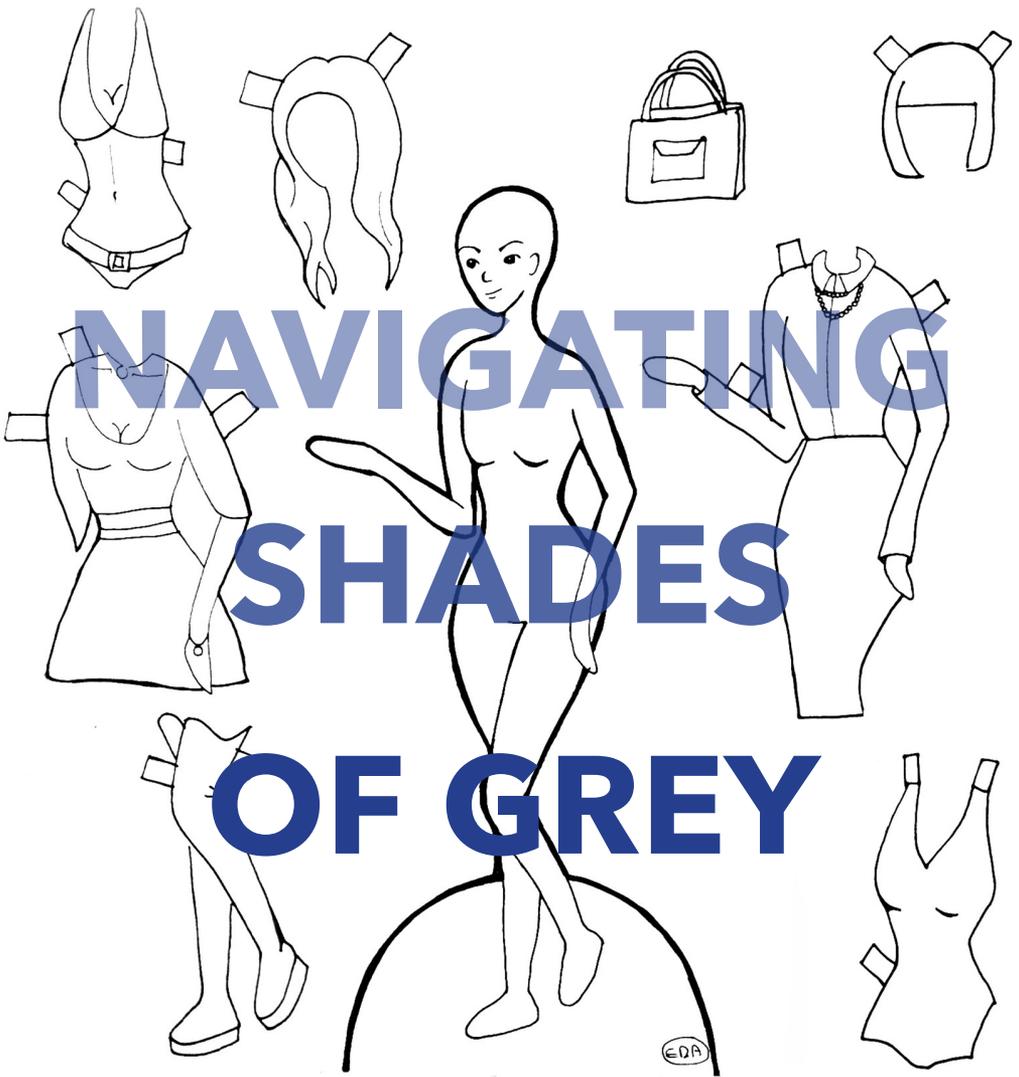
and her shirt covers both stomach and shoulders, yet her outfit was still deemed “inappropriate”. Although the father considered the outfit perfectly acceptable, the public school saw otherwise.

It might appear, then, that strictly following the rules would help avoid trouble. Yet even when female students follow the dress code to the letter they are often the targets of unwanted attention. Molly, a student from New Jersey, recounts a time when she was wearing her normal outfit of a large t-shirt and loose jeans when a female teacher thanked her for “not dressing like a slut”. The teacher was not reprimanded for such a remark. Karly from Florida relates that it was the teachers who were distracted the most by the dress codes. After all, it is the teachers and the principals that survey the students’ clothing. She recounts that teachers would routinely check skirt lengths by peering under tables.

The constant policing of female students eventually leads to an internalized version of this unending monitoring. Psychologists Roberts and Frederickson coined the term “objectification theory,” it states that women and girls are objectified sexually more frequently than men and, as a

result, learn that their bodies and physical appearance hold a high importance in society. Their worth is boiled down to looks, and thus a girls’ appearance must be carefully taken care of.⁷ In a study conducted by Kenyon College, it was found that college students were more likely to believe that a woman in “sexualized” clothing was less intelligent, competent, and moral.⁸ This objectification is internalized when women believe that they and other women cannot be intelligent because of the manner in which they dress and present themselves.

Self-objectification where women equate their self worth to their appearance flourishes at a young age. This objectification turns into self-surveillance as girls monitor their appearance for what could be coded as “inappropriate” and “slutty” which could translate to “incompetent”. Dress codes appear to then clearly target female students far more than male students. This manner of policing might make girls feel ashamed of their bodies and external appearance, potentially distracting them from what they are actually in school to do - learn. +



DRESS & THE CONCEPT OF
AGE APPROPRIATENESS

By: Eliza Dillard

The word “appropriate,” specifically when discussing women’s clothing, is a subjective term that causes my eyes to roll so violently that sometimes I think they might roll directly out of their sockets. Growing up in the American South, dressing inappropriately in certain social situations was a sin akin to not attending church on a Sunday (in a wholesome dress, of course). As a graduate student undertaking extensive research on aging and fashion, the subject of appropriate dress has morphed into an entirely different beast, as I’ve come to empathize with women navigating the trials and tribulations of what it means to dress in a society that sets a double standard for aging women. While there is extreme pressure put on women to look younger, there is also severe backlash for looking too young. Mixed messages about what constitutes age-appropriate dress are sent to women, causing discrepancies and anxieties to formulate as they wade through the murky waters of aging.

After reading “age-appropriate dress” countlessly in magazine articles as well as fashion and age studies books, I began to wonder what the concept even means. I decided it was important to find out – not

from the polished women in stilettos who sit in Condé Nast cubicles, nor from the academics who ponder similar questions. Instead, I wanted to talk to women outside of these two worlds of which I find myself tottering. I started to ask any woman willing to talk to me – relatives, friends’ mothers, a cheery Duane Reade cashier – the same question: what does age-appropriate dress mean to you? Unsurprisingly, what I discovered is that their answers were not about the clothes themselves; instead, they revolved around ideas of concealing the body. When posed with my question, Sarah (46), a housewife, immediately exclaimed, “No butts and no boobs!” Her friend Cathy (53) nodded and said, “At our age, those things aren’t worth showing off anymore anyway – nobody wants to see me in a mini-skirt.” As Julia Twigg writes in her groundbreaking book *Fashion and Age*, “[Ideas about the aging body] centre around the need to cover up, hiding the failure of the body to meet the youthful norm...”¹ When asked why she feels the need to cover up her body, Sarah responded, “Magazines, television shows, advertisements – everyone’s telling you how to look better and younger. If you don’t look young,

you shouldn't show off your body." Cathy and Sarah looked at each other and shrugged.

As these women pointed out, the media deserves a chunk of the blame regarding ideas of appropriateness that govern the ways older females dress. The term "age-appropriate" is thrown around constantly – and rather carelessly – in fashion media, constructing guidelines by which women base their dress practices. The term widens the already extensive rift between the young and the old in fashion, as it emphasizes and normalizes the need to shield certain areas of the older female body from public view while also isolating older women from stylish clothing.

A recent Internet quiz tweeted by *Harper's Bazaar* asking, "Do You Dress Your Age?" equates dressing appropriately at age 40 to hemlines lengthening, dusting off heirloom pearls, developing a blossoming affection for pantsuits, and, alas, donating all nightclub attire to a young woman in her 20s – all dress practices that the author describes as "thoughtful." If a woman is over 40 and following current fashion trends targeted towards youths such as midriff-revealing shirts or short skirts, she falls away from the comforting

bosom of age appropriateness. It seems that this quiz serves as *Bazaar's* roundabout way of stating what too many women already believe to be true: a woman over 40 cannot be in current fashion while also dressing appropriately. Instead of following current runway trends, aging women are not just encouraged but expected to resort to more traditional modes of dress. By reinforcing stereotypes of aging women and likening age-appropriate dress to the "thoughtful" invisibility of the body, this quiz fails to realize the aftershocks these pernicious messages can have on aging audiences, including the ability to create anxieties regarding not only the mature female wardrobe but also the aging body itself. As Julia Twigg states, magazine content such as *Bazaar's* quiz "entrench and naturalize [norms of appropriate dress], reinforcing them as common sense, something simply to be accepted."² In doing so, fashion media not only further aging women from the fashion industry, but they also validate Western society's position on aging as something to be feared.

While editorial efforts such as *Bazaar's* quiz could be argued as strides to incorporate aging women into a system of which they are often excluded, the age-specific content churned

out by fashion magazines oftentimes works against the aging woman. Fashion media provide how-to guides to help women “deal” with aging, which usually include the same recycled “tips” on styles to avoid and the best anti-aging night creams to use. Additionally, fashion and beauty-related articles on aging use a lexicon that highlights the supposed downfalls of aging, portraying the process as a “battle” women must actively fight. These articles concerning how to look good and dress well despite age further fuel society’s negative feelings towards the aging process, causing us to view aging and beauty as separate entities. In the fashion industry, beauty equates to youth – young, wrinkle and fat-free bodies that litter the pages of fashion spreads. Current runway trends are presented to the public on the youngest and slimmest of canvases, and we internalize these youthful images and weigh ourselves against these depictions of beauty. Age plays no role in these images and, as it stands now, it has little place in the fashion industry. Thus, fashion is left in the vernal hands of the young.

It seems impossible to merge age with fashion when the concept of “age-appropriate

dress” still exists, as the term alludes to the idea that there are fashions older women cannot wear. While sheer shirts and crop-tops are stitched with young bodies in mind, that’s not to say that older women cannot wear these trends. We are conditioned to believe that they should not wear revealing clothes out of fear: fear of viewing what our bodies will inevitably become. Fear of decline and death. The concept of age appropriateness is a direct reflection of Western culture’s views not just on aging females but on the aging process entirely. While removing the term from our diction won’t change how society views aging, it can help change how women view aging. To remove notions of age-appropriateness and reserve all women – regardless of age – a spot under fashion’s umbrella is to include these women in a system intimately linked with identity and feelings of self-worth. In an industry that operates on persistent change, why does the exclusion of aging women remain fashion’s constant? Isn’t it high time to rethink or retire the concept? +

IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

By Daniel Terna

The images presented are part of an ongoing series of work about my parents. My father, a 91-year-old Holocaust survivor, is often the focal point of the work, as well as the trauma that my mother (also a child of Holocaust survivors) and I have inherited. In these black and white pictures, I become an extension of my father's body, as he performs everyday routines such as eating, dressing himself, or simply walking. I'm interested in how these bodily actions become more difficult for us as we age—how the mind is still sharp but the physical body slows down. These pictures are about his body – or parts of his body – and consider the ways in which clothing protects us not just physically, but by keeping us rooted in society. I regard the act of getting dressed and going to the grocery store as a type of engagement with the world – we're in trouble as soon as we're unable to perform these types of action.

I take advantage of my relationship with my father by – with his permission – invading his personal space with my camera, and issues of exploitation inevitably arise. However, unlike security cameras, drones, or voyeuristic points-of-view, my camera's presence is known and acknowledged by my parents. It's neither hidden nor discreet, but there is still a sense of scrutiny in the way I observe them. In the case of these pictures, the harsh flash highlights wrinkles, varicose veins, and dead skin. I'm attracted to these types of transformations the body undergoes; yet, instead of choosing to depict these changes in a tender manner, I look at the surface through a clinical lens. +













POWER & PLEASURE

Looking, the Gaze & Contemporary Dandyism

By Fenella Hitchcock

Michel Foucault's *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* and Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* are arguably two of the most well-known and frequently cited texts on the power and pleasure politics of the gaze, particularly within Fashion Studies. These theories will be employed in relation to differing motivations behind the gaze when examining the "contemporary dandy" Dickon Edwards, revealing their usefulness in a new context and ultimately considering the complexities of the gaze. The term "contemporary dandyism", works as a short-hand reference for a group of present day, predominantly male identifying individuals who define themselves as "dandies" both sartorially and philosophically. "Contemporary dandy" will be offered in place of the standalone term "dandy" due to the particular historical roots of the latter, excluding use of participant's own words.

Dickon Edwards self-identifies as a dandy and lives in London.¹ Surviving on National Assistance and occasional paid writing work, Edwards commits

to a physical presentation of his identity and the pose of idleness favoured by Charles Baudelaire. In his daily presentation, Edwards usually dresses in a two-piece suit, shirt, tie, cufflinks, and pocket square. During the warmer months of the year he often makes substitutions, such as linen suits and silk neckties. Given that the suit is no longer the default mode of Western male presentation and is largely reserved for formal occasions or celebrations, Edwards' manner of dress is often seen as unusual. As was the case with its historical predecessor, contemporary dandyism is greatly concerned with the gaze, particularly in its attention to detail. Vainshtein notes the use of optical accessories in the historic modes of dandyism, suggesting pre-existing links with voyeurism, inspection and looking.² Edwards has always been attracted to formal dress and offers a supporting anecdote, he recalls being collected from school and asked why he was still wearing a blazer in the summer heat. Edwards was said to have replied, "I want to be smart... even though there was no reason to be smart".³ Was this formative statement an

expression of Edwards' feeling that he should be smart or that he wanted to be smart? Were his desires due to societal expectation or were they his own?

If we first consider Edwards in light of Foucault, some interesting points can be made about his idea that surveillance causes self-regulation. Edwards has clearly worked hard to cultivate a persona, and it could be suggested that due to his self-assignment of the label of "dandy", that he has effectively set himself up to internalize certain behaviours expected of him, particularly in the public part of his life. By claiming to always wear a suit, even when alone, he allows himself to be regulated in part by his own desires and expectations but also by the potential gaze of others. What is perhaps most interesting in terms of Edwards is his position as the author of an online journal with a cult following and his active presence on social media. Potential observation in an online realm rather than "real life" takes us into new, grey areas for the gaze where Foucauldian ideas only half-apply (having been constructed around "real-world" situations). Not only does he self-regulate when within the presumable privacy of his own domestic sphere, he also seeks to regulate his online presentation,

which is another distinct means of being viewed by others. This added potential of exposure in digital spaces could even go as far as to cause forms of anxiety and intensify regulatory behaviour.

Although Mulvey's essay was written in relation to film, its basic principles can still be applied in the setting of the social sphere. Mulvey's gaze is about gratification that stems from looking but also that of being looked at. As a male who finds pleasure in receipt of the gaze (through photography, online presence, and the eye of the public), Edwards rejects the idea of the male/active and female/passive dichotomy and concrete gender roles implied by Mulvey. When writing on the lesbian gaze, Lewis raises the potential impact of sexuality, which is more relevant to Edwards than Mulvey's heteronormative stance.⁴ If Edwards were to put himself in Mulvey's "female" passive object position, then by her analysis, the male spectator would not experience castration anxiety and therefore have no need to demystify Edwards. Due to Edwards' sexual orientation, it could be suggested that when he places himself as the object of (homosexual) desire to the heterosexual spectator, he creates another kind of anxiety due

to hegemonic "norms" of sexuality. Lewis defines identification with the passive object as "narcissistic" and for Freud - whom Mulvey draws from - narcissism is the desire for the reflection of oneself as well as being aspirational. There are few descriptions that could be so readily applied to dandyism as a whole (contemporary or historical), with its preoccupations with the self and presentation. Lewis also notes that Freud's claims that narcissism links to the desire to be loved and esteemed, achieved by forms of looking, comes up often in conversation with Edwards. By his own admission he is "...a shy person who craves attention - by which I really mean, applause".⁵ One may argue that Edwards is an example of how the gaze can be harnessed by the object to serve their desires as well as, or instead of, the spectator.

While the empirical study of Edwards may be useful in illustrating some aspects of both theorists, it is still a micro level analysis. Both Foucault's & Mulvey's self-regulations are unconscious processes and the extent to which this applies to Edwards is debatable. By drawing on forms of dandyism, which by very nature require a certain degree of self-awareness and consideration to dress, one

could argue that these processes are never entirely unconscious, even after the behavior is internalized. What overarches all debate around Edwards and similar figures is that his presentation is an autonomous choice. Unlike Foucault's oppressive examples, with settings focused on the clinical and corrective, Edwards acts as both authority and captive to his own labels, exercising power over his own mind and to control his body. When one starts to unpick Edwards through his own words, it becomes apparent that he is incredibly self-aware. Further investigation is required to determine the impact of theories of reflexivity on the gaze, including the work of Giddens, who states "...to be human is to know, virtually all of the time, in terms of some description or another, both what one is doing and why one is doing it."⁶ While Foucault's theory of the gaze may present a simple process, the wider we cast the net to include additional factors such as gender and sexuality, the more complex the process becomes. The gaze is both simple and complex in its relationship to dress, especially that of the contemporary dandy. +



COSTUME CAPITAL & the Middle Ground of Surveillance By Sharon Elkind

Costumes, or custom made non-normative publically worn fashion for a specific purpose or statement, are important, if not central, within many subcultures. They range from the bold statements of catwalk concept pieces to the everyday confidence booster of off-the-rack sportswear. Their quality and irregularity inevitably attracts both wanted and unwanted attention, making them a thought-provoking case study for an academic inquiry into the relationship between fashion and technologies of surveillance.

Gaining increasing media

attention for their costumes are Cosplayers who make up part of many international subcultures devoted to popular media, although most commonly in reference to media products from Japan. Cosplay is a portmanteau of the words "costume" and "play", each representing half of the Cosplay process of embodiment by dressing as a fictional character and performing as them. Based on my current ethnographic research study known as the "Stand Alone Cosplay Project," this essay examines the ways in which costumers engage with the public gaze in order to complicate our understanding

of the impact of surveillance on identity construction through fashion.

Within costuming cultures, members both protect and celebrate identity experimentation through forms of surveillance with a particular focus on photography. Cosplay costumers strike appropriate poses for photos to display their knowledge of the character as well as their craftsmanship. The success of a particular costume is often measured through representation: if the wearer finds photos of themselves posted online following an event, he or she could rightly assume that their costume was successful. The more posts featuring their work, the more cultural capital individual costumers gain amongst their community. In this way, surveillance becomes a vehicle for traditionally-styled fame in a synoptical framework.¹

Many Cosplay conventions have their own galleries through which attendees can share their photos. Competitive costumers also host their own websites to display photos and interact with their fans. Some social networks such as Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Reddit, and cosplay.com even offer users the ability to rank and critique costume photographs as well as tagging those photographed. While this

fosters community for participants, it inevitably also makes the subculture vulnerable to online surveillance by outsiders.

As a result, while notoriety may be the intended goal for some competitive costumers, the vast majority of practitioners utilize surveillance in a way closer to what Mark Andrejevic has described as “peer” or “bilateral” surveillance through various forms of social media.² This middle-grounded approach in which everyone watches one another also serves as a means through which costumers can rebel against negative media representations of their practices and an avenue for self-policing by exposing violations in practice.³ Cosplayers often will post accounts of harassment, especially regarding fitness, race, sex, and other variations of physical appearance causing individuals to be “unsuited” to play certain characters. It can also be a tool for gaining support from the larger community, warning other costumers of potential dangers and shaming their attackers for violating costuming ideals. One of the most effective forms of this has been the #NotACosplayer meme,⁴ where insulted costumers take photographs of themselves in their costumes while holding signs that have the insults written on them.



Another side effect of photographic exposure is the perception of costumers by friends, family, and their communities. In interviews, costumers often exhibit similar linguistic patterns to LGBTQ “coming out” stories, clearly displaying the emotional effects of surveillance. Cosplayers I interviewed at an event in August 2014 recounted being told by family members that they would not be seen in public with them while in costume and that their interest in certain types of media was “childish”, or that they had been reduced to labels such as “geek” or “nerd”. Many expressed dismay and embarrassment over the utilization of costuming for degrading humor in TV sitcoms⁵ or on late night talk shows.⁶

Despite this, they all encouraged more people to

understand and try costuming for themselves. A number of participants described it as a “gateway to creativity” and a means of self-expression. Others simply said that they wanted the world to know that costumers were not “scary” and that everyone was welcome to try costuming because it is “fun”. Cosplayers have begun sending this message to anyone who will listen, encouraging the press, academics, and people they know to try costuming at least once before passing judgment on it. They have co-opted surveillance strategies to spread the costuming ideal of free gendered experimentation and invited the world to try on their subculture’s costume for a day. +



BURNING MAN

FASHION AT THE EDGE

By Lauren Sagadore
Photos by Robin Falletta

Nestled between the sloping hills of a nearby mountain range, the Black Rock Desert stretches as a blank canvas in the state of Nevada. A hundred miles of alkali flats are a reminder of the now extinct Lake Lahontan. The silted playa surface that remains is a harsh environment, with scorching sun by day, plunging temperatures at night, and dust storms creating whiteout conditions to further contend with. It is a beautiful landscape, vast and rugged. For one week a year it is also the site of the art festival Burning Man.



For the last week of August since 1990, a small corner of this desert transforms the barren landscape of the playa into the circus of Black Rock City, the name for the temporary community created for Burning Man. While the event name reflects the burning of a wooden effigy, the cultural climate surrounding the main bonfire is perhaps the most notable feature. For one week only, a fully functioning city is erected from the dust, complete with bars, yoga enclaves, tea sanctuaries, gladiator domes and mutant vehicles. Burning Man is not a typical city but rather a bohemian carnival acting out an alternative experiment in community.



Time spent in Black Rock City has the sense of being in a world away from everyday life. Not only is Burning Man physically remote, with many individuals making a veritable pilgrimage to the desert, it is also technologically isolated. In contrast to contemporary society's hyper-connectivity, the comparative "radio silence" at Burning Man is distinctive. Lacking cellular and internet reception, contact with the outside world is reserved only for emergency circumstances. At Burning Man, one thus feels truly off the grid, obscured from the prying eyes of the exterior. While this is not to say that surveillance is altogether absent from Burning Man, its isolation from mainstream society impacts understandings of particular types of surveillance that might be critical of alternative behaviors. Black Rock City uniquely creates a space that feels at the very edge of society, allowing new cultural practices to flourish.

How does fashion operate within this environment? Described by participants as costumes, Burning Man fashions greatly contribute to the spectacle of the event and foster an other-worldly experience. The experience of dress at Burning Man reinforces this idea of a space separate from everyday life. Borrowing from sociologist Erving Goffman's concept of the back stage, the performance of fashion at Burning Man demonstrates the different possibilities that can take place behind the curtain, away from the gaze of the audience.¹ Perceiving Burning Man as backspace allows new modes of dressing to flourish, opening possibilities for sartorial creativity, offering challenges to gendered paradigms of clothing and questioning ideas of appropriate dress. A physical and metaphorical world away, Burning Man offers 66,000 participants the opportunity to play dress up. +











CRIMINALIZING DRESS

STOP & FRISK

IN NEW YORK CITY

By Laura Jane Kenny

What will get you arrested first: the color of your skin or the clothes on your back? This is the contested question among those who live with the daily threat of being stopped and frisked. New York City's "stop-and-frisk" policy allows police officers to use their common law right of inquiry when deciding whom to arrest.¹ An officer's suspicion is enough grounds to permit the intrusive practice of frisking. While the results of an officer's so-called intuition yield no more efficient findings than random searches, stop-and-frisk has been legal since the early '90s.² In 2012 the stops were at an all-time high, and

85% of those stopped and frisked in New York City were Black or Hispanic.³ While racial profiling is not a new phenomenon, the role of clothing in a police officer's assessment is one that begs examination.

To look and to be looked at is part of the human experience, but this sort of casual analysis does not fall equally onto all people. Bodies within the urban landscape are continually analyzed as police surveil their appearance for possible threat. A surveilling gaze takes in all that it sees – clothing, neighborhood, race, gender, body, demeanor,

etc. – yet the triggers of guilt are always unclear. Michel Foucault's 'panopticism', and John Berger's theory of the gaze, offer a useful lens through which to understand the stop-and-frisk practice.⁴ The idea of the gaze suggests that social groups lower on the ladder of social hierarchy subscribe to evaluation from those with greater power.⁵ When subjected to the stop-and-frisk policy, predominantly male Black and Hispanic populations are assessed with the values of the prevailing social group.⁶ Yet this surveillance occurs in communities that subscribe to their own unique aesthetic values and priorities.

Governing authorities impress extreme assessment of visual appearance with the goal to install social order and ensure the function of power, successfully removing control from those being surveyed. The patrolling police car acts as a type of modern day panopticon, continually analyzing the neighborhoods patrolled with authority to punish those whom they find suspicious.

I analyzed 13 interviews of individuals who have been stopped and frisked. These interviews, conducted and published by the Center for

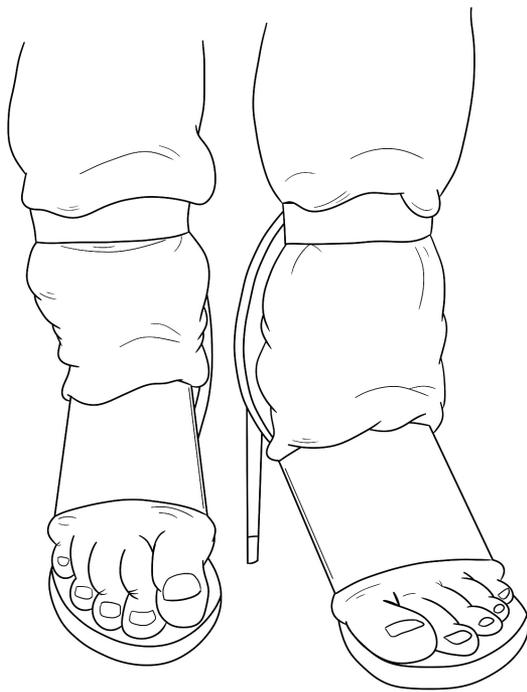
Constitutional Rights in 2012, do not directly consider dress practices; their main goal is to further understand the individuals who were stopped and frisked and the impact of the event. However, clothing and appearance is a theme that surfaced in more than a third of the 37 available interviews, underscoring their place in this discussion.

Throughout the interviews, two major themes emerged. Multiple individuals who had been stopped and frisked expressed strong beliefs that clothing mattered; that police would interact differently depending on manner of dress or adornment. I named this group "believers of legible clothing," since they believe in clothing's ability to communicate meaning and intent. The other group was labeled "believers of powerless clothing." The majority of those who discussed clothing fell into this group and suggested that clothing did not matter, that it was helplessly secondary to race. Yet both groups expressed their frustration at police officers' refusal to acknowledge the clothing's inherent meaning. This was coupled with the intentional act of incorporating signs of innocence into their individual dress practices.

Members of both groups suggest that police often do not acknowledge nor understand the message behind their dress; yet the individuals continue to wear certain clothes in the hopes that it might avoid or decrease the likelihood of being stopped and frisked. The inconsistent analysis of dress leaves targeted individuals with feelings of frustration. Many interviewees suggested that they feel compelled to "dress up" in order to avoid targeting, yet they know this does not guarantee exemption. Lack of clothing acknowledgement and inconsistent analysis does more than disparage self-expression - it invalidates the individual's ability to communicate personal characteristics. In locations where visual elements are decidedly important, ignoring an individual's adorned appearance reduces them to members of their socioeconomic group. In the case of stop-and-frisk, those inspected are often stripped of their individuality and are seen primarily, if not solely, as a member of a guilty racial group. Not only is this a racist application of visual analysis, it suppresses the individual's ability to portray any sort of message through clothing. This pressure to dress above reproach underscores how governing authorities view race as directly tied to criminality

and that no other identity marker, like a suit, can undo the negative value our systemic racism places upon people of color.

Studying racial profiling without considering appearance and dress allows their connotations to go unexamined. Appearance is an amalgamation of societal assumptions and beliefs and is difficult to probe since they are so deeply embedded in our methods of semiotic analysis. Cities rampant with anonymity increasingly turn to the visual for understanding and clothing is perhaps the most blatant of these visual cues. Stop-and-frisk functions not only as a unique phenomenon through which to study the intersection of dress practices and racial profiling, but also serves as a social occurrence that underscores the importance of clothing in everyday life. Through the avenue of stop-and-frisk, we understand of the consequences of visual analysis - how people are affected by the threat of looking "suspicious" and the impact of "dressing innocently." †



THE PROBLEMATIC PREGNANT BODY

Containing & Framing the Female Form

By Caroline McCauley

On March 26, 2013, Kim Kardashian was photographed wearing a tight knee-length leather dress, a leather jacket, and black patent leather stilettos. Although her “sex-kitten” aesthetic shouldn’t come as a shock to anyone, due to her protruding baby bump, Kim received an onslaught of criticism. The major line Kim crossed was eliciting sex appeal while pregnant. While articles criticizing her outfit expressed concern over Kim’s comfort and well being, they mostly focused on the inappropriateness of her body

hugging outfits that revealed “too much” of her “condition.” An article from Today titled “Maternity-appropriate? Kim Kardashian’s Pregnancy Wardrobe Criticized,” commented, “As much as pregnant women want to celebrate their growing bellies and personal style, there are limits.”¹

The female body and female sexuality are regulated in a variety of instances. One reason for the age-old fashion etiquette of a pregnant woman concealing her “condition” has been (and

continues to be) how the pregnant body is viewed. Emily Martin in *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* examines the anxiety surrounding the female body during the reproductive phase. Martin argues that the pregnant body arouses fear because it is seen as "a subject in a continual state of change, rather than a concrete being".² Loose maternity clothing that hides the burgeoning belly of a pregnant woman masks this anxiety-arousing instability and formlessness of pregnancy. As a result, pregnant Kim Kardashian ventured into sartorial mayhem and indecent exposure by wardrobe choices that not only embraced her bump, but also blatantly exposed her condition. While the sexually coded materials of fur, leather, and spandex crossed the line of "acceptable" pregnancy, Kim's choice of sky-high Louboutins caused her to be branded with titles such as "worst pregnancy look" and compared to a more Middleton.

Kim's Instagram photo captioned "Swollen feet or a new Givenchy tattoo?" with one foot suffocating in a velvet black Givenchy heel and the other foot naked, swollen, and "tattooed" with the indentation of the shoes pattern stirred criticism. The

wearing of the Givenchy stilettos can be seen as an even a greater faux pas as they revealed the "grotesque" bodily deformations and discomforts that a pregnant woman undergoes. It exposes, in Martin's words, this very "ambiguous state of the body changing, morphing, and becoming fluid that engenders anxiety"³ and causes the pregnant body to be placed under surveillance and trapped within the boundaries of "appropriate" maternity dress. However, Kim made it clear during her pregnancy that she had no intention of adhering to these limits commenting, "When I really get my bump, I will love showing it off."⁴ Kim Kardashian's pregnancy wardrobe choices transgress the entrenched social code of pregnant women concealing their pregnancy and becoming monstrous and grotesque as they expose pregnancy, its transformations, and its effects in their raw form. +

SEEING IN SPACE

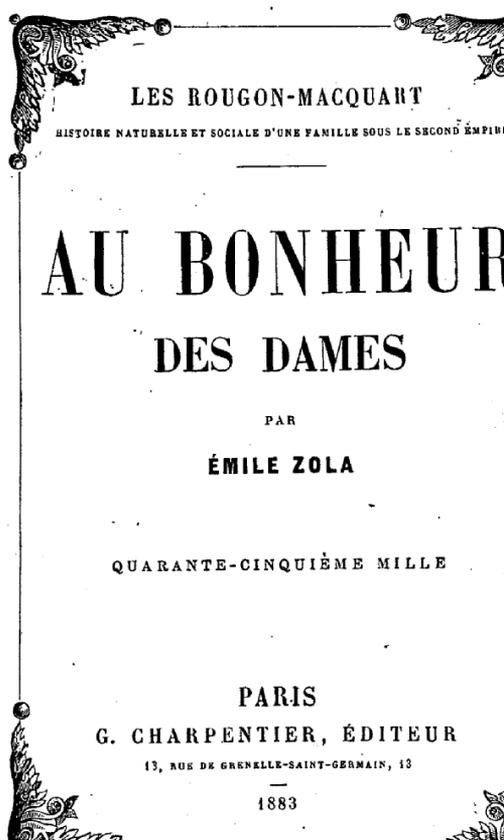
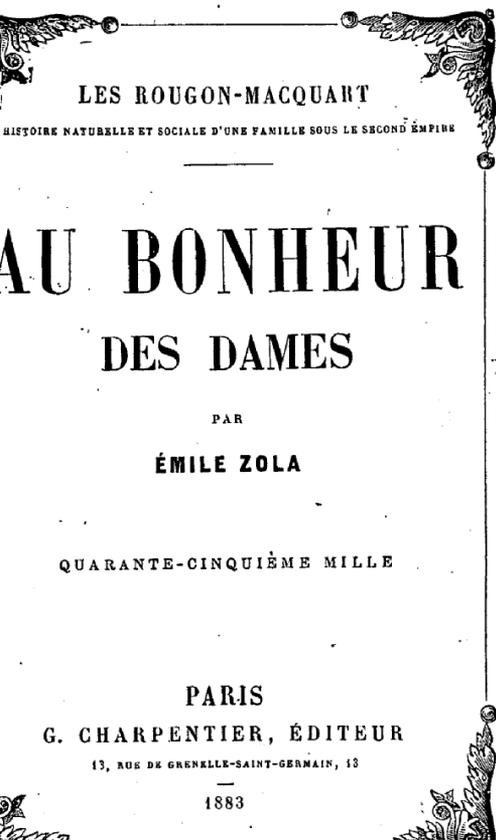
The Nineteenth Century Department Store

By Paula Alaszkiwicz

Within the context of mid-nineteenth century urban modernity, the department store stood as a novel cultural space with new economic and social opportunities. Despite the novelty, elements of other modern institutions - namely theatre, penal systems, and industrial factories - are identifiable within the architectural and social space of the department store. Though varied, these modern institutional

types share an emphasis on a specific visual practice: simultaneously seeing and being seen. Applying these institutional metaphors to the department store allows for readings of its sociocultural function as a site for visual, rather than exclusively economic, consumption.

Architectural historians have often paralleled the nineteenth century European department



store with the theatre. Kathryn Morrison suggests the institution developed from “places of theatre and spectacle as settings for retail activity.”¹ Meredith Clausen proposes that it was “designed as a stage set, an elegant theatre for the public.”² Visually, the department store and theatre share in architectural style; both rely on sweeping staircases, elevated balconies, and grand vantage points. These features, along with the department store’s emphasis of light through maximized windows and glass domes, actively promote the practice of looking. Like the modern theatre, which strategically employs architecture to guide the gaze of the audience, the actual layout of the department store stimulates sight.

Comparisons of the department store as theatre propose a doubled metaphor: it is both the place to watch the spectacle and the place to perform in front of an audience. It is the site for the enactment of a script. The grand central staircases have been read as inviting guests to “exhibit their newly acquired attire in full view of others.”³ Recalling Mary Cassatt’s painting *In the Loge* (1878), which presents a female theatre spectator in the foreground being unknowingly watched by a man in the

background, the department store, in its theatricality, is a place of doubled spectatorship. On the stage of modern and monumental institutional architecture, the performance is the act of being seen by watchful spectators; space and sight become inseparable.

The study of sight in nineteenth century institutional space is given precedent in Michel Foucault’s analysis of the Panopticon model prison in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.⁴ The product of the eighteenth century British social theorist Jeremy Bentham, the Panopticon is formed of a circular ring of cells with a central guard tower. From this tower, inmates would be anonymously observed and constantly subjected to the guard’s surveilling gaze, serving to promote self-monitoring behavior. This design affords a total view from centre to periphery, allowing the unification of disparate inmates under a single ordering gaze. Visibility is central to Foucault’s study. The Panopticon, he postulates, operates “as a pure architectural and optical system,”⁵ thus compounding space and vision in an alliance of power.

This theorization of viewing recalls his earlier articulation

of a “reciprocal visibility [that] embraces a whole complex network of uncertainties, exchanges, and feints,” in which, “the observer and the observed take part in a ceaseless exchange.”⁶ In the Panopticon, the dialogue between viewer and viewed is embedded architecturally; conceiving of inmates as the simultaneous receivers and bearers of a specific power reveals an inherent relational within the prison space. As this model operates on seeing - or the possibility of being seen - it necessitates a doubled gaze; inmates at once see and are seen within the theatre of the penitentiary. The oscillation between observer and observed establishes similarities in the visual practices fostered by the prison and the theatre, and by extension the department store. Across these cases, a specific enactment of sight is promoted through architectural space - the script is rendered spatial and enacted through vision.

The Panopticon, theatre, and department store share a common juxtaposition: the crowd and the individual. Inside the Panopticon, the crowd - addressed by Foucault as a “compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective

effect” - is replaced by a “collection of separated individualities.” However, from the centralized tower, this collection becomes a multiplicity for supervision.⁷ The assimilation from individual to compact crowd, unified under a collective gaze, is echoed in the space and visual practice of the department store. The architectural features of the department store allow shoppers to oscillate between the bearers and receivers of the gaze, a phenomenon termed “shopper-spectator” by the cinema theorist Ann Friedberg.⁸ Borrowing from the theatre and the Panopticon, subjects within the department store simultaneously watch and are watched.

The juxtaposition of crowd and individual is identifiable in Émile Zola’s novel *Au Bonheur Des Dames*.⁹ The opening chapter witnesses the female protagonist’s first encounter with a fictional department store based on the Parisian grand magasin Le Bon Marché. Describing her experience of initial visual seduction, Zola writes:

“There was a crowd before them, groups of women, pushing and squeezing, devouring the finery with longing, covetous eyes... There was the continual roaring

of the machine at work, the marshalling of the customers, bewildered amidst the piles of goods... And all that went on in an orderly manner, with mechanical regularity, quite a notion of women passing through the force and logic of this wonderful commercial machine."¹⁰

Zola's figurative language - "machine at work," "mechanical regularity," and "commercial machine" - correlates with Foucault's characterising of the Panopticon as an automatic, mechanical model. Additionally, it provides a third metaphor to apply to the department store: the industrial factory. Abstractly, surveillance is a specific mechanism. Through architectural space, the Panopticon imposes this mechanism as a machine that functions automatically while producing specific ideologies of power. In Zola's novel, the department store emerges as a space in which relations between subjects and institutional ideology are imposed with the regularity of an industrial machine. Most importantly, it is a machine that manifests through the practices of visual consumption enacted by visiting shopper-spectators.

Considering metaphors of the department store as theatre, Panopticon, and industrial machine

positions the institution as one that is dependent on architectural space and its promotion of specific visual practices. Within the department store, architectural space produces an ideological script to be performed through visual practice. From central vantage points along balconies and staircases, a controlling gaze orders the anonymous and unruly crowd below. The ordering gaze of the department store is a model of reciprocal spectatorship. The boundaries between viewer and viewed are fluid; the shopper is at once actor and spectator. As a place of fashion consumption, and thus a significant site in the formation of fashion identities, the department store introduces concepts of spectatorship and surveillance to the systems and cycles of fashion and its theorizing. Analyzing the department store through metaphors of modern institutions reveals the centrality of visual practices within its space. The modern department store is not only a space of economic consideration, but fundamentally one of architecturally-embedded and ideologically-driven visual consumption. +

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DESIGNED BY AMMAR BELAL

Interview by Aria Darcella

What inspired the collection?

It started from me finding my identity in a new sphere. While I was on that journey of finding my own identity, I came across my identity in the sphere of a global conversation about hijacked identities and hijacked ideologies that is going on right now. I was born in Boston but I grew up in Pakistan and Switzerland, and I represent a certain segment of Pakistani society, which is not very representative of the mass culture of what Pakistan's identity is shown by mass media. I think this idea of hijacked identities, hijacked ideologies was the starting point of this collection – finding my own, and then figuring out other people whose identities have been stripped from them, but their stories haven't been told.

What is 1432?

1432 is a number of a prisoner whose name is Amanatullah Ali, and he's a prisoner who has been in Bagram prison. Bagram is an American-run air base in Afghanistan that is similar to Guantanamo Bay. This guy's been a prisoner there for 10 years. His story is about somebody who has not been charged with anything, the same way people in Guantanamo Bay are kept there under suspicion but without any legal charge. 1432 is his number, and it was the first story that I picked up on that led me to the other issues in my collection. It started from him and his identity being stripped, and him being reduced to just a photograph, and his lack of access to lawyers or any kind of legal discourse. As I learned about other stories about civilian casualties from drone attacks, the heroin trade from Afghanistan skyrocketing since the US occupation, the corruption, what this war has done, and this false idea of women being more free in Afghanistan now than they were under the Taliban. I kept on coming up with these counter-narratives that are not gaining momentum in the West. We have a state narrative and we approach this conflict – which is very pro-war, because we are at war – but any story about things that have gone wrong, those are narratives are just not gaining momentum. Because the sequence 1432 (which is what I want to call my label and work going forward) I'm looking at the world of information that we come across, and dissecting sequences. 1432 now stands for not looking at everything in a linear fashion, which is 1-2-3-4. It's a philosophy that says 'when you come across information through mass media, have the discourse to dissect that and break the sequence, and look at it as 1-4-3-2, because most things are 1-4-3-2, and not 1-2-3-4.



How are you incorporating all of this in to the design aspects of your collection?

The first part was to get myself acquainted with all these stories and narratives, and I narrowed it down to eight counter-narratives related to this specific conflict. They were narratives about the Afghan war and I wanted to create awareness about them. Once I found those narratives and came up with those stories I wanted to take all my research and put it together using the language of craft and art, which is indigenous to that region. I wanted it to be about empowering those people. That part of the world is very well versed in expressing itself in the language of textile and color, and craft related to textiles. Using these tools, I wanted to create a canvas for each of these narratives, and that canvas needed to have a 360-degree argument of my research. I started approaching the collection through eight groups of prints, which embodied all this information for the argument that I was trying to publicize. I researched three areas: I would have the photographic evidence of the collection through the photographs that a photo-journalist had taken of the victims. I would talk to human rights law organizations to give me the legal data of laws that have been broken or abused. I would use think-tanks to get statistical data about the numbers related to deaths, or war, or incarcerations. I put these things together in a collage to create the textiles. These were created using embroidery or weaving, or craft, which are indigenous to that region.

The last part was the silhouette part, because the silhouette had to touch base in our Western world. These textiles, these stories, had to be interlaced with the silhouette so it's more interesting and appealing to us. The silhouettes were all oversized sportswear. The reason behind that was taking something really precious - taking all these handicrafts, all this hand-made couture, and using it as something very sporty as if we don't care about it, saying something about re-appropriation. The other objective was why it was oversized. The idea of oversized clothing and baggy clothing in hip-hop culture is thought to derive from prison uniforms. Some people feel that they were incarcerated in this society because of racist bias, or any kind of bias. When they were in prison, they had a standard form of uniform that was not specific to size. So when they came out of the prisons and went back to the communities they wanted to wear that as a badge of honor, saying "this is where I came from", as a kind of street cred.

I also find it interesting that a lot of the apparel is made in that part of the world. Pakistan is the third largest producer of cotton. The biggest market for those sportswear goods is the U.S. It's really interesting that millions of t-shirts and sportswear are being manufactured in that part of the world, for us to consume here in the American market. Then those clothes that are later sold second hand, the stuff that is leftover, are sent back to [Pakistan]. I found it really interesting how whenever we see militants from that part of the world, they're always wearing American hoodies, American vests, or American outerwear as utility clothing. I think there is something very poetic about the journey of where something is made, where it goes to be consumed, where it is discarded. It comes back and is re-appropriated to fight back against the same system. That's mostly sportswear. They're not making suits or ball-gowns, they're making everyday clothing.

Do you think there is a place for politics in fashion?

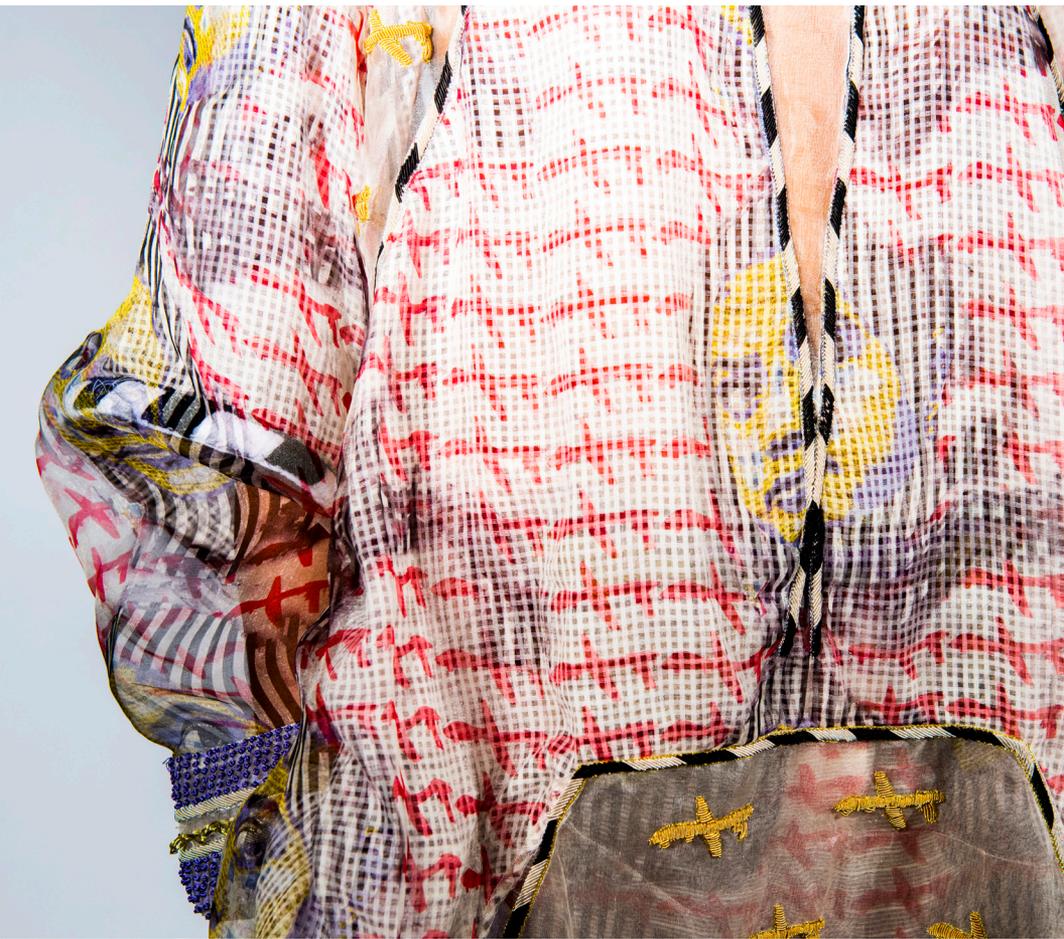
Of course. I think there is a place for politics in art, and I treat fashion as art. The way I as an artist approach it is I don't like calling myself a fashion designer. I like thinking of it as an artist. I create a body of work, research work, and that body of work should be able to be channeled through different mediums. That's why I also did a 5-minute film for this collection. I produced a song, an electronic music track, with voice-overs by somebody who is reading out the letters of the mother of Prisoner 1432. The beat was a loop of the helicopter gun shooting down civilians from a WikiLeaks video. The point is that this body of work that I did for 1432's first collection - fashion was just one of the avenues that is channeled. Of course there is a place for politics in art, and fashion is just one medium under that umbrella of art. I strongly believe that. †













FASHION MONITOR

Surveillance as a Fashion Skill

By Nathaniel Dafydd Beard

Of all the creative industries observed and commented upon by journalists, critics, campaigners and the public, fashion is arguably the most monitored of all. Through the prism of journalistic reportage, varying in quality from Suzy Menkes' missives (previously for the IHT and now for *Vogue*),¹ to the snippets of fashion insight in free-sheets like Metro, it is almost as if we cannot escape from the never-ending consideration of what's in and what's out. Who's the new "hot" model or designer, who's got their finger on the pulse of the zeitgeist (currently Phoebe Philo for Céline it seems),² who's

lost their touch (Juicy Couture pink velour tracksuits);³ what's the latest street-style trend being worn in *i-D* inspired "straight up" photomontages; is that Alexander McQueen or Reiss being worn by the Duchess of Cambridge? And that's just the print media, never mind the ever-growing (and increasingly established) fashion bloggers, accompanied by a growing volume, in numbers and influence, of Pinterest pages, Instagram feeds, Twitter announcements and Vine videos. Yet, perhaps this interest and scrutiny is not entirely surprising, given that fashion presents itself as a society spectacle,⁴ which in



turn, requires the spectacle to thrive. Yet, for all this monitoring, what exactly is being uncovered? What reflection of society does this reportage support? Is there now perhaps too much or too little scrutiny? And what role does monitoring and surveillance have with today's fashion industry?

Curiously, fashion and surveillance have a specific, well-defined affinity. By definition, surveillance is the "close observation or supervision maintained over a person, or group etc., especially one in custody or under suspicion."⁵ As asserted earlier, fashion is

observed, if not always overly critically, by the wide variety of fashion media; which, in turn, is not dissuasive of the ongoing suspicions the general public has of fashion. Perhaps academic writing on fashion offers more critical examination, and certainly ideas around observation and surveillance remain critical in the training of fashion professionals within the academy or fashion school, not only designers, but others in related roles such as art directors, photographers, buyers, marketing and PR officers. In particular, during my own MA studies at ArtEZ Arnhem⁶ a critical component of this, as I now

realize, was developing my ability to look, observe, watch and survey. This took form through many hours spent perusing and analysing the images found in magazines and books, to find not just the “right” image; but rather the exact image or set of images needed to explain and examine concepts and ideas through visual montages. Explaining it like this makes it sound simple, often, however, this really was the toughest task, learning to make use of surveillance as a form of visual research. Lecturing today on several fashion-based courses in Britain, I now find myself drawing on those lessons of becoming fluent in the language of surveillance, aiming to impart some semblance of this critical ability to my own students. Only time will tell how successful I am, since many in my classes come away perplexed, looking at me askance, wondering why I am so encouraging of this act of (critically) looking, observing and surveying across diverse media including advertising, books, magazines, shops, films, exhibitions, and performances, together with online resources. While they are certainly lucky with the internet-based resources open to them, there remains a question of quality the internet of images does not quite provide. How to impart this component of

surveillance to the “digital native” generation?

Yet, surveillance, within the fashion context, and the developing industry as we are coming to know it, remains very much a key tool. The act of surveillance, of close observation, is fundamental in developing a critical and analytical skill set. Indeed, there are numerous areas of fashion research where surveillance, as a skill, is essential in understanding not only trends, but also consumer behaviour and psychology. As my experience perhaps indicates, this takes time to develop, yet oddly, in our speeded-up, globalized age, we are encouraged to ignore this, instead leaping onto the next digital innovation. Yet, behind such innovations are real people, and it is these who need to engage with surveillance skills if the fashion industry is to evolve and thrive. Not only those working or aspiring to become fashion critics, journalists, editors, or bloggers, but also those more intimately connected with the apparatus of fashion, those who are creating its physical artefacts and developing its experiences of spectacle. After all, without the spectacle of fashion there would be nothing to put under surveillance. †

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Illustration by Eda Cakmak

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COSTUME CAPITAL & THE MIDDLE GROUND OF SURVEILLANCE

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1432 *Images by Gabriele Guigni*

Art Direction: Ammar Belal and Stephanie Herold

Designer and Stylist: Ammar Belal

Models: Preetha Nooyi and Ninja Singh

Photographic Consultant: Alex Kwok

Make-Up and Hair: Brian Dean

FASHION MONITOR: SURVEILLANCE AS A SKILL

Image by Nathaniel Dafydd Beard

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