

'The Overworked Body'

Through Oct. 14 at Mathew, 46 Canal Street, Manhattan; 929-229-9156, mathew-nyc.com. Through Oct. 15 at MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38, 38 Ludlow Street, Manhattan; ludlow38.org.

The overlap between contemporary art and fashion has become more of a merger in recent decades, with artists creating garments and clothing lines and designers mounting runway shows in galleries. ["The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress"](#) at Mathew and the [MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38](#) represent the best of these marriages. Organized by Matthew Linde, the show includes over 50 designers from the 2000s and ranges from graduate student experiments to "fast fashion": early collaborations with multinational corporations (such as Isaac Mizrahi for Target and Alexander McQueen and Viktor & Rolf for H&M).

Many of the garments have back stories, like a black sheath dress at Mathew by Narciso Rodriguez from a show scheduled for Sept. 11, 2001. It became a kind of lost collection, and here it is installed next to a dress with blow-torched sequins by the downtown designer Shelley Fox.

Some of the more outré objects include postapocalyptic survival wear from the Japanese collective Final Home ; knitted boots and gloves by BLESS; a Martin Margiela vest made with black ski gloves; and Bernhard Willhelm's look-books featuring the French porn star François Sagat.

Artists inclined to present performance art at their openings could take instruction from the designers here. Both galleries have videos of nontraditional runway shows. At Ludlow 38, visitors can watch Tom Ford's Gucci show with strippers lining the catwalk. At Mathew, there are examples of Carol Christian Poell's brilliantly imaginative shows: In one video models lie like corpses on stretchers in a morgue, and in another they float down a river in Milan with spectators standing on bridges, watching them pass below. Beautiful and perverse, the video is like a contemporary updating of John Everett Millais's 1850-51 painting of Shakespeare's [Ophelia](#), a gesture that hovers perfectly between art and fashion, the subversive and sublime.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER



Matthew Linde

The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress, 2017
The New York Times, Martha Schwendener (September 28th)

CRISIS AND CHILL

Tobias Madison on “The Overworked Body”

THIS PAST FALL THE EXHIBITION “The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress” conceived by curator and writer Matthew Linde and organized with Saim Demircan and David Lieske, took place at two New York Chinatown spaces: Ludlow 38, where Demircan is a curatorial resident, and Mathew Gallery, which Lieske owns. Evoking “Fashion: An Anthology by Cecil Beaton,” a germinal 1971 exhibition curated by the photographer and designer for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Linde’s show privileged connoisseurship over precise cataloguing as he tracked a decade characterized by the galactic ascent of the megabrand, fast-fashion proliferation, and high-street collaborations with formerly exclusive designers. Digital distribution of images and wares alike dovetailed with new technologies of the body, embodied most prominently by the era’s It Girls—from Paris Hilton to Alexa Chung—and trickling down to everybody else via analogous shifts in labor conditions such as the rise of the gig economy. In the decade since, to be present has meant to be accessible, with any attempt at absence negated by a compulsory online existence or its less glamorous twin, the surveillance video. As overpresent, overphotographed, and overworked bodies gear up for their public appearances, garments need to be designed to meet the upcoming decade’s needs—for versatility, adaptability, plurality, and, if so possible, anonymity or invisibility.

What the exhibition proposed was a reconsideration of the fashion of the aughts—a period bookended on one end by 9/11 and on the other by the 2008 financial meltdown—as a form of crisis management, addressing a human figure subject to constant alteration and compromise. To cite just a few examples, the detachable skirt of a cotton shirt by Lutz Huelle from autumn/winter 2002 had twice as many hooks as eyeholes, making it hang awkwardly no matter how one wore it. A dull trench coat (Huelle again; from Spring/Summer 2001) that one might wear to the office featured shoulders that could be zipped down, allowing the garment to collapse into an after-work cocktail dress. The horny slits and straps on Helmut Lang garments promoted the idea of the body as a living currency in the new electronic wasteland.

A transparent nylon jacket from 2000 by the Japanese label Final Home—founded by Kosuke Tsumura to make flexible survival clothing for scenarios including a nuclear fallout—could be stuffed with garbage or other materials to provide warmth and/or enhance appearances. The owner could even pencil in his or her information on a tag sewn on the outside: The garment doubles as a body bag. Early-aughts fashion liked its tags and labels, to say nothing of its ideology, sewn and



Models, like the rest of us, no longer pull off looks.

shown inside out. Perhaps the most striking form an external tag took was the silver cocktail dress attached as a necklace to a black overcoat from Wendy&Jim’s autumn/winter 2001 collection, which channeled the low-key glamour of the exhibition as a whole.

Among a selection of videos documenting fashion shows and presentations was one featuring Carol Christian Poell’s spring/summer 2004 men’s collection “Mainstream—Downstream,” in which male models floated like corpses down the Naviglio Grande canal in Milan in 2003. *Best Before 16/10/00* is a short sequence of CCTV-quality footage from Poell’s 2000 collection presentation, consisting only of models in clothes resembling body bags laid out on gurneys, their made-up feet protruding. By turns questioning longevity in fashion and the distribution methods of the industry, the video and its grainy interlaced lines, typical of the amateur video medium the footage was shot in, seem to scan the inert bodies as if for hidden truths. Even the Raf Simons pieces from the designer’s autumn/winter 2001 collection, patched up with subcultural lingo, popped up in this show like an aerial view of a graveyard of beliefs and esoteric convictions. The private becomes public, and in cyclical trends the dead are forced back to life. Or is it the other way around?

When gay porn star François Sagat ends up with a bouquet of flowers stuffed in his anus, or his penis stuck in the exhaust pipe of a Renault Twingo—as he does in images that appear in the calendar produced for Bernhard Wilhelm’s spring/summer 2008 collection—he perfectly embodies the confusing comedy of errors characteristic of pleasure-seeking in the new millennium. Linde’s rich playlist for an era channeled the now-vintage subjectivity of what it meant to be a delirious body in the 2000s, hallucinating the present and oneself. A MiniDV tape jammed into an orifice could also be an accessory.

The exhibition’s metaphysics of adaptation, change, and death are perhaps best summed up in a video documenting Hussein Chalayan’s spring/summer 2007 runway show: A spinning, numberless infinity clock transported the audience straight into the afterlife. Models wore intricate constructions of boning and bubbles, moving down the catwalk like ghosts to the sounds of warfare and ritualistic clapping. At one point they stopped, and robotic mechanisms hidden within the clothes lifted skirts and opened blouses. Models, like the rest of us, no longer pull off looks. They are worn by clothing, used by a superstructure that has dressed them, and worked over by the images that mediate this structure. If the body is always equally a digitized specter and an organic object, how does one *object* with it? □

TOBIAS MADISON IS AN ARTIST LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY.

Matthew Linde

The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress, 2018
Artforum, Tobias Madison (February 1st)

HARDER HARDER MIUCCIA PRADA¹

Katie Serva on "The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress" at Ludlow 38 and Mathew, New York



"The Overworked Body," New York, performance view

As the millennial turn fades from our ideation of "now," the way we dressed in the early 2000s is coming into view. Unlike past moments, however, which could be quickly summed by such style hallmarks as the power suit or grunge, fashion of the aughts is perhaps better characterized by the changing status of the body as social-professional activity shifted, seemingly overnight, from a more or less analog register to hyper-connected post-Fordist screenspace.

This fall, curator Matthew Linde took a stab at framing aughties style with his two-part New York exhibition "The Overworked Body." Here, Katie Serva, having lived and worked in New York's fashion channels since the '90s (and with, and around the material on view) gives her take on this show.

Before I graduated from design school in 2000, I would rush to the city's better newsstands to pore over the oversized (and expensive) "collection magazines" as soon as they came in, some weeks after the shows had finished. Neatly organized, with names like *Collezioni* and *Fashion Show!*, these imported tomes provided partial access to the runway looks and obscure labels withheld by the industry's stingy image release practices, a precious resource to a fashion student in a time before every look was immediately uploaded in high resolution, made searchable, swipe-able, tag-able, downloadable, and printable (not to mention the pool of bloggers, celebs, and buyers posting intel in real time). The transition from one mode to another was almost imperceptible: the channels of media quietly realigning as phones became cameras and paper gave way to the screen, until the garments (along with the ways of presenting them), which were likewise

Matthew Linde

The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress, 2017
Texte Zur Kunst, Katie Serva (January)

evolving in turn, could no longer be sufficiently represented by the once seemingly comprehensive “collection magazine.” From the vantage of today’s media ecology – where sites such as style.com and the like, functioning as live portals to full collections, feed fast fashion consumption and visual production – this ’90s format now appears as the niche, curated object it always was.

But what about this transitional decade? How can this confused early post-millennial interval, when the printed fashion tome lost relevance, this era of media dispersion and the aesthetic mash-up it at least in part engendered, be circumscribed – much less from such close historical distance? A pioneering attempt was offered in New York this fall by curator Matthew Linde (founder of the Melbourne-based fashion exhibition space Centre for Style) in the form of “The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress,” a two-part exhibition at Mathew Gallery and MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38. Citing Cecil Beaton’s 1971 “Fashion: An Anthology” at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum, Linde presented his personal interpretation of the ambiguous styles of the “aughts.” Inclusive but leaning toward the avant-garde, it included actual items by over 50 designers,² as well as show footage, various publications from the ’00s, and live performances, to form an aptly schizophrenic take on what Linde describes as “an overloaded and overworked” period in fashion.

More accurately, that description might be qualified as the arrival of such a time. The fast-fashion micro cycles of H&M and Zara, soon mirrored by the jump to as many as eight collections a year generated by more upmarket brands, have yet to slow, even if destabilizers such as Vetements signal an impending shift with a “see now buy

now” model. What is different about the present in contrast to the early to mid-aughts is that fashion must now always and instantly be “image ready” for short attention spans, often trading subtlety for maximum visual impact. Much of the work in “The Overworked Body” was made before the advent of social media, which is to say at a point when such quiet concepts as brand anonymity and the decomposition of clothing could claim viral power contra Versace or Prada as they circulated on slow burn through the oblique editorial of *Vogue* alternatives such as *Purple*, *Self Service, A Magazine*, and Bernadette Corporation’s *Made in USA*. Martin Margiela (whose namesake house is now helmed by Galliano) in particular was a brand shrouded in secrecy, its nuanced output being the work of a man who never gave interviews or showed his face (contrary to the ubiquitous, publicly exploited “creative director” role of late). The seldom-seen video collaboration between Margiela and artist Marina Faust (sourced by Linde for this show) is a greyed, languid pastiche of pieces from 1999–2004 shot simply against a white wall. When the camera’s unwavering focus lingers on a simple brown corduroy vest, it feels almost defiantly mundane. The straightforward demonstration of the Belgian designer’s brilliant “duvet” coat and its series of convertible covers – repeatedly changed like a bed – unfurls more methodically than current appetites might prefer; and yet to watch it again, it still completely transfixes.

While the exhibit managed to pack in an impressive number of physical garments within the two modestly sized Lower East Side venues given over to this show, it was the extensive video program that, making apparent the social context in which this clothing emerged, made it all gel.

Showcasing high-concept alternatives to the traditional catwalk, some of these videos could now be seen, here, as real-time precursors to the “fashion film.” This is true of the video for the SS 2004 “Mainstream-Downstream” presentation of revered Austrian menswear designer Carol Christian Poell, who floated his male models motionless (as if dead bodies) down Milan’s Naviglio Grande canal to the sound of intermittent chatter from confused onlookers above. A comment on what Poell saw as the homogenous state of menswear, the luxury fabrics that clothe them are ruined by the polluted water as they drift mindlessly and powerlessly with the current. Or take the military-themed AW 2004 show for Belgian duo A.F. Vandevorst, wherein models emerge from black limousines pulled up to the back end of the runway, evoking secrecy and executive power; or the poignant video of Alexander McQueen’s SS 2004 performance, which reimagines the ultimately tragic “They Shoot Horses Don’t They?” as a Michael Clark-choreographed piece, featuring both models and professional dancers performing frantic, dislocated movements. Arguably most arresting to watch, though, was Hussein Chalayan’s watershed 2007 collection of remotely controlled robotic dresses that unzip and change shape, dramatically self-adjusting their silhouettes. It’s quite the memorable trick, given that the motors and pulleys throughout these garments are practically invisible despite being sewn into the lightest of fabrics. This show remains one of the most storied fashion moments of the time and left stunned critics to wonder if this was in fact the future – though a decade later, it would seem that wearable technology has still yet to catch up.

But then a 2001 *Imitation of Christ* film comes on and breaks me from my reverie. The label’s

reworked (but not enough) vintage aesthetic and celeb-heavy casting hinted at the fame-obsessed climate to come; and when Reese Witherspoon and Selma Blair enter the frame, it feels decidedly like an invasion. Of course, New York fashion has always had a vital social undercurrent – from Susan Cianciolo’s Run restaurant at Alleged Gallery, which functioned as a meeting place and actual restaurant (\$10 meals!), to the downtown following of the late, beloved Ben Cho. The electricity of Ben’s spirit and ingenuity (a dress that uses knitting needles and mannequin arms at the shoulders to create the illusion it’s crocheting itself comes to mind) also spilled into the city’s nightlife: “Smiths Night,” the weekly Sunday night party he co-founded at Sway, perfectly encapsulated the ’00s NYC scene.

What captivated me most in this exhibition were Linde’s less familiar choices (no doubt the fruits of some arduous Tumblr research), and how pieces from the graduate collections of Central Saint Martins and The Royal Academy of Arts Antwerp now appear to sit seamlessly beside the likes of Issey Miyake, Jean Paul Gaultier, and Raf Simons, or Rodarte’s collaboration with Target (the merging of designer and “high street” gained prominence in the early 2000s and remains ubiquitous in today’s retail strategy, a phenomenon recently taken further by Telfar Clemens, who, of his own accord, designed the new uniforms for American fast food chain White Castle, which 10,000 employees will wear). With Annalisa Dunn’s freeform patchwork of knitted stripes or Hideki Seo’s cartoonish stuffed horns, Linde shows us the student work that represents mostly pure, fleeting moments free from the concerns of mass production or catering to a market. And yet he doesn’t deny us such institutionally ordained

efforts as French couturier Adeline André's immaculate 21-armhole chiffon dress. Yards of sheer single-armhole panels are reminiscent of paper dolls when unfurled, but as each pass of the diaphanous material wraps around the body, the layered garment grades darker in color and shorter in length. The result is a slim ombré gown with delicately built-up shoulders that requires assistance to put on (the designer herself was in attendance at Mathew gallery for a single demonstrative performance). Pivoting off this, Linde also included runway footage of KEUPR/van BENTM's play on the carnivalesque clichés of couture, the obscure Dutch duo contradicting their minimalist millennial peers with outlandish "hybrid" garments of one pant leg, half a gown, or a portion of a jacket, worn simultaneously to appear as completely different configurations depending on the angle of the viewer. In both galleries, the video's chopped-up soundtrack (an early collaboration with famed sound designer Michel Gaubert) played as if an exact aural equivalent to the designs: the catchiest snippets of "Funkytown" and "Careless Whisper" mixed crudely together, echoing sickeningly through the space.

For a final closing performance, models styled in looks from the exhibition walked the short distance from Mathew to Ludlow 38, where they gleefully utilized the catwalk ramp that took up most of the latter's narrow space. Unwitting passersby could not have guessed what unified this parade; would it have been so hard to tell had it been any other decade being reenacted through clothes? Very likely, no. What makes the fashion of the aughts so distinctive is its lack of distinctive qualities – or at least as could be employed to describe a certain silhouette or set of dominant material preferences. Rather, style, in the age

of image proliferation and microtrends, would seem to move so quickly it can't yet really be seen, or at least not so easily named. Perhaps with a greater range of hindsight, other qualities will at some point become visible, much in the way that '90s fashion trends, however disparate, can now be understood vis-à-vis the shift to globalized production and their "no logo" backlash to the performative consumerism of the '80s. For now though, it could be just fine to let '00s style circulate without fixed narratives. Linde didn't bring cohesion to this period, but that's hardly a failing. Indeed, the rush of indeterminacy and the plurality of ways in which '00s aesthetics were represented felt both right – and right on time.

"The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress," MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38 and Mathew Gallery, New York, September 10–October 15, 2017.

Notes

- 1 Slogan from T-shirt by Henry Holland, mid 2000s.
- 2 Including works by 20471120, A.F. Vandevorst, Adeline André, Alexander McQueen for Target, Andrea Ayala Closa, Andrew Groves, Anke Loh, Ann-Sofie Back, Annalisa Dunn, Arkadius, As Four, Benjamin Cho, Bernadette Corporation, Bernhard Willhelm, BLESS, Carol Christian Poell, Christophe Coppens, Comme des Garçons, Cosmic Wonder, Dorothée Perret, Dutch Magazine, FINAL HOME, Helmut Lang, Hideki Seo, House of Holland, Hussein Chalayan, Imitation of Christ, Isaac Mizrahi for Target, Issey Miyake, Jean Paul Gaultier, Junya Watanabe, KEUPR/van BENTM, Kim Jones, Koji Arai, Kostas Murkudis, Lutz Huelle, Maison Martin Margiela, Maison Martin Margiela and Marina Faust, Miguel Adrover, Number (N)ine, Organization for Returning Fashion Interest, Proenza Schouler for Target, Purple Fashion, Rodarte for Target, Shelley Fox, Sophia Kokosalaki, Stephen Jones, Susan Cianciolo, Tao, Telfar, Undercover, Victoria Bartlett (previously VPL), Viktor & Rolf, Viktor & Rolf for H&M, Walter van Beirendonck, Wendy & Jim, Yohji Yamamoto, and _____fabrics interseason.



OPINION - 26 OCT 2017

Authenticity and its Discontents

A pair of exhibitions in New York question the nature of authorship in fashion's postmodernity
BY JEPPE UGELVIG

In his 1836 novel *Sartor Resorts*, Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle observed that clothes are always, despite their seeming banality, 'unspeakably meaningful'. As self-adornment, the clothes we wear mark currents in personal and collective identification, patterns of movement and migration and socio-political affiliation; as commodities, they speak of shifting systems of labour, production and global distribution. Fashion responds much faster than art to the cultural zeitgeist of its time. 'Fashion speaks capitalism,' as writer Elizabeth Wilson once put it; but as a child of capitalism, fashion – in all its economic, social, and aesthetic complexity – rarely receives critical curatorial attention. Most fashion exhibitions seem to resort either to a high-modernist approach of portraying the designer as a great auteur on par with their art-historical contemporaries, or the materialist doctrine of traditional costume

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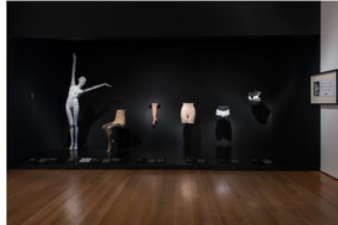
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Matthew Linde

The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress, 2017
Frieze Magazine, Jeppe Ugelvig (October 26th)

history. However, two current exhibitions in New York – ‘The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress’ at Mathew Gallery and MINI/Goethe Institut Curatorial Residences Ludlow 38, and ‘Items: Is Fashion Modern?’ at the Museum of Modern Art – make bold attempts to decode fashion from two opposing curatorial perspectives, by tackling the very premise of fashion’s postmodernity, and with it, many of its existential dilemmas: the relationship between form and function, automation and craftsmanship, and the status of aesthetic authorship in the age of global mass production.



‘Items: Is Fashion Modern?’, 2017, installation view, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy: © 2017 The Museum of Modern Art, New York; photograph: Martin Seck

Both exhibitions, curated by Matthew Linde and Paola Antonelli respectively, cite a methodological predecessor: for Antonelli, the infamous 1945 MoMA exhibition ‘Are Clothes Modern?’ curated by Czech-American architect Bernard Rudofsky, effectively the only fashion exhibition to appear in the museum for 70 years; and for Linde, the 1971 Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition ‘Fashion: An Anthology’, curated by London aesthete Cecil Beaton. Both

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‘The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress’, 2017, installation view, Mathew Gallery, New York. Courtesy: Mathew Gallery, New York

Installed across two sites in the Lower East Side – Mathew Gallery and Ludlow38 – ‘The Overworked Body’ examines the still-to-be-defined era of 2000s dress in a Beaton-esque fashion. From the crass neon sloganism of early Henry Holland and the abstract radicalism of the second-wave Belgian avant-gardist A.F. Vandevorst, to the peculiar functionalism of North-European designers like Ann-Sofie Back, and the party-driven ebullience of downtown New York collective A4Four, Linde paints an image of a booming industry in constant pursuits of newness. These examples prove that the 2000s was an era of experimental garment design: the alien and carnivalesque forms of Hideki Seo’s mody-morphing ensembles in blue and red primaries from 2002 echo the irreverent work of his then-tutor Walter van Beirendonck, whose politically tone-deaf ‘menswear burqa’ from the same year gender-swaps Muslim garb in a cacophony of red, blue and earth-toned knitwear. Linde cites 11 September, 2001 as a critical juncture in New York City’s fashion scene, changing not only the market but the general état d’esprit of the American fashion capital. (The World Trade Center was struck on the fourth day of New York Fashion Week, also the planned date of Narciso Rodriguez’s SS’02 show; his densely encrusted black cocktail dress is also on display here.)



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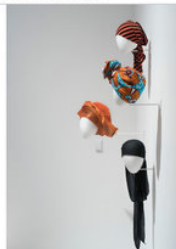
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"The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress", 2017, installation view, Ludlow 38, New York. Courtesy: MINI/Gaethe Institut Curatorial Residences Ludlow 38, New York; photograph: Yair Oelbaum

The 2000s saw the industry on the cusp of a digital revolution, one that would irrevocably change the fashion world forever: platforms like Style.com (now Vogue Runway) gave anyone with a computer access to international fashion, collapsing divisions between "insiders" and "outsiders" and launching high fashion's as the mass-cultural phenomenon it is today. However, if digitization "democratized" fashion, it also diffused it, as it came face to face with the illusory power of the mass-market. Martin Margiela was the first in a string of radical European designers selling their namesake brands to corporate conglomerates (the launch of the brand's closure after Martin's departure is marked at Mathew Gallery by an uncanny vest stitched from up-cycled ski gloves), at while the 2000s saw the rise of high street giants like Zara that spearheaded a type of retail practice where the sartorial vanguard - be it haute couture or street culture - was copied at such a pace that any small- to mid-scale design studio would struggle to keep up. "Trickle-down" and "bubble-up" economics are some of the most clichéd tropes in fashion theory, and Linde contests these reductive logics in his historical presentation. The inclusion of items from collections produced by high-fashion designers in collaboration with retail brands, such as Alexander McQueen and Proenza Schouler for Target, speaks to an important market shift, in which profit is generated by brand pollution rather than imitation or wholesale theft. In these cases, authorship is continually caught between the market and the myth, the marginal and the mainstream - in the process shaking up all previously established hierarchies of 'good design'.



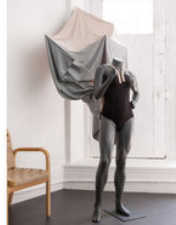
"Items: Is Fashion Modern?", 2017, installation view, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy: © 2017 The Museum of Modern Art, New York; photograph: Martin Seck

If Linde provides a precise take on the past decade of high fashion, during which authorship became an increasingly complicated question, MoMA's large-scale survey serves as a helpful historical backdrop. Its presentation of 111 archetypes of modern dress - from the suit to the Speedo to the Burkini - attempts to break down the complicated and often irrational histories of the "items" of clothing we wear everyday. Though juxtaposed objects and accompanying short video essays, bold comparisons abound: the ubiquitous fanny-pack appears in its various historical renditions, from the Native American buffalo pouch made of animal hide and HTV-sew nylon merchandise, to Vivienne Westwood's bum bag designed for her 1996 Louis Vuitton capsule collection. Margiela's famous tobacco boot, which he re-invented again and again in his time, derived its odd toe-cliff from the footwear of Japanese construction-workers, also on display. The sailor kameez, a casual cotton blend two-piece sport in South Asia, is cheekily flanked by the more traditional sarī



"The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress", 2017, installation view, Ludlow 38, New York. Courtesy: MINI/Gaethe Institut Curatorial Residences Ludlow 38, New York; photograph: Yair Oelbaum

Can we, and should we, judge these histories of inspiration and appropriation? "Items" makes no ethical judgments, but portrays instead the many paradoxes of authorship in contemporary fashion, pointing to the way in which the origins of a design are increasingly obscured by its global circulation and corporate ownership. In this age, authorship becomes a question of copyright and trademark, epitomized by the designer's monogram, which functions both as a legal marker and a brand signifier. In 1984, Miuccio Prada added the family brand's triangular metal label to a chubby nylon backpack, inspiring millions of counterfeits, some of which appear in the show alongside their original model. Around the corner, the work of Dapper Dan encapsulates the inverse of this brand exchange: in the late 1990s, the self-taught New York designer sold custom clothing for African American celebrities from his Harlem storefront that freely appropriated and re-sampled manogram patterns from European fashion houses like Fendi, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. The fact that Gucci recently re-appropriated Dapper Dan's iconic designs



"Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress", 2017, installation view, Mathew Gallery, New York. Courtesy: Mathew Gallery, New York

If fashion can be defined as the practice of dressing in rapidly and continually changing styles, its modes of authorship must be structured by the ever-changing rhythms of the marketplace. It becomes the duty of the fashion curator, then, to break free from the outer-model and embrace these modes in all their complexity.

Main image: "The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress" (detail), 2017, installation view, Ludlow 38, New York. Courtesy: MINI/Gaethe-Institut Curatorial Residences Ludlow 38; photograph: Yair Oelbaum

JEPPE UGELVIG
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"The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s," installation view at Mathew Gallery, New York (2017). Courtesy Mathew Gallery, New York.

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The Overworked Body Ludlow 38 and Mathew Gallery / New York

Is it the 2000s or the aughts? Would you say post-9/11, the Bush years, or the war on terror? Housing bubble or housing crisis? Your twenties? MySpace? That time you lived in Williamsburg? Does "last decade" indicate our stern preference to not talk about it?

The same anxiety troubles "The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress," an honest eulogy to that ten-year span of time. The exhibition collects radical fashion between spring/summer 2000 and fall/winter 2009 into a historical hall of mirrors in which dozens of studiously garmented mannequins recount the era's feverish obsessions. Put another way, the show's fitful attachments exhibit a budding angst.

There are many ways through this exhibition, which converts Mathew and Ludlow 38 into overcrowded showrooms. Connections between designers are largely intuited. Some were especially captivated by the apparatus of control. At the former space, Ann-Sofie Back's cocktail dresses and reworked trench coat expose the shameless will to power behind the austerity of business casual. A Victorian-inspired Jean-Paul Gaultier dress employs new (at the time) photographic fabric printing to simulate patterns and ruffles, complimented by an infamous Stephen Jones shoe-hat flopped on the mannequin's head. Decadence tends toward irreverence in other designers: Final Home's mesh coat filled with all sorts of office trash (e.g., a Diet Coke can and FedEx shipping form); Margiela's military-style vest made out of puffy ski gloves; the torched sequins in a Shelley Fox dress. Behind the naughty pastiche of '90s styles is boredom in the KEUPR/van BENTM Fall/Winter 2000 show, a video of which is on view. Each time a model takes their turn, a *Looney Tunes* bonk-on-the-head sound effect is heard.

Neoliberalism spread rapidly during the aughts. Wealth flowed upward. Designers may have sniffed out clues to the nihilism driving our current predicaments, having made light of the ill-begotten popularity facilitated by the internet. It's tough to name. The flipside involved special credence paid to New Age spiritualism and countercultural chic. Innocence, frivolity and joy describe several looks displayed on a catwalk-cum-skate park packed into Ludlow 38's entryway — rejoice in fabrics and textures. Hideki Seo's contributions, two school uniforms that transform the wearer into a scaly mythological chimera, speak to the narrow distance between animism and imagination. Bedazzled outfits by Andrew Groves and a gown by Arkadius balance frump and glamor; A.F. Vandervost's dress is Weimar club gear; and an abundance of BLESS demonstrates their coy, cult-like sensibility, drawing connections between universal football fandom and featureless, unisex onesies.

The exhibition takes place definitively *downtown*, in a section of Chinatown and the Lower East Side that many of the designers included here, especially Susan Cianciolo or the late Ben Cho, helped to popularize. The proximity is voyeuristic. During the same era, galleries moved there, too. It's been almost a decade and we keep coming back to sneak a peek.

by Sam Korman



ARCHIVE



João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva
by Simone Menegoi



Dudesweet
Bangkok



Arte Povera
Notes for a guerrilla war
by Germano Celant

Matthew Linde
The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress, 2017
Flash Art, Sam Korman (October 17th)

GREETINGS FROM NEW YORK

Robert McKenzie

The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress

As teenagers in the late 1990s and very early 2000s, my twin sister and I would follow the most vanguard fashion magazines we could find. I remember *The Face* being available at the local library. On a family vacation passing through an Australian country town we came across a shop selling an exciting new magazine and the interest and intrigue was so intense I can still summon the memory of it twenty years later. The types of publications we liked, titles like *i-D* or *Purple* or *Dutch* magazine, are probably familiar to most readers who find themselves holding this particular contemporary art publication. They are, whether acknowledged or not, part of the fulcrum from which contemporary art has pivoted or pushed against. It felt like there was something personal in the relationship we had to each magazine title. The American magazine *Nylon* seemed to have a special hold on my sister at one moment and I had some fetish-fondness for *Doingbird*, an Australian magazine devoted to experimental fashion photography. From a vaguely post-subcultural worldview the magazines we were interested in probably all seem pretty same-same. At the time though, even the smallest difference in emphasis or perspective appeared full of meaning and vital. It would be too solipsistic to recall all the minutiae of my youthful interest in fashion and the various emotions and ideas that formed through these encounters, but what I want to say is that it was valuable to me. Beside the obvious influence of encouraging me to save money and buy some unnecessarily expensive clothes, it also encouraged me to meet other people with an interest in “underground” forms of art, fashion and music and if one can excuse any sense of cliché, I can honestly say that my life really was radically altered by it.

So it was with a certain sentimentality that I came across the exhibition “The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress.” This group show was spread across two Lower East Side locations; the non-profit project space Ludlow38 funded by Goethe-Institute and the trans-atlantic enterprise Mathew Gallery run by artist/dealer/musician David Lieske and his business partner Peter Kersten. Ludlow38 has an annual curator’s residency and the chosen curator is responsible for the yearly programming. For 2017 this position was filled by Saim Demircan, one of the organizers of “The Overworked Body” and a former curator for the Kunstverein München. Matthew Linde, an Australian curator who specializes in fashion, was the other organizer and from the outside it would seem he was the project’s main protagonist.

The experience of the exhibition rested largely on a dense aggregation of designer clothing. Outfits were put together using items that shared aesthetic affinities. A European contingent including Helmut Lang, Bless, Lutz and Maison Martin Margiela were shown on the same or adjacent mannequins, a nod to their professional and intellectual cross-contamination. The same went for Japanese designers like Comme des Garçons, Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake and Final Home. Through these groupings one could identify the key geographic localities for what I would describe as “underground” fashion: Antwerp, Vienna, Paris, Tokyo, New York. For myself, as something of a self-described lover of fashion, or as the French might say *amateur*, the show encouraged a train spotter’s compulsion to identify and recognize. There were many great examples of the period’s fashion from many designers who were the locus of my teenage investigations.

The exhibition design was similarly engaging. Mannequins were placed on low raised platforms lending the installation a museum-like impression. At Ludlow38, these platforms intervened with a passageway in the space, forcing the audience to walk across them as if entering the static runway. The platform also curved up towards the front window where the artist Whitney Clafin had created a special window display. Wigs were produced for many of the mannequins by Isaac Davidson who runs a company called Wigbar that specializes in wig design, hair styling and hair extensions for photo shoots and television. This production seemed to mimic the excessiveness of The Metropolitan Museum’s costume exhibitions where architectural interventions and lighting have become major features of such shows as the recent *Comme des Garçons* retrospective.

Archival “support material” from the 2000s, various types of publications and other documentation, was also included. A vitrine at Ludlow38 displayed Bernadette Corporation’s *Made in USA* magazine. A couple of monitors showed video footage of runway presentations. At Mathew Gallery a group of Bernhard Wilhelm look books and posters were spread along a shelf. All these elements combined—the clothes selection, exhibition design and ephemera—worked impressively to summon the ghosts of recent fashion and its momentary interventions into everyday personal expression.

Many of the qualities that had brought me to fashion as a teenager were warmly affirmed. The curator’s chosen outfits were full of the formal exuberance (terrific colors, textures and unusual compositions) that had so engaged me. Critical jokes about functionality or semiotics which were key components of many garments and still functioned in the ways I had so fondly remembered.

The largely personal-nostalgic aspect of the exhibition was, however, only one of its attractions for me. What stimulated me greatly was the curators’ focus on such a recent time period of fashion history. This seemed so much in contrast with the art world which is almost terrified of the preceding ten or twenty years, preferring to wait for generational change or to focus only on the very contemporary. The awkward memories of the preceding few years are often ana-

Matthew Linde

The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress, 2018
Starship, Robert McKenzie (February)



Ludlow 38, New York, 2017

thema to an art world that would like to forget that its activities are also subject to shifting tastes and other such vagaries.

Contemplating this exhibition, and the lessons it might have for the art world, I couldn't help but think about what shifts in style might actually mean. Why do we desire endless novelty and reinvention in cultural expression? Is art merely a merry-go-round of significations that randomly index a specific moment? Or are they more complicated symptoms? Meaningful actors on the ideas that create our social matrix? To

answer these larger questions, it is unfair to look to one curator and one exhibition. Nonetheless, Matthew Linde kindly agreed to indulge me by answering some questions.

I loved the title of your exhibition—"The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress." It states very clearly the ambitions of the exhibition—to present a survey of the main themes of 2000s fashion. Can you tell me about the parameters you set for the exhibition and the methodology you used to select designers?

My title alludes to Cecil Beaton's 1971 exhibition "Fashion: An Anthology," which was held at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. It was an important curatorial landmark for fashion as it was the first time that artistic trends in modern clothing were deemed worthy of museological study. It is interesting to acknowledge that the specific curatorial requirements for something as vague as "fashionable clothing" posed a major dilemma. Traditional custodians of historical clothing had dealt with and analyzed these "artifacts" from either anthropological or sociological perspectives. "Fashion" as artistic expression needed to be treated differently. It is interesting to think of this also in the relation to the art curator and what their responsibility is to history, sociology, anthropology or some sort of more pure "spirit essence" of the contemporary.

So with this interest in the creative aspect of "fashion" rather than some sort of pure history, this bon vivant Beaton took on the task of "curating." For this purpose he used the format of an anthology—selecting as his whim dictated the most vivacious examples of different clothing. This has set the tone for a lot of fashion exhibitions since, most notably those produced by Diana Vreeland who in 1973 was appointed Special Consultant to the Costume Department at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vreeland, who had been the editor of *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, was often criticized for her ahistorical groupings, which one might say was a betrayal of the curator's "fiduciary" duty to historical accuracy. In a more positive light I would say her ability was to decipher fashion's ineffable élan regardless of trivial concerns such as the what, why and when of the objects. For "The Overworked Body" I wanted to hijack Beaton's and Vreeland's approaches and take them to the point of ad nauseam. In contrast to Beaton's 1971 exhibition though, which had a clearly delineated chronology (like this is what was chic in the '30s, this is what was hot in the '40s and so on), the only criteria necessary for inclusion in my exhibition was that the item of fashion or ephemera had to have been made in the 2000s. Obviously that cast a wide net for an exhibition over only two small spaces.

The 2000s defines a period of fashion that I see as being so overloaded, or as the title suggests "overworked," and

complicated that I just wanted to communicate that without being bogged down by too many specific parameters. I did not want historicity to get in the way of what I saw as that decade's more important artistic advantages. And rather than explication, isn't it more fun to at least to some degree enact the spirit of what one is trying to communicate? In contrast to much fashion curation, take for example the Museum of Modern Art's recent show "Is Fashion Modern" which was something like a series of Wikipedia entries, I had no interest in tracking various subcultural styles. I certainly did not want to have, for example, a neo-rave section, a hip-hop corner, a Paris Hilton homage etc. Nor was it going to be a survey of luxury labels of the time who did quantitatively well in press and sales. Different to "survey" or "overview," an anthology means a selection by choice. My methodology was to try and highlight the fringe voices, or critical designers of the period. So I included a mix of designers; from the iconoclastic like Viktor&Rolf; the underground like The Organization of Returning Fashion Interest; the scholarly such as Anke Loh; the carnivalesque like Bernhard Willhelm; the multi-disciplinary like BLESS.

Hearing your curatorial methodology, and being a fan and follower and even a participant in a very minor way of the period you focused on, I found it very successful. It was a real pleasure to have the spotlight on objects and ideas that have only just become "memories." Your period of inquisition is just too recent to have become universally nostalgic. It made me consider how discourses can change almost arbitrarily. As if time passes and for that reason alone, without any other higher guiding force, things must be made different. The art world obfuscates this reality by talking of "changing styles" rather than "changing fashions." But the art world is just as subject to these forces as clothing or anything else for that matter. Do you see any correlation?

Personally I find it incredibly exhausted to compare the art world and the fashion world. But that's just me.

Ha ha. Ok. Was there any particular aspect of the 2000-2010 discourse that

you were looking back on that you felt was particularly urgent to communicate?

Before the 2000s, fashion was much more of an insider game. You had to get the right magazines or attend the shows to witness these "discourse changes." It's important to remember *i-D* had only a few retailers in Australia pre-21st Century, so new designers and collections were especially obscured for those who didn't live in fashion capitals. I think a major shift in practice occurred alongside the online digitization of fashion. This "democratization" of fashion has allowed emerging designers to deploy the newfound tools of the widening attention economy to gain global visibility with incredible speed. As I wrote in my review for NYFW, this contemporary condition has led to practicing the quick assemblage of image-ready design. VFILES is a good example of this system, which values the impact of the image in obvious design one-liners and gimmicks, and in doing so extracting the gains of social-media metrics. Exaggerated silhouettes with a macro, uncomplicated design approach, appropriate for the consumption of the four-sided frame, works best under this system of data aggregation. You can see this happening in so much graduate work across the globe.

The 2000s expressed the growing pains of this shift. Looking back at shows on Vogue Runway as late as 2008 or 2009 the image quality is like 150x250 pixels! Technology for online viewership was somehow still lo-fi, including the mini-dv video recording of the time. It almost feels as if the industry was undergoing puberty, awkwardly adjusting to its new technological identity. In "The Overworked Body" there was a grouping of European designers (Lutz, Ann-Sofie Back, Anke Loh, Dorothee Perret, Wendy&Jim, ___fabrics inter-season, BLESS) whose practices were rather unspectacular insofar they remained somehow at odds with the immediacy of the image, working with generic garments as their departure point. One of the pieces by Lutz, a designer who used to work under Martin Margiela before forming his own label, is a relatively quotidian black trench coat. Inset into the shoulder seams, however, are zips that when undone collapse the garment into a negligé dress. An Ann-Sofie Back corporate outfit features a conventional blouse made out of worn silver fabric.

When the fabric tie is pulled together towards the back, the front appears modestly conventional and when the fabric is pulled towards the front, two large box pleats are revealed over the bust, seemingly mimicking saggy boobs. Upon close inspection the mundane grey slacks feature a circular fabric fastening to secure and carry a belt, as if for mountaineering. The Wendy&Jim ensemble consists of a characteristic '80s/'90s prom dress refashioned as a large necklace worn over the top of a blazer. It floats in front of the figure and impossible to wear as the actual dress through an operational side-seam opening. It was these sorts of examinations between generics and functionality that attracted me to such designers—a subdued quality I think is worthy of reflection today.

My argument is not that 2000s fashion were inherently critical, my interest was the way in which designers deviated from their adolescent prevailing technologies. Many designers also made experimental printed matter as part of their practice. Cosmic Wonder made booklets with prose, instructional guides and installation imagery. Keupr/van Bentm produced a document outlining the plot of a fictional runway show, as an expanded mode to present their collection. BLESS made parasitic look books published in different local art journals and magazines across the world.

But I'm just as interested in today's designers as I am of historical fashion. For example some of my earlier points I see addressed in *Vetements*, both in their interest in reformatting generics as well as reimagining modes of dissemination.

The exhibition also prompted me to think about that oft invoked, but for me little understood, idea of "critical distance." Is it the sense of emotional indifference that occurs once a certain period of time has past? When questions at stake no longer feel rooted in personal identity? Is it the period after which only the historian and the conscientious student care about the specific crises from moments that have already past?

I digress though. To return to your curatorial activities, I understand "The Overworked Body" will be more widely disseminated through a new publication based on the research you made for the exhibition. Can you tell me anything more about it?



Ludlow 38, New York, 2017

David Lieske and Rob Kulisek have a fashion magazine that we are going to turn into the exhibition 2.0... It will behave as a catalogue, with install imagery alongside an encyclopedic-style documentation of each piece; a fashion magazine, commissioning various stylists and photographers to construct new editorial photo shoots with the pieces; a journal, including essays by fashion scholars discussing fashion and time; as well as reprints of archival 2000s fashion advertisements from magazines. BLESS will also feature their

new signature "parasitic look book" in the publication.

Well I very much look forward to seeing it. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.



EXPLORE FASHION FROM THE 2000S AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE

By Ezra Marcus
 Photography: Dillon Sachs
 Published October 18, 2017



Photo by Dillon Sachs, courtesy of Mathew Gallery



In a new exhibition titled *The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress*, Australia-born and New York-based fashion curator Matthew Linde refuses to take received wisdom for granted. He's very clear to explain, as we step through the two mannequin-stuffed gallery spaces in Chinatown (Ludlow 38 and Mathew Gallery) that he's using for this sprawling look at fashion from the previous decade, that the show is not meant to be "a survey or an overview." At least, not in the rigid sense that a historian might use those terms. Rather, he points out, "It's an anthology, meaning a selection by choice." The show expresses Linde's point of view about the hidden forces bubbling beneath the sartorial surface. "This approach has really been lifted from Cecil Beaton's 1971 exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, titled *Fashion: An Anthology*," he explains, adding that this was the "first instance in which fashionable modern dress received a museological moment ... previously these exhibitions were done under the auspice of a dress historian, but how then can a dress historian approach the idea of fashionable modern dress?"

Linde remarks that his exhibition "hijacks this anthological approach, but to the point of ad nauseam ... This exhibition presents a period of fashion that is overloaded and overworked." His vision sweeps across a wide range of designers, from major figures like Helmut Lang and Walter Van Beirendonck, to obscurities like KEUPR/van BENTM and Hideki Seo. While a more pedantic exhibit might have skipped unknown figures in favor of designers whose clothes people actually wore, Linde uses small names to illustrate big ideas. "I'm bringing up unsung voices from the period to present that fashion history has always been slippery and complicated," he says, with a mischievous smile. "So someone in 2050 doing an anthology of 2000s dress would do something wildly different to this. This is more of an attempt to unnerve or complicate this idea that fashion periods are cement."

So what did the period add up to, exactly? "Prior to the 2000s you really had to be an insider to know what was going on in designer fashion," Linde notes. "When digitization occurred, which people describe as the democratization of fashion, suddenly these wider markets were available. But at the same time you had the proliferation of fast fashion—Zara, TOPSHOP, H&M, Target. So suddenly things became a lot more ugly," he adds, laughing. "There was so much trash in the 2000s." Linde's vision of the decade captures an itchy, imbalanced energy, sparked by disruptive forces like 9/11 and the rise of social media. He showcases designers who blowtorch sequins, turn prom dresses into necklaces, and fill transparent post-apocalyptic survival outfits with trash. They mock couture silhouettes and use religious garb as a punchline. Nothing was sacred. Or perhaps, everything was.



Matthew Linde
The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress, 2017
 Interview Magazine, Ezra Marcus (October 18th)



Photos by Willem Holboer, courtesy of HENK van der Meer, Curatorial Foundation Lashuis 19

MATTHEW LINDE: This is KUIPRAAN BENTM, there's two of them and they met in AntZ, which is the fashion school in Antwerp in the Netherlands. They only operated for a few years, but for me it was incredibly important that their voice made presence within the '90s. They only showed in couture work, as a refusal of the dominant design ethos of the late '90s and early '00s, which was this kind of minimalist chic, Helmut Lang approach. They wanted to block the couture and to produce digital couture. So they were literally dubbed by Vogue as "Cartoon Couture," and I think it's evident in the flattening of the lips up here and the cartoon-designer nature.

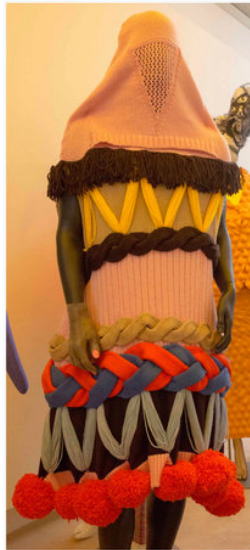


Photos by Willem Holboer, courtesy of HENK van der Meer, Curatorial Foundation Lashuis 19

LINDE: This is Hiddi's box, a 2001 graduate collection from the Antwerp Academy. So far as I know, while he didn't go off and create his own label, it's nice as a moment in time in fashion. Walter van Bovenbroek was the fashion coordinator at the school, you see Walter's voice being re-generated through new designers in the 2000s. Like, who would happen if Walter started designing in the 2000s?

INTERVIEW: Did box have a major commercial impact?

LINDE: No, I think he's the design assistant now for Aina. For artists, their practice often develops as their career develops and gains refinement. Fashion designers are the antithesis of this; their best work is usually their graduate work and as they become more and more successful, so the market they become more and more diluted.



Photos by Willem Holboer, courtesy of HENK van der Meer, Curatorial Foundation Lashuis 19

LINDE: There's Walter Van Bovenbroek himself. Fall/Winter 2008-2009 I believe, wow wow. Looking at the specific, cartographic side of fashion as it always is with Walter, it's a kind of essential study of material and masculinity. He's always trying to talk with masculinity. Of course this is a kind of political collection, bearing history, which is something you probably can't get away with bearing in 2017. The 2000s weren't always wide, sometimes you could get away with these cultural cross-pollinations within fashion.

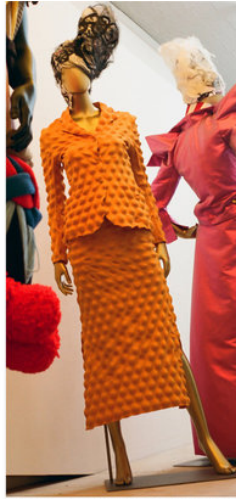


Photo by Tom DeBruin, courtesy of 2013/14 Fashion and Textile Museum, London, UK

MATTHEW LENSE: This is by Miyake from 2000. During this period, they were really looking at fabric, technique and how to produce fabric, and this again came out as a great example of that. Like, "How can we continuously look with synthetic?" I think this is a very good example of being thoughtful around the 2000s as being identical if you will. When you look at this from a kind of quick reference, pragmatic understanding, you would much rather place this in the 90s. This is what I mean. In this is really a very good example of designers embracing the 2000s style. So a lot of people have come in here and said, "Wow this looks like the 90s?" And it's like, well, they were all made in the 2000s, so [laughs]

INTERVIEW: People often say the 2000s was when we called "retro" blew up.

MATTHEW LENSE: With a lot of subculture styles were really re-looking each other. And if you read [Walter Benjamin] or something, they really use this idea to show the 1930s. However, interestingly enough, Walter Benjamin was talking about the same thing with regards to 1930s fashion, how it was rebelling styles. So I think this is a permanent condition of fashion, that it's really not done. That one could see the present only through means of the past returning.



Photo by Tom DeBruin, courtesy of 2013/14 Fashion and Textile Museum, London, UK

MATTHEW LENSE: This look is by Wendy & Jon, European designers who were working with Benetton. In the past from their 1992 collection, they made these architectural pieces down, but they never made an opening, so it always just functional in a neckless. So you can only wear it as a neckless, it's one big long neckless.



Photo by Tom DeBruin, courtesy of 2013/14 Fashion and Textile Museum, London, UK

MATTHEW LENSE: This is by Klaus Martschke, who famously worked for Helmut Lang throughout the '90s and started his own label in late '90. This was like a link to the European past that he had. But in terms of the very minimalist approach, but also playing the line between very female and like being [laughs] and obviously using a transparent fabric as well.





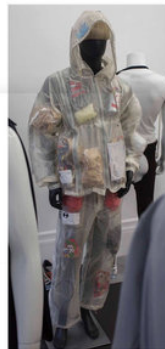
Detail of the top part of the two-look by Singapore in the 1980s. The model appears to be wearing a black top.



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