4. THE AUGMENTED CATWALK: THE INFORMATION SYSTEM HYPOTHESIS
4.1. fashion x reality: the collapse of a system

On September 11th 2001, about 8 million people in New York city witnessed, in real life, history shifting. In front of their eyes, architecture crumbled into piles of metal. Their bodies were covered in dust and their routine disappeared. The attacks killed almost 3,000 people and caused at least $10 billion in property and infrastructure damage (wikipedia). For those people, the attack was a real and actual thing.

While many New Yorkers witnessed the tragedy in loco, about 7 billion people globally experienced it through hyperreality (Baudrillard, 1998). In front of our screens we witnessed, live⁶, a tragedy becoming entertainment through an architecture that was reduced to spectacle and image. The mediated narrative following the hours during and after the attack happened through multi-angular cameras, with views from top, bottom, sideways, from the river, from outside of the city, from all sides of the city. The space lab sent images of Earth where one could see smoke rising from the planet’s surface. We saw zoomed in and out images of this same smoke, of bodies falling, of close up of bodies falling, of frozen frames of bodies falling, all transmitted by satellite. The city’s skyline was erased as if subjected to a kind of humorouss digital manipulation, and the sound during video transmissions was amplified: the humming crash caused by the collapsing of the towers was remasterized for those who have home theater equipments. Americans, and consequently the world, was under “red level” alert. Then orange, then yellow, then red again. Emotions manipulated through CMYK maneuvers.

For us, viewers, the attacks happened somewhere away from New York. It was virtual.

On September 11th 2001, New York Fashion Week was taking place at the Bryant Park, just a few blocks away from the World Trade Center. Just like every year since it first appeared in 1943, it hosted old and new fashion names, extravagant collections, exclusiveness and everything else that has shaped Fashion, from production and spectacle to image making. In that specific season, many brands and a large number of fashion media were preparing to

⁶ Live broadcast is never really live. There is a 5 seconds due to technical reasons. In some cases, the channels delay it in purpose so to be capable of censoring any unwanted situation. If there is not a live transmission, we are always in the past.
start one more catwalk day.

In that specific season, the shows did not happen.

Two weeks after the attacks, a small show was put together organized by Vogue and Style.com. A total of 10 new designers presented their collections at Carolina Herrera’s showroom in New York. There was no music, and the only thing one could hear were the models’ high heels against the hardwood floor:

“There are some times when you feel like fashion isn’t that big in the broader scheme of the world. CNN wasn’t announcing that Fashion Week was canceled.”

Behnaz Sarafpour, designer participant of the small event

“I had shown my collection right before 9/11, but obviously no one was writing about anything to do with fashion after that. Somehow, making clothes, it all felt so frivolous.”

Christine Gano, designer participant of the small event

“There was a great opulence in fashion and then this terrible thing happened and everybody went back to the roots: clothes that we have to sell because we have to survive. And we did. Fashion always survives. It is for your everyday life. It’s not only frivolous, as people think, to talk about fashion and clothes and all of that. It’s for your everyday life. You project yourself when you get dressed. Fashion has always been important.”

Carolina Herrera, designer who provided the physical space where the small event took place (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/08/fashion/fashion-week-ten-years-later-a-bond-forged-in-tragedy.html?pagewanted=all)

The fact is: no matter how traditional and important the fashion shows were, they could not survive the reality strike that fell upon the tents on Bryan Park that day. Fashion, the more-than-a-century old social phenomena that had created their own images through spectacle, it was silenced for the first time by a spectacle larger than Fashion itself. And worst: the temporary absence of Fashion did not change the world neither provoked any social cataclysm. In fact, no one really noticed.

9/11 and its mediatic exaggeration of content and form over an already existing hyperreality was the definitive arrival and permanence of the liquid space
Top: Stefan Eckert’s holographic fashion show, 2011
Bottom: Chanel being reflected on the mirrors installed at her studio in Paris

Fig. 24
We commonly associate “virtual” with the web mostly because that is how we are experiencing it now in the 21st century. The word “virtual” - late Middle English (also in the sense ‘possessing certain virtues’): from medieval Latin virtualis, from Latin virtus ‘virtue’, suggested by late Latin virtuosus. - goes beyond that, reflecting worlds or thoughts that are the ones of simulation, of representations of a perfected reality, very close to being something without actually being it (Merriam-Webster Learner’s Dictionary). It can also refer to entities such as angels, that are idealized figures that inhabit idealized places somewhere. We now understand virtual as being not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so; Simulated; performing the functions of something that isn’t really there. Opposite of real or physical. (The Free On-line Dictionary of Computing)

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of schizophrenic link between reality (commerce) and virtual (brand’s ideology). Finally, contemporary creative directors as well as the arrival of internet as a place where to look at collections (net_a_porter and showstudio) came to once for all dissociate Fashion from clothes, in case we still had any doubts about it.

Despite of all financial implications\(^8\), 9/11 put into question the very virtuality that has defined Fashion as this all-present, all-encompassing entity that seems to permeate modern life for more than a century. The idea that a whole fashion season – and a whole system - disappeared solely based on the impossibility of physically existing in a real location with real clothes and real people (and as a consequence not producing images, spectacle, frenzy, media, and desire), collides fashion’s virtuality against the hard wall of the actual, exposing the fragility of a system that had apparently freed itself from the material of reality. As the attacks officially moved us into a world governed by information\(^9\) in excess, information from many sources, information in many formats, information in all directions, information IN_formation, Fashion retroceeds in time and becomes inexplicably analog as it cannot handle the overloaded information at stake.

And, on top of Fashion’s reduction in meaning and momentary disappearance, its commerce was painstakingly reshaped with the financial crash in the U.S. that installed a new kind of business model that distorts and exhagerate the basic principles of the system:

- The rise of fast-fashion\(^10\), mostly resulting from the huge financial downturn

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8. 9/11 had a huge impact on fashion industry as it reshaped fashion consumption for the years to come. At least for the first year and mostly for economical concerns, there was a general loss of interest in Fashion in the US. Low cost fast-fashion such as Zara, H&M, and TopShop became the norm, with the fashion press advising that it was financially astute to dress from head to toe in high street or to mix budget clothes with expensive pieces (Mendes, 2010).

9. In the context of the attacks, information refers to the pornographic excess of data and facts that were distributed through a networked structure of communication. In any form, the information signified knowledge.

10. Fast fashion is a contemporary term used by fashion retailers to express that designs move from catwalk quickly in order to capture current fashion trends. Fast fashion clothing collections are based on the most recent fashion trends presented at Fashion Week in both the spring and the autumn of every year. These trends are designed and manufactured quickly and cheaply to allow the mainstream consumer to take advantage of current clothing styles at a lower price. This philosophy of quick manufacturing at an affordable price is used in large retailers such as H&M, Zara, Peacocks, and Topshop. (wikipedia)
Top: Zara (left), Louis Vuitton (right)
Bottom: Prada (left), Zara (right)
The global climate situation has altered temperatures all over. Winter is hotter, summer is even hotter. Spring and Fall are basically the same season. Fashion brands are reluctant in producing fur jackets, for instance, as no one knows how cold actually the seasons will be.

- The rising in sales within the fast-fashion industry made appear a new business model financially powerful and capable of competing, in numbers, with Pret-a-porter;

- As a result, the number of brands presenting their collections at events such as New York Fashion Week has gone from around 100 to 250 shows, most of which are commercial brands showing the same kind of fast fashion we see all over. In addition to that, the number of fashion shows globally reached unimaginable peaks: Before there were 4 major fashion weeks (Paris, London, New York, Milan). Now, there are 240 fashion weeks around the world, mostly showcasing commercial and fast-fashion products;

- The rapid speed on production within fast-fashion as well as the massive user’s presence on the web has triggered a different kind of time relationship we used to have with fashion. Now, why do we have to wait for 2 seasons when Zara can give us novelty every 2 weeks? and why do we need seasons anymore?

- Most of fast-fashion companies do make copies of what they see on catwalks. Zara, for instance, has copied from Prada to Celine, having to deal with copyrights infringements. So, if that’s the case, do we need to look at fashion shows if we can, for the first time in history, have exactly the same garment for at least 10% of the original price? (Fig. 25)

- Speed and schizophrenia mixed together gave birth to a kind of phenomena that has replaced the seasonality of Fashion for a system of immediate and ultra-fast trends – fashion translated as pure data - as if to offer as many options as possible to the point where there is no space for assimilation. As of now, and according to trendhunter.com’s September 2014 report, there are currently 2,878 new trends related to fashion happening at this exact moment. How can we digest all this? Henceforth, what is exactly are we following right now fashion wise? As we look at ourselves, can we identify an image as

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11. The global climate situation has altered temperatures all over. Winter is hotter, summer is even hotter. Spring and Fall are basically the same season. Fashion brands are reluctant in producing fur jackets, for instance, as no one knows how cold actually the seasons will be.
Fig. 26

Upper top: Chanel Haute Couture 2013 / 2014

Top: Alexander Wang Women’s Fall/Winter 2014/15 Collection

Upper bottom: Rick Owens Spring/Summer 2014 Collection

Bottom: Burberry Holographic Fashion Show, 2011
identifiable as they were in the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and even 90s? Aren’t we dressed almost exactly as when 9/11 happened?

Fashion has always been subject to crisis (financial, social, cultural, and even political) throughout its history, and that many crisis helped the reshaping and reorganization of the system into more efficient structures while maintaining the integrity of the whole. The problem in this new context, however, is that the crisis – the terrorist attacks and all its consequences – worked as a domino effect, reaching not only commerce but the whole system embedded on the catwalk as well.

While it is true that Haute Couture’s fashion shows have, in the past decade, raised the bar in terms of spectacularity (as a business strategy to impose luxury as a safe commodity in crisis moments) it is also true that a larger fraction – if not the totality – of pret-a-porter fashion shows have looked into other formats of representation that are manipulating materiality and performance, as to allow for possible ways of existence and propagation without actually being physically and timely present.

Nonetheless, this research disputes that such scenario within pret-a-porter shows has drawn out an evident shift within Fashion system in the past decade, pointing towards a possible replacement by a new set of rules – a new system per se – that is capable of retaining Fashion’s desire to communicate (send a message) and its eventual transformation into something else.

The production-spectacle-image accumulation of systems in Fashion has not guaranteed its existence as something virtual, and only a new structure ingrained within an originally virtual substance can permeate a final and definitive transition back into virtuality. This assumption will depart from the hypothesis that a new Fashion System has to allow for messages to become a free flow entity with no restraints, not even ones imposed by the system itself, open to a vast array of interpretations and, most importantly, manipulations by users (audience and media) and consumers. This can only be achieved by morphing the whole materiality of fashion shows (from space to bodies and objects, even brands) into a territory entirely built of information (either as data or action), making evident information’s inherent capacity to become the element that generates multiple messages. (Fig. 26)

The hypothesis of a new system will be translated as IN_formation, as a system that is in the process of becoming. By allowing information to be the me-
boundary: Virtual/Information
space: subject to interferences
body: subject to interferences
object: subject to interferences
action: subject to interferences
time: global
diator between the system and the final user (media and buyers), fashion shows can become a place for ongoing experimentation and constant interactive flux.

Information will be defined here in two terms, according to the general system theory:

- First, as the plausible material that constitutes knowledge and participates in the process of triggering a message. The general theory makes clear the separation between information as acquisition of knowledge and information as the power of organization and/or creative action.

- Second, as factual data, the digital-based component that forms everything that constitutes the virtual as such.

To discuss information is to consider its existence in contemporary terms, within a space-time condition governed by complexity, flexibility, and changeability, in a society formed by individuals that are also complex, flexible and, above all, subject to change, inhabiting now a virtual world where becoming whatever they want whenever they want is the new norm. In the liquid society formulated by Bauman (2006), this new citizen has overpassed the attention on any imposed message, by manipulating its own forms of information into whatever kind of communication and resulting imagery they desire. The contemporary Homo WebSapiens born immersed in images, filters information as tool for creation: by zooming in, out, cropping, clicking, sampling, and tagging, information is manipulated in free form in the creation of formless images with many if not infinite messages depending on the user. Because information aggregates all the process and materiality that generates any given message, it cannot be controlled neither contained; otherwise message is trunked and possibilities are restrained. Information wants to be free. (P. Himanen, The Hacker Ethic).

The IN_formational catwalk, in this sense, is a place designed to exist as a continuous source of open and free flow information, capable of reorganizing the action (the presentation of clothes) into manipulable formats (such as data, image, text) that go beyond the expected ones (the look and the maintenance of a status quo). Such space in flux is one that continues to endure even when the show is over, reproducing itself ad infinitum, duplicating the action that now has become an object subjected to all virtual fluctuations:
fotografía, hashtag y vuelta a empezar: la moda y su adicción a las redes sociales

Seguramente los agentes de modelos de todo el mundo tuvieron que ir a por una dosis extra de café y unos cigarrillos cuando se enteraron de quiénes eran los protagonistas de la nueva campaña de Marc by Marc Jacobs. Nada más y nada menos que jóvenes saharianos procedentes de Instagram, el

Fig. 27
Likes, comments, sharing, forums, reinterpretations, appropriations, editing, illegal copyrights infringements, archive, and so forth. In fact, the hypothesis of such system implies that, at some point, the brand loses control over the outcome of a fashion show, and the final outputs become information again: fashion ruminates itself in order to produce ad infinitum.

4.2. system IN_formation:
unifying the catwalk through informational components

Historically, catwalks have always been linked to the production (directly or indirectly) of images. The first catwalks, with its many facing mirrors, were already suggesting the multiplication of an image coming from a body that was just set in motion. Later, film recorded this same body in movements, and images were set in moving sequences. In the 60s, the emergence of the look changed the typology of the catwalks, as photographers were occupying a strategical position—the pitstop—within fashion spaces. These pitstop were, and still are, placed at the end of the catwalk, photographing the moment when the model stops and the look is revealed.

The contemporary catwalk is the space where this very look is crashed into pieces. Gone is the idealization of the fashionable image produced by photographers in the dissemination of the look. As a matter of fact, the constructed look, framed accordingly to a camera positioned in relation to the body’s model, is a concept long dissolved into the format in which catwalks are embedded today. In this new form, the fashion show is an arena of cameras, a body of lenses that mediates the gaze between the audience and the catwalk. Empowered by technology (cameras, ipads) and converted into user-interfaces (instagram, vimeo, vine), the audience (media, buyers, consumers, and bloggers) has reframed the centralization of decision-making into the creation of image in and from the catwalk, images that later will be edited, cropped, hashtagged, shared, liked, downloaded, and hyperlinked, in an overloaded mediatic frenzy. (Fig. 27)

If from one side we have an image that is now created unconnected to the brand’s imposition, from another side we have the fact that anywhere inside of the catwalk space is subject to be photographed, filmed, and transmitted live. Anywhere/anything inside of the catwalk space is liable to become information.
During early work on the Seattle Central Library, the architects—Rem Koolhaas’s Office for Metropolitan Architecture—together with their clients, excited libraries in Europe and the United States to reimagine existing institutions and theorise about their futures. Such extensive research and dialogue led to an interest in toying with building pieces together. The library’s façade is composed of cardboard tiles that support the floor slabs, thereby eliminating the need for structural supports. The building surface is thus not only a饰面 but provides structure, as the building supports the floor slabs. Thereby achieving the internal columns. Similarity, for Mikey, the facade was conceived as a façade as a façade as a façade—coordinate with a decorative element. The pattern is a visual play with the idea of a building as if it were just a decorative element. Testa & Weiser’s intensive study of new materials and technology coupled with a close examination of the skin of diamond-shaped panes of glass (much like a fishnet stocking) set into a matching steel grid that operates as both a structural system and part of the structural system.

**Fig. 28**

Images extracted from Skin & Bones Catalog

Somerset House

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**A-POC (Miyake Issey and Fujiwara Dai)**

A-POC TRAPEZOID, with Ripple Chairs by Ron Arad for Moroso

Since 1997, Miyake has focused his attention on design research and technology. Together with Fujiwara Dai, his associate and design engineer, he pioneered the manufacturing method in POC (Polycryl Cell). A-POC is an industrial process by which fabric, texture, and a completed form—the components of a fully finished woven garment—are made in a single process. The first iteration of A-POC comprised the production of continuous fabric tubes from which seamless garments can be extruded by cutting around lines of demarcation customised to the wearer’s contours. More recently, A-POC has been applied to media other than clothing in works such as “Temptation,” a tint, tint, and tint, presented at the Milan Furniture Fair in collaboration with designer Ron Arad.

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**Nanni Strada**

Forty-2 Dress from Il Manto e la Pelle collection 1973

Tubular polyester fabric

Nanni Strada and Clino Castelli

Original poster for film Il Manto e la Pelle 1973

Paper

Digital print

Courtesy of Nanni Strada Design Studio, Milan

The 1974 film Il Manto e la Pelle (The Cloak and the Skin) documents Nanni Strada’s efforts to incorporate the technology used to generate tubular forms into her knitwear design methods. In 1997, she received the Compasso d’Oro award for industrial design in recognition of her creation of the world’s first machine-knitted seamless dress. As compartments in a vertical stack: the building’s garage. These programmatic spaces were reconstructed as a rethinking of residential construction in which all spaces, windows, and structural components are integrated. The exterior shell and all interior floor plates and partitions are fabricated of carbon-fiber-faced cellular panels, which are assembled like a honeycomb and bound together by prepreg tape (carbon-fiber tape infused with soft resin) that appears on the outside as if it were just a decorative element. Testa & Weiser’s intensive study of new materials and technology is coupled with a close examination of the world of contemporary fashion designers such as Yohji Yamamoto, whose Inside Out All Weather Dress sparking an investigation into tippping building spaces together.

**Testa & Weiser**

Carbon Beach House (pattern) 2006

Computer generated print

Courtesy Testa & Weiser, Los Angeles

Carbon Beach House (unbuilt, 2006) represents an investigation into simultaneously as a structural system. windows, creating a decorative exterior that functions like an organ pipe. Its pearls, Ito wrapped the nine-story building in thin concrete that references the trees lining Omotesando Avenue. The pattern not only covers or shades but provides structure, as the building supports the floor slabs. Thereby achieving the internal columns. Similarly, for Mikey, the facade was conceived as a façade as a façade—coordinate with a decorative element. The pattern is a visual play with the idea of a building as if it were just a decorative element. Testa & Weiser’s intensive study of new materials and technology coupled with a close examination of the skin of diamond-shaped panes of glass (much like a fishnet stocking) set into a matching steel grid that operates as both a structural system and part of the structural system.

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**Yoshiki Hishinuma**

Inside Out Jump Dress

Spring/Summer 2004

Philadelphia

Courtesy of Yoshiki Hishinuma Co., Ltd.

Known for using innovative textiles and creating unusual shapes, Yoshiki Hishinuma launched his own label in 1998, after a brief stint working for Miyake Issey. His work combines new technology with traditional Japanese techniques such as shibori or tie-dying to develop textiles with effects like pleating, puckering and crinkling to provide texture and volume.

**Toyo Ito and Associates, Architects**

TOD’s Omotesando, Tokyo 2002-2004

Architectural model, acrylic resin

Facade studies for TOD’s Omotesando, Tokyo 2002-2004

Digital print

Courtesy of Toyo Ito and Associates, Architects

Haisu Suzuki, photographer

TOD’s Omotesando, Tokyo

Digital print

Courtesy of Haisu Suzuki

Toyo Itos' combined an interest in art, with a desire to create architecture that is light, transparent, and almost ephemeral. Highly refined resolution in the project for the Tod’s Omotesando building is an extension in Tokyo for the Italian luxury-goods company Tod’s. Wrapped in a graphic grid, the store is made of steel and glass that operates as both a structural system and part of the structural system.

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**A-POC TRAMPOLINE, with Ripple Chairs by Ron Arad for Moroso**

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**Fig. 28**

Images extracted from Skin & Bones Catalog

Somerset House
In the process of absorbing this radical shift, catwalk spaces have also fragmented themselves into parts, reducing its significance to basically one aspect of its materiality: surfaces. While in a conventional catwalk the most important wall is the background in which the look is photographed against, the current formats understand the space as a recollection of circumscribed surfaces that are intrinsically conditioned to be animated (by video or any other technology) or to serve as an all-encompassing envelope that visually unifies the space as just one entity.

Interestingly, and not long ago, the relationship between fashion and architecture was widely recognized mostly around the way they look in their superficies: from one side, buildings understood as a skin that resembles fabrics; from another side, garments that apparently utilize architectural semantics and forms in the construction of their designs. As this relationship is narrowed down to pure visuals, it also changes their meaning as disciplines: Fashion is reduced to clothes; Architecture to facades. Both are reduced to their surfaces or rather, their skins. This condition highlights more of architecture’s debilities as a discipline that has been aestheticized, to the point where its meanings are neglected in favour of a built environment that has fetishized architecture as a form of commodity (Leach, 1999).

However, the current catwalk seems to embody the commoditization of space by not only embracing such condition but actually becoming the condition itself: fashion shows have developed into a multi-surffaced space, a layered skin that wishes to communicate through the insertion of moving and infinite images. In this sense, space as commodity is a sine qua non plight.

Most of what is used today in the process of animating the surface’s space has happened through the insertion of video projections. One of the qualities of this medium is its ability to visually divide the space in two: in and out, inside and outside, here and there. As flat and depthless openings to other landscapes, the projections are not visually demanding as Le Corbusier’s windows. They do not conquer anything. Instead, they offer a synergy, a play of give and take between audience, clothes, and space, an exchange between three different realities resulting in many different meanings. In a space constructed with light and movement, the video projections are, according to Lavin (2011), gentle kisses that insert an intensely affective environment into an architectural volume that itself was nothing.
Fig. 29

Top: Dior Fall Winter 2013/2014

Middle: Alexander McQueen’s Spring/Summer 2010

Bottom: Prada’s Fall Winter 2013/2014
A video projection moves one eyes away from the clothes. It tells another story, it creates a background narrative that could easily blur the action that is taking place in the catwalk but it actually does not. In fact, the presence of video projections in the catwalk has substantially affected the typology of the space adding another action into the already existing parading of models: Now, as the surfaces are animated and the background has become an all over foreground, all angles and all sides of the catwalk are subject to become an instant image. The videos, as an envelope that wraps and unifies the space, have fragmented the pitstop into portions around the catwalk: now all is for the cameras:

- For the their fashion show Fall Winter 2013/2014, Dior constructed a squared space where the audience was set in the middle, having all the perimeter walls covered with moving images that were, in fact, enlarged blown up details of dresses. The space had no pitstop: there were small rooms in opposite side of four walls where the photographers were distributed. The space had to be photographed not from one side, but many. Cameras had to be place in different positions so to allow for the whole space to be filmed. (Fig. 28, top) (Diagram information page 104)

- For Alexander McQueen's Spring/Summer 2010 presentation, the image of the models walking was projected, in real time, onto the backwall of the catwalk. They were enlarged, fragmented, rotated, overlapped, and multiplied into infinite, creating a sense of displacement within the catwalk, a space inside of another one (Fig. XX). Sometimes, the cameras (moved around by gigantic robot arms) would film the audience and project their image also on the walls. Referencing to the mirrors used in the interior spaces of the first fashion shows, the models were occupying many spaces in time: the catwalk comprises time and space, in a timely play where a collection is always past-present-future (it is about the future; it is presented now; as it leaves the catwalk, becomes past). A realtime video duplicates space and, as a result, creates overlapping glimpses of future over future, present over present, past over past (Fig. XX). Reality is dissolved into layers of significance where one – the audience – is stuck between two realities. (Fig. 28, middle) (Diagram information page 104)

Because of the play between cameras and the action, the usual focus on the models had to be adapted to a landscape format more subtable for being filmed than photographed. In fact, the whole performance was transmitted live on web, and the video was later uploaded on youtube with, as of today, more than 15,000 search results (47,000 on google).
• Prada’s Fall Winter 2013/2014 collection was about narrative (see case study). The project designed by Rem Koolhaas AMO’s studio used video projections to tell a secondary story inserted in the context of women wandering around in a catwalk that invaded all the surface of the space. The videos were showing urban fragments, enlarged cats, shadows of women in a sort of Hitchcockian domestic atmosphere. Walls becoming the medium in which a message (or portions of it) is sent. (Fig. 28, previous page, bottom).

These three examples introduce another spatiality where video projections were determinant in defining new spatial and use configurations:

1. **Typology:** the conventional typology of two rows along the catwalk had to be adapted in order to accommodate the digitalized space;

2. **Documentation:** photographers and video cameras were distributed along the whole area. The pitstop disappears;

3. **Perspective:** the audience was distributed in different portions, differentiating what one group is seeing from the other; Different portable cameras positioned all over, resulting in different amateur videos;

4. **Gazing:** what is being looked at is now a moving body and a moving image;

5. **Linearity:** the catwalk does not have a beginning neither an end. It becomes a landscape.

6. **Narrative:** the space becomes cinematic: a second story evolves and tells another story;

7. **Reproducibility:** everything is image and all is subject to dissemination;

Videos projections set the catwalk in motion as if the models were not enough. And, with it, a whole new medium that ultimately has to rely on movement to be seen and cannot be documented through photography only, as it reduces the whole experience to frames. Indeed, all fashion shows subject to video interference have to be uploaded online in its entirety otherwise.
Fig. 30

Top: Gareth Pugh S/S 2011 Collection

Middle: Gareth Pugh featured at Lexus Design Disrupted, 2014

Bottom: Monolith
scenarios. First, the catwalk as a hyperlink\textsuperscript{12} : media, buyers, and consumers have the opportunity to choose their own best angle, edit their own pictures, and tell ( or create ) their own messages. Images can be immediately uploaded online as they now are not static frames. Fashion shows for download and susceptible to reproduction\textsuperscript{13} ( Benjamin, 2006 ).

Second, videos are promoting a typology that can be fragmented into other formats. From immersive spaces to even independent videos that are uploaded on YouTube as fashion films, the video-surface as a spatial component has redefined the catwalk as a producer of self-reliant thumbnailed catwalk experiences or, in some cases, even portable ones.

- Among fashion designers, Gareth Pugh has been a constant innovator within the spatial possibilities of use of videos in generating other ways of presenting the collections. His first catwalk presentation in the mid-2000s was a video projection inside of a room, with few guests. The video ( or fashion show ) was uploaded on YouTube and hyperlinked all over. More recently, his fashion show in New York – Spring 2015 – introduced a space in its entire covered in videos with dancers performing and interacting live with the images projected on two walls. Guests had no chairs, and had to wonder around in a space dominated by moving references. Recently, he produced a virtual reality installation called Monolith, intended to fully immerse the user in what he calls his “atmosphere”. ( Fig. 30 )

Spaces were built with moving images in the past. The Eameses’ experiment called Glimpses, a multiscreen installation done in Moscow in 1959, is what they called The Space of Information, described by the media as information overload, an avalanche of data. Film was used as a way to compress as much information as possible in the smallest volume as possible, and the excess of visuals was to guarantee an overwhelming feeling throughout the presentation. It was a controlled space with no room for interpretations. Interestingly, all these tactics derived from their experiments and studies on the control room of American army during war times. ( Colomina, 2009 ) Although having some similarities, the video-surface of the catwalks works on opposite directions. It actually allows for as many interpretations and uses as possible. It opens the space for its use \textit{ad infinitum}.

\textsuperscript{12} Hyperlink here defined as a connection ( link ) that exists in more than three dimensions: space, time, and virtual.

\textsuperscript{13} The first fashion shows were private as to avoid piracy and unauthorized copies. Today, the space of catwalk instigates the reproduction \textit{ad infinitum}. The collection’s aura, if in fact there is one, lies on its portability and shareability.
Fig. 32

Upper top: Louis Vuitton’s spring/summer 2013


Middle: Unifying make up


Tetris apartment, a project by OFIS arhitekti in Slovenia, appears in a brazilian newspaper as an example on “architecture for poor people that does not look like architecture for poor people”. The same typology is repeated and the only changes are on the surface level.

transfashion: transexuales, sociedad y moda

La modelo Andrey Pej: ha sido la última en probar suerte de la moda en serlo y lo intranscendente en el mundo de la moda. La beta entonces conocida como Andrey Pej: renuncia al mercadito que hace unos meses finalizó en procesos de inscripción de estos. A partir de sitios, en su merece el mercado representante de la autópsica por momentos, crea una mujer llamada Andrey.

los chicos que querian ser como chicas

Bajo el diseño de la ciudadela de la ciudad de Londres y a lugares limpios y limpios, desde la formación de las normas España, transgeneraciones. En ellos, sin problemas. Y en habitaciones de los diseños de una construcción intermitente ha sido en lo que ha sido parte de las circunstancias hasta donde se encuentran a niveles urbanos y alemanes. Hacia la idea de unión entre las incógnitas tan común en este acierto en versión 21.
As more and more the catwalk space is reduced to surfaces, more it frees itself away from the necessity of being “constructed”, as this concept is slowly being replaced by “projected”, “installed”, “downloadable”, and “transmitted”. The idea of transmission, actually, is the one that overlaps many surfaces into one space-time condition that has negotiated a new aperture between the exclusive space of catwalks and outside consumers. Many fashion shows are being transmitted live, and the whole spectacle is reduced to a surface screen now read in terms of numerical parameters and resolutions (2160p: 3840x2160, 1440p: 2560x1440, 1080p: 1920x1080, 720p: 1280x720, 480p: 854x480, 360p: 640x360, 240p: 426x240 ). Fashion shows subject to HD. ( Fig. 31 ).

While the surface of the catwalk space dissolves in pixels and becomes maleable, other phenomena takes place in opposite direction, turning organic surfaces in nature into databased material: Bodies in motion, the fashion models have historically been conditioned to objectification and control. Their bodies enlarged, diminished. They turned themselves into super bodies, race bodies, Twiggy bodies, Kate Moss bodies and so forth, according to fashion´s necessities. Now, they are cloned artificial surfaces.

The process of standardization that first started in the beginning of the 20th century seems to have reached its maximum capacity nowadays, and fashion has finally encountered a modus operandi that automatically selects the ones with more coincident genes formations. Any visual compilation of fashion shows reveals how there is some sort of selective process taking place, focusing on a certain biased physical format, independent of gender ( it does not matter if the model is transgender, gay, lesbian, as long as they all look the same ) ( Fig. 32 ). According to Baudrillard ( 1995 ), when there is more and more information, there is less and less meaning. The current surfaces typologies of the model’s bodies portraits an object designed to inform, subjective to all sorts of superficial ( as in superficies ) alterations in order to be expressed as a canvas that can absolutely be anything. One sees the same image over and over and over on the catwalk, in a process based on multiplication¹⁴ rather diversity, producing a type of human being – here will be referred to as Info-Bodies – that can be reproduced and manipulated until it exhausts itself and disappears. Perhaps, that is the goal.

¹⁴ Multiplication, in the symbolic order as proposed by Baudrillard, results in substractation.
Fig. 33

Top: Model Alexander McQueen

Middle: Model Patrick Mohr

Bottom: Model Hussein Chalayan
The Info-Bodies are an in-between hybrid of human being and data, a cross-dressed cyborg that has evolved into a technologically produced simulacrum (Arthur Kroeker cited on Balsamo, 1996). Info-Bodies exist virtually only, as it holds the potential to simultaneously exist in two realities, internally and externally experiencing and being experienced (Becker, 2000). It is the surface that is on the other side of cameras, that is being hyperlinked, cropped, enlarged, zoomed in, zoomed out, downloaded, tagged, framed, and replicated\(^{15}\). The Info-Bodies are not designed to become a standard of beauty neither a model of superbody. It is a surface predestined to be converted into images.

Between flesh and plastic, the catwalk has witnessed how the models' skin has been interpreted as a manipulable device that can sometimes be a monster, and sometimes be nothing (and everything at a time). The possibility of becoming anything, in a social context where anyone can be whatever one wishes (Bauman, 2006), does not mean evolution. It means becoming now, becoming instantaneously. Fashion cannot wait for bodies to evolve into desired forms. (Fig. 33)

Info-Bodies approximate pristine to technology. It is an almost religious image, angelical in its embodiment of the human but, in the surface, artificial. It is the maximum objectification of a body that is already an object.

In Bjork's video *All is full of love*, two robots make love recreating a kind of posthumanistic condition only possible in the hyperreality of the perfect skin, of the object-body as a machine. This impossible body as a surface stretched to perfection is something real in the domains of Maya\(^{16}\), where skin and body structures are resumed to “Rigid and soft-body dynamics, Streamlined retopology toolset, and Surface modeling”. It is not by coincidence that the product is named after the Sanskrit word Maya, the Hindu concept of illusion (wikipedia).

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15. The concept of replicated bodies, or replicants, was first introduced by Hidley Scott in Blade Runner, as a fictional bioengineered android. In it, because of their physical similarity to humans, a replicant must be detected by its lack of emotional responses.

16. Autodesk Maya commonly shortened to Maya, is a 3D computer graphics software that runs on Windows, OS X and Linux, originally developed by Alias Systems Corporation (formerly Alias/Wavefront) and currently owned and developed by Autodesk, Inc. It is used to create interactive 3D applications, including video games, animated film, TV series, or visual effects. (wikipedia)
Fig. 33

Top: Iris van Herpen Fall/Winter 2014-2015

Bottom: Viktor and Rolf autumn/winter 2007/2008
In the catwalk, the approximation of body to materiality encounters places of intersection in the work of brands such as Iris Van Herpen, Louis Vuitton, and Viktor & Rolf, that have explored the boundaries between skin and constructed reality. In Van Herpen, for instance, bodies have been subjected to alterations through implants and make-up, and have become vacuumed objects in the form of architectural separations. Viktor & Rolf have redefined the body as a kind of large scale figure doll reminiscente of the 19th century dummies, while Louis Vuitton has propagated the blend and replicant-like look of models we now see all over. (Fig. 33)

The possibility of detaching the models from their skins and turn them into surfaces of information (holograms, images, videos) coincides with the emergent practice of textiles technology that is currently on the rise. Techno-fabrics, printed dresses, and responsive textiles are the prophets of a near future where the idea of the having a closet might be replaced by the concept of subscribing to clothes, and where the idea of buying a t-shirt might be resumed to downloading a file. The new technological textiles might indicate the direction towards which clothes are heading to: the dematerialization of collections to the point where it is not necessary anymore to see clothes in order to buy them. More importantly, clothes will be bought based on duration, reuse, resource technology, information, plug-ins, apps, and its capacity to store data.

McLuhan, in his The Medium is the Message, describes clothes as the extension of the skin. In the same book, he discusses when a friction happens between informations – when information is brushed against information – the results are effective and involvement takes many forms. Today, body, clothes, and space – information and information, technology against technology – have unified three skins into one.

The informatization of space and body into an integral form of data-surface is one side of the phenomena that has also evolved in terms of action: now, although the parading of fashion models still continues to be the centerpoint of the presentation, other formats as well as other triggering elements are introduced within the performance. Most of these new formats rely on the combination of action and time (a moment within the performance) to bring to life unexpected if not not many results.

Fashion shows such as Chanel (see case study), Viktor & Rolf (Fig. xx), and Henrik Vibskov (Fig. XX) represent three different moments that utilize
Top: Viktor-rolf fall 2010
Middle: Hamster Wheel Fashion Show: Henrik Vibskov
Bottom: Michael Kors’s online fashion show
the relation between action and time in order to produce more than what the fashion show can give.

In Chanel (case study), a voice over is the element that generates a second performance within. Viktor & Rolf, on the other hand, have utilized the fashion models’ bodies and clothes, transforming them into a kind timely performance with a certain pace, rhythm, and transformation: it is a performance/presentation that needs to be witnessed (either physically or through video) to be understood. Henrik Vibskov’s catwalks are known for introducing other elements on the catwalk – objects, spaces, structures – as to ignites other forms of body movements and action. Vibskov’s presentations are closer to what a happening is, with a non-linear narrative/action happening at the same time that fashion models are walking around. (Fig. 34)

In a parallel moment/time condition, a secondary action happens: many fashion shows are now transmitted live, apparently opening its doors (at least visually and virtually) to an audience eager for participation and inclusion. As this new virtual fashion body enters the space, it turns their gaze to the screens and the action is perceived through other channels: now, this online audience reads the space through resolution and artificial memory. Space is compressed (.mov, wmv). Space is edited. Space is hyperlinked. It is a space that exists simultaneously, that can be fast forwarded, frozen, and rewinded. (Fig. 34, bottom)

These new fashion bodies are now virtual and many, and encompass a game of action that connects inside and outside, logged in and logged out, presence and virtuality. The live transmission is one that crashes two opposite times: the present-past-future of the catwalk, and the play-stop-continue of the screen. The presentations do not begin: now transmissions are resumed depending on internet speed.

Fashion’s immersion into virtuality through the catwalk space is, according to some (Riviere, 1998), a sign of Fashion’s disappearance. The fact is, however, that Fashion still exists and the discussion about the fashion show’s relevance continuous. And contrary to a conservative faction within the industry

17. Bustle.com, ID.com, Nytimes.com, to cite some of the online publications that have discussed during September 2014 again the relevance of fashion shows, assuming the position that they are as relevant as they were in the past.
(mostly Haute Couture and specialized media) that bets for the maintainance of traditional formats, the Pret-a-Porter industry takes the risk in becoming a place for experimentation, a condition that was intrisically under Couture domain. Today, the brand as the boundary in which inputs and outputs are processed, works as the media that releases just enough information (through the space, body, and action) capable of sparkling the rapid and looped process of automated production of other images by the audience/users: the meaning of the collection disappears, and what is offered is an augmented space subject to user’s interpretation.
4.4. ANALYZING THE CATWALK AS AN INFORMATION SYSTEM: CASE STUDIES
The new concept of the architect

The architect is going to be the fashion designer of the future. Learning from Calvin Klein, the architect will be concerned with dressing the future, speculating, anticipating coming events and holding up a mirror to the world. The architect's practice will be organised as a limitless virtual studio, like Andy Warhol's Factory, scattered; a network of superstars. Network practice extends existing forms of co-operation with clients, investors, users and technical consultants to include design engineers, finance people, management gurus, process specialists, designers and stylists. The new architectural network studio is a hybrid mixture of club, atelier, laboratory and car plant, encouraging plug-in professionalism. As in contemporary manufacturing, efficiency and diversity, continuity and differentiation are inseparable, with customised Audis and Volkwagens rolling off the same production line. Making use of new technologies, the network architect benefits from the increased transferability of knowledge. The will to invent is fundamental, ensuring that the basic values of the discipline, ranging from geometry...
Alexander McQueen conquered the space of the space of fashion shows through drama, robots, body deformation, and visual inducted pain. His presentations were described as beautiful, offensive, brilliant, and outrageous. As his collections had more to say that the fabrics could communicate, he utilized this territory as one that could negotiate the materiality of clothes with the many psychological layers behind his creations.

The case study presented here is no exception: a collection inspired by a 19th century painting by Paul Delaroche called The Execution of Lady Jane Grey, that was presented on animatronics instead of real fashion models. Most of what was documented about this specific fashion show is through video recordings. The action was programmed and the space was designed as to hold on to the concept behind. What makes this fashion show relevant to the discussion of the catwalk as a system has to do with the actual moment in which it took place - in 1999, a moment in fashion marked by the appearance of the first e-commerce website (Net-a-Porter) and the ongoing growth of internet use and technology devices - and how this catwalk worked as a preliminary introduction to what we see today within fashion shows all over: a space converted into an information machine, more concerned about triggering ideas/sensation/possibilities than actually presenting a collection. The clothes, in this context, becomes an excuse to which the action of developing a controlled performance takes place, questioning conservative fashion aspects such as the look, the collection, the moving bodies, physical structure (difference between backstage and catwalk), and the audience’s role in documenting the event through photography.

The analysis of this catwalk will happen by observing the way the show is disseminated (Through videos on youtube. There are no publications about the show, neither a lookbook was done to showcase the collection) and how the presentation itself intersects or/and conflicts with the way in which it is introduced today as video format. This approach intends to highlight the premise of how this fashion show was announcing signs of rupture between real and virtual, between seeing and perceiving.

Nevertheless, the analysis will follow a more ordered sequence as describing
Fig. 35

Could Fashion be archived in its entirety virtually?
initially the components of the system in relation to the performance and, later, focusing on the way the presentation was construct on stage and on video.

• Context

1997 / Minimalism and Luxury in fashion / Boom of fashion editorials in magazines known as “Le Big Bang” / Alexander McQueen is named British Designer of the Year / Louis Vuitton appoints Marc Jacobs as its creative director / Gianni Versace is murdered / Microsoft becomes the most valuable company in the world / first Louis Vuitton pret-a-porter collection / Martin Margiela is appointed Creative Director of Hermés / Deconstruction as trend in fashion / Europeans agree on a single currency the Euro / The human population of the world surpassed six billion / Internet Explorer version 5 released / My Space was officially introduced to the Internet / Bluetooth announced / The initial release of Napster / Speedo launches its first biometric suit / Net a Porter as the first e-commerce business / The popular show Big Brother is broadcast on Germany / The Dot Com Bubble Bursts and thousands of DotComs go bust / virus ILOVEYOU spread by e-mail shuts down computers world wide / 2001

• Condition

There is a lack of photographs about this show, most likely due to the typology of the show itself. The description presented here was done from a 3 parts video found on Youtube. The original recordings were possibly done in Hi8 or similar formats that were common at that time, and later transferred to the web by unknown source. This analysis sustains the importance of video as the medium tool in which this show is available today, and understands the relationship between the camera images and the video settings/format as being one entity that mediates the viewer’s experience. ( Fig. 35 )

Location: youtube
Mídia format: 3 videos
Total running time: 23:45 minutes

Video 01
Title: Givenchy Haute Couture Fall Winter 1999 – part 1
Url: www.youtube.com/watch?v=paERAUjhnUG
Time: 9:45 minutes
@allofus I think the video is deceptive. I don’t think the fabric was as stiff as it appears. It’s most likely a combination of all the pleats, boning, the fabric itself (probably starched), and the petticoat underneath, which gave the coat volume. The lack of movement of the garments on the mannequins, a chief complaint from critics of the collection, contributes to this as well. As for the guy, it does look a bit like Treacy, but I doubt it. He looks a bit young.

**SR ANTONIO CARLOS OLIVEIRA DE JESUS** 3 years ago

When he comes to receive the applause, and disappears into the ground, one of the saddest moments I’ve ever seen.

Chichibn Chrome 2 years ago

Oh wow, so the latest collection isn’t the first time they’ve used only mannequins.

Joao Pedro 2 years ago in reply to Chichibn Chrome

@beachballfish2 although that seems to be a financial thing? since couture is so restricted, it kinda makes sense.

spike413 4 years ago

Wow, I never really had the best opinion of this collection judging from the handful of pictures I’ve seen, and I always thought the decision to use mannequins was kind of silly. But the video does such an amazing job of highlighting the details. Thank you for posting this!
Video 02
Title: Givenchy Haute Couture Fall Winter 1999 – part 2
Url: www.youtube.com/watch?v=i597ZGwfrDE
Time: 9:04 minutes
Resolution: 240p
Number of views: 8,828
Number of likes: 43
Number of dislikes: 00
Number of comments: 03

Video 03
Title: Givenchy Haute Couture Fall Winter 1999 – part 3
Url: www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xT1Gl6a7Bg
Time: 4:56 minutes
Resolution: 240p
Number of views: 5,000
Number of likes: 27
Number of dislikes: 00
Number of comments: 12

• Resume:

00:00 / First 8 seconds of static TV noise with complete dark screen followed by Givenchy logo and name of collection. Fade in / Fade out. Alexander McQueen smoking cigarette. Cut. Staff positioning what it seems to be a mannequin or dummy on top of a platform sustained by a scaffolding-like structure. The space is dark, and the lit areas are the ones only where this action is happening. The mannequin is now seen as a transparent dummy illuminated from within. The mannequin is dressed with clothes from the new Givenchy’s collection. As it is placed on top of the platform, it starts to rotate in its own axis, while the platform ascends. The movement of the platform is manually triggered by staff member using a crank. As the mannequin goes up, it re-
Fig. 36

Space Typology

Fig. 37

Top: Action
Bottom: Body Non-human
up, it reveals a second space upstairs: a semi dark space, with spotlights directed to the mannequins. The light has some design in it, which add another layer of texture to the artificial skin of the mannequin and to the clothes. Screams and claps. There is an audience present, located in the squared perimeter of the performance area. There are now 3 mannequins present, rotating around their axis. There are other small opening on the floor, which suggest that there are too are apertures from where other dummies emerge.

The whole action lasts about 50 seconds. The dummies submerge while new dummies emerge wearing different garments. This new group of mannequins emerges in the central area which also reveals two groups of squared openings. The typology varies according to the position of the dummies: 4 outside squares, 4 interior squares. Sometimes 2 outside squares and 1 interior square. Camera zoom in, zoom out. Dummies up and down. Music changes. The actions repeats over and over.

As the show ends, McQueen is taken up to the catwalk. Audience explodes in joy. He salutes. The platform moves down. / 23:45.

• The components in McQueen’s Fashion Show

  o Space typology: a squared area, approximately 15m x 15m. It is surrounded by a group of 4 level grandstands. The whole space seemed to be painted in gray. The central area has clear 9 squared sections: 4 larger ones and close to the outside perimeter of the square, and 4 smaller ones toward the center of the square and one central one. There are no lights besides the ones above each of these squares. There is a dark gray curtain covering the whole central area of the performance space. There is an underground area that works as backstage. It is located right below the performance area. It has 4 peripheral platforms and one larger one in the center with 5 smaller structures. (Fig. 36)

  o Action: Non human models wearing Haute Couture clothes attached to a metal structure that moves vertically in a two level space. Four of the non human models rotate around their axis. There is a routine of movements that control when, where and how the dummies are presented. (Fig. 37, top)

  o Body: Non human. Head made out of transparent glass lit from within. Body made out of fyberglass with skin tone color. The body structure seems to have standard models sizes. The head has no clear features. There are 5 typologies: arms down, one arm down and hand on waist, both hands on waist, arms wide open to the sides and up, arms folded on top of head. (Fig. 37, bottom)
Fits.me biorobotics company has modeled the female form with a robotic mannequin, FitBot, whose artificial muscles can simulate the shape and size of different (human) body types.
Object - Collection: “Based on the 19th century painting The Execution of Lady Jane Grey by Paul Delaroche, it featured luxurious fabrics – mink, cashmere, gaberdine and silk – overlaid with an abundance of delicate beading and embroidery.”

Audience: In 1999, most likely journalists, buyers and VIP clients as it was common in standard fashion shows, in an average number of 100 guest probably. Now, through video documentation (YouTube, repeat tools, playlists), a total of 35,777 viewers.

Time: 23:45 minutes.

Description

Lady Jane Grey was 16 years old when she was decapitated. Paul Delaroche’s painting depicts the moment when she is blindfolded and being assisted by his executioner. Her skin is bright, extremely shiny. The space around her is dark as well as McQueen’s fashion show: all the audience is immersed in complete darkness, making it irrelevant the classist criteria of the catwalk: as the front row disappears, so the VIP guests. No one is there to be seen.

The architectural space is divided in two areas: the catwalk itself and the backstage. If in a standard fashion show the backstage is located at the very beginning of the catwalk, McQueen twists this conventionality by placing it right below the catwalk, redefining the backstage (space of production) as a dungeon (place for suffering, place of torture, usually underground, perhaps influenced by Lady Grey’s story), giving it a position of power in relation to the catwalk itself: the video starts with images of the backstage, inverting the visual logic of fashion presentations where the backstage is never at sight.

McQueen’s fashion show reveals what should not be revealed, transforming a place of production into a space of spectacle. (Contemporary fashion shows have interfered very little in this traditional arrangement as the backstage still remains a hidden gem, although its placement inside of the catwalk structure has become more dynamic. In recent presentations like Louis Vuitton’s 2013 spring-summer collection, the backstage was located in a level above the catwalk, which allowed for a vertical dislocation of models onto the runway.)
Some brands and fashion designers have turned the backstage into a place of social happenings, by opening up its dynamic and tense production space to post-show celebrations. A series of images are then meticulously produced: models, designers, celebrities, makeup artists, assistants, and producers mingle and are photographed in a fabricated environment of image production. The squared spatial typology allows for the distribution of four grandstands around the catwalk area. The gaze is evenly spread in contrast to conventional elongated catwalks with the predominant side view of models passing by. Audience becomes a fashionable inversed panopticon that observes the collection from all sides. As recent discussions about the use of portable devices in contemporary fashion shows seems to indicate, the act of looking at collections has gained a different definition as the relationship between audience and clothes is now negotiated through a machine. McQueen´s arrangement continues to be relevant as it reintroduces the importance of looking at clothes into the discussion of fashion shows typologies by considering the audience as one single gazing entity in contrast to the individuality that prevails in most fashion shows.

Throughout his career, McQueen continued to explore the relationship between audience and the space of catwalk. In Vox (spring/summer fashion show, 2001), he constructed an enclosed mirrored room in the middle of the catwalk. As the audience waited one hour for the show to begin, they were confronted by their own reflections on the mirror, forcing them to “choose between looking away, watching themselves or watching others watching themselves”. In Plato’s Atlantis (spring/summer fashion show, 2010), robotic arms equipped with cameras were capturing images of the audience and projecting them onto the background, while models paraded on the catwalk.

Givenchy’s fashion show was about a female body facing death. As the show begins, this disgraceful situation becomes immediately the central point of the presentation as well as the more significant image presented on the catwalk (the collection received mixed critics, with some calling it luxurious and others calling it uneven). McQueen’s choice for not using real models was groundbreaking at that time. The collection was presented in mechanized mannequins with glass heads illuminated from within, a clear reference to the decapitation of Jane Grey. These mechanical dummies were manually lifted from the backstage using platforms and cranks, reaching the catwalk area through openings on the floor.
Frames of original video extracted from youtube
Although is not clear if that was McQueen´s intention, his mechanized mannequins are the design of an ideal body for presenting clothes. This approach has somehow a historical point of reflection as the origin of fashion models (end of 19th century) was embedded with criticism about the objectification of women as well as a ferocious critic on how their movements were controlled to satisfy the designer´s need. Also, McQueen´s dummy models are not ones born as an speculation on genetics or human body modifications but rather on the use of technology (in this case, a very rudimentary one) and the materiality of the physical space as tools for generating new forms of human interface.

This presentation was the first one in a series that would explore other forms of model bodies. Shows such as spring-summer 1999, spring-summer 2000, and autumn-winter 2006 engaged the audience and fashion industry in a relationship with robotic bodies, holographic bodies (skin as digital construct), and alien bodies, blowing wide open the standardized typology of fashion models that we still continue to see.

As the show continued, McQueen´s presented the audience with a difficult problem: the controlled movement of dummies did not allow for the collection to circulate in the space (as a convention fashion shows with models parading on the catwalk). The illuminated heads in a dark space also did not contribute for the photographs to be taken, since it created a high contrast between the mannequin´s light and the surrounding darkness. As a result, McQueen´s space turned out to be a place not for looking at clothes (an outrageous approach for fashion industry standards at that time) but rather a space to be experienced. This phenomenon is now seen 15 years later in fashion shows such Lexus Design Disrupted (Fig. 38) that have created immersive augmented spaces with holographic female bodies, where the experience of being in a “fashionable” space overwhelms the goal of seeing a collection.

McQueen defined himself as someone who knew the fashion rules well enough so he could break them while keeping the tradition. As we translate that to the realm of his fashion shows, one can understand how his design intentions were there to adulterate the structure while keeping the cohesiveness of the spectacle intact. In this sense, his catwalk spaces became scenarios for explorations on perception and multiple meanings.
For the Fall/Winter 2012 lookbook Real Fantasies, Prada projects the future of fashion as a retrofitted past. Set within a dystopian society of machines and jagged geometries, genetically perfected clones roam digital colonies. Each scene depicts an antiquated landscape within a galaxy of characters engrossed in oblique and possibly deviant power dynamics. (extracted from youtube)
Frank Stallone 1 year ago
Prada fantasy: No Black People. This is how the world would be if the Third Reich had won.

Zoe Rose 2 years ago
This looks like some kind of utopian, totalitarian society thing going on.

Art Gold 1 year ago
The fashion business is so self righteous sometimes. This video is just bad. No one can convince me it's not. And they have fucking experts and a lot of money working for Prada. I don't know how something like this happens.

GreenThumb 2 years ago
Edwardian Cyberpunk. Love it.

Elaine Mary 2 years ago
I liked the idea, but the way they presented it is CRAP.

HERO CLAVDVS CAESAR AVGSTVS GERMANIVS 2 years ago
“What the bloody hell is this??? It’s Prada sweetie.” “...it’s fabulous darling.”

MustNotRead 2 years ago
clothed pop art

Niloufar Tajeri 2 years ago
Sorry, but this transmits quite a fascist atmosphere. Imagining a future set in nostalgic and nearly mythical spaces with white European clones that are shrewd, up like modern high-class Nazis. I'm not suggesting that the makers of this video are aware of this effect, I would, however, recommend them to just watch it again with some critical distance, and to question their references from all perspectives.

Jazzical 2 years ago
Why do those 2 gays look like S.S. officers, whops now there kissing...gays + Nazis=CaTzies

eyesballpaul1985 2 years ago
This is trying to be like the film metropolis made in the twenties based in the future. I think their trying to be futuristic but all their really doing is making dicks out of them selves. If this was just a movie it would be ok but their seriously trying to get people to dress like this and charge a fortune for it. what a bunch of sh**

SimplyVerus1591 2 years ago
Sh*tterrrr whatever the hell this is? A poor attempt to recreate the movie "metropolis" and the expressionist cinema atmosphere? Prada artistic team, fly down and be real please.

ITSFULLOFSTARS5 1 year ago
This PRADA campaign is magical. It reminds me of a 1980s Kraftwerk video. Kids today don't know anything about fine art...Have you ever heard of Russian Constructivism or Surrealism Art Movements?...Well this is it. Kids today have no reference points...They don't try to figure out things or search out the meaning of what they see...we really need to place more emphasis on Art education in public schools. LOVE IT MIUCCIA!

bigrocker1982 2 years ago
is it just me or do the clothes look like what someone worrried up in the 1970's which they thought we would be wearing now and in a world of. I don't even know, that was retarded. One thing definitely lived with the spoiled douche Prada line though, the girl that took out the fat stack of bills and handed it to the other. Even in their "futuristic" curbside vision it has to have an "I'm richer than u" element. douchetards this was horrible.

Eric Andersen 1 year ago
Clear intentions aside; acting F, editing F, music D. This should never have been released. It is so bad it is satirical.
Ennis House in Los Angeles, by Frank Lloyd Wright, was used in 'The House on Haunted Hill' (1959), 'Twin Peaks' (1990) and 'Blade Runner' (1982)

an utopian planned community slated for 100+ acres in Rancho Mirage, was originally conceived with gay people in mind, but straight people can come too--everyone's invited to the multi-generational, pedestrian-oriented, culture-driven, hyphenation-mad little burg, for which plans include 300 residences in eight neighborhoods, an entertainment complex, a boutique hotel, a gym, and "state-of-the-art wellness facilities" in phase one (phase two will add more residences).
If Fashion could be extended to urban scale, what kind of cities would better fit with a whole society controlled by Prada?

As we look at Fashion’s constant strive for colliding past-present-future at once – which in itself is a real and unreal condition –, one might conclude that any city (or anywhere) would be adequate for a society that is governed entirely by a brand, as long as it is one that occupies a transitioning territory between utopia and heterotopia. Perhaps, a futuristic or post-apocalyptic landscape; perhaps, a space formed by circumstances that go against physical materialities and spatial conventionalities. The point is not quite to define this place in terms of metaphors but, instead, in what kind of visual distortions or interrelated actions could result from such construct that resides into the blurred limits between perfection and deviation.

Foucault’s separation between utopia and heterotopia defines utopian places as being sites with no real place, representing society in a perfect and unreal form (Foucault, 1967). In fashion terms, such ideal and non-existent places would probably come in the form of a perfect setting (or condition) which makes one want to be part of it: a place as creator of desire. Most of what we see in advertisements portrays such utopian and perfected territories, where fashion bodies are immersed in a context where everything works as the ideal background for clothes to be seen. There is, however, a contrary force – a heterotopic one – that relates to Fashion’s capacity to juxtapose in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible and that are linked to the accumulation of time (Foucault, 1967). Catwalks, in this sense, are heterotopic places where many players are present and many convergent and opposite actions are happening at once, in a moment that is, in itself, the materialization of time in compressed format. Catwalks are also creators of desire.

While the discussion around utopia and heterotopia is yet to be explored within fashion studies, the subject has been vastly discussed in the architectural field. During the 70s, for instance, some of the most relevant studies on this issue appeared on the academia, making evident the concern about the relation between utopia x heterotopia (modernity x postmodernity) in determining society’s new moment. Books/manifestos such as Los Angeles, The Architecture of Four Ecologies by Reyner Banham and Learning from Las Vegas by Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi, were important in defining heterotopias in relation to the urban settings, and how these newly observed scenarios were perceived as real while occupying a position as builders of
RealSpace is the sum total of our current architecture, we have built as much as all previous history together and we hardly tried. RealSpace is the product of the encounter between escalator and air-conditioning, conceived in an incubator of sheetrock; (all three creating access to history).

RealSpace – Koolhaas Junkspace Remix (150 BPM)

RealSpace is the body-double of form, a territory of ambition, unlimited expectations, strict earnestness. RealSpace is a Krakatoa of concepts, a Petris dish on steroids: it increases immunity, it creates, oversees resolve, prefers realization to intention. It substitutes hierarchy for accumulation, composition for addition. More and more, more is more.

RealSpace – Koolhaas Junkspace Remix (150 BPM)
other realities. In 1978, Rem Koolhaas publishes Delirious New York, a manifesto on how technology and economic power could trigger maximum urban tensions, releasing a new architecture format that would completely substitute the real and natural in favor of the artificial. Such phenomena, named by Koolhaas as “the culture of congestion” (Koolhaas, 1994), strickingly intersects with contemporary fashion’s condition as being a laboratory of lifestyles, a lively experiment on behaviour based on the merging of technology, information, and social interactions.

It is perhaps this point of intersection – the capacity to generate artificial and controlled congestions - that has permeated Koolhaas´ collaborations with Prada since 2003 in many of their fashion shows presentations, through the creation of sets that break with some of the catwalk’s conventionalities (the rectangular catwalk), relying largely on new typologies (displacement and fragmentation of audience in the space) and the use of videos projections as a parallel narrative. Most of the catwalks work, in fact, as small versions of urban contexts.

Among the many catwalks designed by OMA, there is a specific moment that comprises an in-between situation that needs to be set aside as something out of the ordinary, exactly because it collides utopia and heteropia in the creation of a narrative and time continuity: for the Fall/Winter 2012 collection, OMA proposed a catwalk along with a visual lookbook18. Koolhaas’ proposal, however, worked in a different way: the lookbook would be presented as a video that would depict a kind of utopian city/place where cloned young and fresh bodies (obviously wearing Prada) were inhabiting it. The video is called Prada Real Fantasies, a title in itself utopic by defining a brand – an ethereal construct – as being real and fantasy at once.

For 2 minutes and 5 seconds, OMA’s video/lookbook introduces a hypothetical life in a city that is represented through a futuristic/retro scenario, where a controlled, robotic, and surreal life evolves around young and perfect bodies. The video is punctuated by short vignettes: there is not one single linear narrative. Instead, every 5 to 10 seconds correspond to a change in the video, and a new action takes place. The vignettes are short situations where females

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18. A lookbook is a collection of photographs compiled to show off a model, a photographer, a style, or stylist or a clothing line. This gives viewers ideas on how to style outfits, or to show what the latest fashions are. (wikipedia)
Cities are constructed in images in Google Street. Users can navigate places, by rotating, zooming in, zooming out. People are pictured as frozen frames. Surroundings, however, are manipulable.
and males do not talk, barely move. In some cases, a female moves while the male is completely frozen as if under some sort of physical trance. In other situations, all bodies are frozen but architecture moves. Sometimes there is no gravity. Sometimes the space disappears and models walk on moving images that work as floor and ceilings. **Space is often fragmented into images.** Some of the backgrounds images used in the videos maintain a resemblance with fragments from OMA’s projects such as the Prada Head-quarter in Tokyo, with its perforated skin making a quick appearance as the back wall of one of the vignettes.

Although in a different context, the previous description finds common points of interference with the OMA’s description of the lookbook video itself:

“For the Prada Autumn/Winter 2012 lookbook, AMO projects the future of fashion as a retrofitted past. Set within a dystopian society of machines and jagged geometries, genetically perfected clones roam digital colonies. Each scene depicts an antiquated landscape within a galaxy of characters engrossed in oblique and possibly deviant power dynamics.” (extracted from youtube)

The vignettes – or short narratives within the larger one – is the representation of a **system within a system** where components are organized in a non-linear format. Because they are non-linear systems and do not rely on each other to maintain a storyline that does not exist, they can be separated/dissociated from each other without compromising the structure of the lookbook. The final result, in this sense, can be either the entire video (2:05 long) or the video fragmented in pieces (sometimes 10 seconds, sometimes 5 seconds). In both situations, information is intact.

Considering the definition of the lookbook as a system of subsystems, each vignette can be analyzed according to its individual components:

- **Vignette 01 – from 00:00 to 00:10:**
  - Space: Outdoor space, a bridge probably as one of the models is looking down; concrete structure; limpid sky that is moving in relation to the static architecture; Geographically not identifiable.
  - Body: One male, one female. Both young. The male body shows no movement. The female is in movement (walk); Female with heavy dark eye shadows.
  - Clothes: Darker tones, discreet;
Zhan Wang’s Lunar Economic Zone project imagines a celebration taking place in Shen- zhen in the year 2028 to mark the arrival of the first shipment of lunar minerals. The film shows what it might look like if China was able to facilitate an even greater monopoly by being the first to exploit the moon as a resource, and how the resulting wealthy and technologically advanced metropolis might be presented in a show of power to those in the West.

“The important takeaway from the project is that it is an external propaganda of a techn- topian future set against the realities of our fears and desires,” said Wang.
-Action: the action is triggered by the female body, that enters the space and deviates the attention from the male body, that is apparently frozen. Female body with no significant face expression. She carries what seems to be a cigarette holder; Information through few and discreet movements, information through the pattern from the clothes, information through the music (instrumental). Message could constructed by considering the immobilized male body in relation to the female. Perhaps the male is moving, and the video had to be slowed down as the female was entering in high speed within the frame, and only by reducing the speed one could see her presence. They are both moving (maybe), but in different pace.


• Vignette 02 – from 00:11 to 00:20 :

-Space: Interior, control room like space, located probably in outer space, as Earth can be seen from the window.

-Body: One male, one female. Both young. The male body shows no movement. The female is in movement (talking on old phone); Female with heavy dark eye shadows.

-Clothes: Darker tones, discreet;

-Action: the action is again triggered by the female body, that talks on the phone, not aware of the male presence behind her. At some point, a small airplane lands on the table. Earth can be seen from the window, and that might indicate that the male and female bodies are from extra-terrestrial origin or might even be artificial. Perhaps are humans inhabiting a space base. Female looks around, but her gaze seems to go through the male’s body. That might indicate that either the male or female body are not occupying the same space.

-Time: Night. Fall/Winter. Anytime. Anywhere. Orbit. No time. Overlapped time if we consider the possibility that they are not occupying the same space.

• Vignette 03 – from 00:21 to 00:30 :

-Space: Interior, living room/lounge space, a globe, a chair, perforated walls facing outdoor dark sky;

-Body: One female. Light hair.

-Clothes: Lighter but still sober tones.

-Action: Female enters, sits on the chair and observes the globe next to her.

• Vignette 04 – from 00:31 to 00:33 :

-Space: Outdoor, open space, or rather a transparent building where one seems to be floating in the air.
-Body: One male.
-Clothes: Lighter but still sober tones.
-Action: Male pressing one hand against the other, looking towards the viewer as if engaging in a visual conversation or some sort of telepathy.

• Vignette 05 – from 00:34 to 00:36 :

-Space: Outdoor, open space, with columns organized in line configuration.
-Body: Two males, Two Females.
-Clothes: Lighter but still sober tones.
-Action: A male and a female reenact a photoshoot. The other ones are frozen.
-Time: Night. Fall/Winter. Anytime. Anywhere. There are two distinct times: one lived by the couple that is movement, the other lived by the couple that is not moving.

• Vignette 06 – from 00:37 to 00:43 :

-Space: Outdoor, open space, two different environments. A floating transparent container.
-Body: One male, one female
-Clothes: Lighter but still sober tones.
-Action: The male body is enclosed within a transparent container that seems to be in a non-gravitation space. The female body is frozen, although occupying, at least visually, the same space as the male model.
-Time: Night. Fall/Winter. Anytime. Anywhere. There are two distinct times: one inhabited by the female model, and other by the male enclosed inside of the container. They perhaps exist in different parallel universes.

• Vignette 07 – from 00:44 to 00:55 :

-Space: mixed outdoor, indoor space. Brutalist architecture with lines of trains crossing, creating a network of moving elements from one building to the other
-Body: Two male bodies
-Clothes: Dark, sober.
-Action: Both males enter the space from opposite directions. They greet each other with kisses on the cheek. They seem to float onto the image. They
talk briefly and leave. Meanwhile, trains move on the background in different speeds.

- Vignette 08 – from 00:56 to 01:02 :
   -Space: Interior, control room space, white, screens.
   -Body: Two male bodies one female body.
   -Clothes: Dark, sober.
   -Action: Both males talk. Femal model is frozen in while walking. One of the screens show images of the catwalk for the Fall/Winter 2012 Prada’s collection. The image is in movement.

- Vignette 09 – from 01:03 to 01:13 :
   -Space: Interior, domestic space, white, big windows that reveal a kind of analogic environment with numbers.
   -Body: Two female and one male
   -Clothes: Dark, sober.
   -Action: All bodies are immobilized. At 01:09, females model start to move: they look at the male model that continues frozen in time. The numbers on the background move according to the music beat.

- Vignette 10 – from 01:14 to 01:23 :
   -Space: Interior, domestic space, white, big windows that reveal a kind of analogic environment with numbers.
   -Body: One male, one female
   -Clothes: Lighter, more colorful.
   -Action: All bodies are immobilized. Background image moves according to the music beat.

- Vignette 11 – from 01:24 to 01:35 :
   -Space: Interior, stairs going up, two openings that reveal a rotating structure inside. All space is black and white but the openings.
   -Body: Two females
   -Clothes: Lighter, more colorful.
-Action: All bodies are in movement. One female enters as the other is already inside. They engage in conversation. One gives an object to the other.

• Vignette 12 – from 01:36 to 01:38 :

-Space: Interior, dark, with analogic kind of Disco club lighting on the background.
-Body: Four males
-Clothes: Lighter, more colorful.
-Action: All bodies are in movement. Three male bodies are talking and drinking. The fourth male enters and is observed by the others; He leaves the scene.

• Vignette 13 – from 01:39 to 02:05 :

-Space: Interior, suptuous space, with carpets, chimneys, and chair. Back wall seems to be the plan of some landscape.
-Body: Eight males
-Clothes: Lighter, but sober;
-Action: All bodies are in movement. They are divided in two groups – 3 males, 4 males – and one male on his own. They start to disappear as the space is fragmented in pieces, revealing the credits of professionals involved in the making of the video.
-Time: Anytime. Anywhere. Non-existent

OMA’s architectural environment for Prada’s lookbook is a lapse inside the past. As we look back to 1972, it is interesting to notice the conceptual and obvious visual connection between the video and the series of conceptual drawings that Koolhaas presented as his final project at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. The project, called Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, is a theoretical exercise where he highlights Belin’s walls qualities sarcastically – expressing architecture’s power and danger - through an urban intervention in London. The city would be divided in two halves, and the population would be divided in two groups – the good ones and the bad ones. As he describes:

“Suddenly, a strip of intense metropolitan desirability runs through the center of London. This strip is like a runway, a landing strip for the new architecture of collective monuments. Two walls enclose and protect this zone to retain
Fig. 39
Up: Exodus, by Koolhaas
Fig. 40
Bottom: Prada, by Koolhaas
its integrity and to prevent any contamination of its surface by the cancerous organism that threatens to engulf it. Soon, the first inmates beg for admission. Their number rapidly swells into an unstoppable flow. We witness the Exodus of London. The physical structure of the old town will not be able to stand the continuing competition of this new architectural presence. London as we know it will become a pack of ruins.” ( Rem Koolhaas, Madelon Vriesendorp, Elia Zenghelis, Zoe Zenghelis l Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: Exhausted Fugitives Led to Reception, project, 1972 |The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection, New York )

Although in a different context, the previous description finds common points of interference with the OMA’s description of the lookbook video itself:

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A comparison between the images produced at that time ( Fig. 39 ) and Prada’s lookbook today ( Fig. 40 ) reveals a conceptual continuation of a story, now through fashion terms, in which his experiments on what he calls “architecture’s excessive compulsion toward the spectacular”\(^\text{19}\) take the form of modernist utopias embedded with the power of a brand.

These modernist scenarios have, however, a sense of time suspension that might indicate a certain unstabled control that is about to collapse. As models walk around and as bodies float in the air, the images recreate an utopic environment that was understood by some youtube users as being “fascist” and “totalitarian”. Some called for the fact that there were no black models, and that the video materializes the world if the III Reich had won the war ( Fig XX page XX). Just like catwalks themselves, Prada´s lookbook reflects on a game of social status through the idealization of designed bodies within pristine and technological architectural surroundings that are, perhaps, defining a division in society in two groups: the chosen ones ( I wear Prada ) and the outsiders ( I wear Zara ). One cannot help but wonder if, just like in Exodus,
Fig. 41
Views from the catwalk: Prada Fall/Winter 2013
Koolhaas´ idea for this video/lookbook is also based on sarcasm and mockery, now in relation to fashion´s definition as a discipline that has relied on status quo and segregation in order to maintain its existence.

Koolhaas´ intention in this project was to, perhaps, break free from the rules while pretending to be a participant of the negotiations. As OMA first designed a video of an utopian futuristic “totalitarian somewhere” where Prada exists, it later proposed a new strategy that played with time, space, and action in and outside of the catwalk, punctuating a heterotopic break from the utopian norms at play until now.

The video/lookbook was done for the Fall/Winter 2012 collection. However, the catwalk for that season had little to do with what was presented in the video, as it was organized as an open floor typology with the whole floor area covered with a multi-colored carpet and huge chandeliers. The set in nothing resembled the futuristic tone of the lookbook neither the conceptual approach of the lookbook.

Interestingly, however, was the conspicuous visual and conceptual closeness between this video and the catwalk for the following season – a year later. As described by OMA, the space for the Fall/Winter 2013 collection was a vaguely industrial yet semi abandoned environment, populated by few manifestations of domestic everyday life. Models weave through this set, exploring and re-inhabiting an undefined large interior. A continuous series of images is projected on the walls; they combine idyllic settings and industrial devices into a mysterious and abstract panorama, expanding the show space into a post-romantic imagery. ( www.oma.eu ) ( Fig. 41 )

The images projected on the walls as well the appearance of the models were reenacting a situation that could might as well be the continuation of the narrative of the lookbook: the same models were parading the catwalk, with the difference being the make up (wet hair) only. A same face with no expression, a walk with controlled movements, all wrapped up by a soundtrack that is an almost slowed out version of the music that plays at the lookbook.

The catwalk, although conditioned to more stable components (space, body, clothes, action, time), cannot be understood as a cohesive system anymore. Because its possible production is the result of a previous action – a video that was done a year ago – the catwalk works as the continuation of a story written in the past, a post-narrative and final conclusion of a scenario that was
Fig. 42
Views from the catwalk: Prada Fall/Winter 2013
created before the catwalk existed. It is, instead, an open and evolving system that is interpreted always in relation to another system (the video as a system of many independent subsystems).

This open and evolving system is organized with the same sets of components. However, aspects of its structure have to be confronted with the subsystems of the video system previously discussed:

-Space: As an inversion of the traditional catwalk configuration, AMO conceives a set built around the perimeter of the audience, which is seated on an irregularly shaped central island. The stage and the island are built in wood. The floor is a patterned combination of burnt wood planks and industrial metal sheets. Furniture is built in wood, metal and plexiglass in combination with paper textures, while curtains are in blue and grey velvet. (www.oma.eu) Space is conformed by video projections all around: shadows of cats and women move slowly, as if in another reality. (www.oma.eu) Vignettes 06/13.

-Body: A total of 40 female models. Controlled movements, wet hair, faces with no expression.

-Clothes: Prada has, of course, in her best collections found something gorgeous in the off-kilter, the marginal, the banal, allying it with her own eternal preoccupation with bourgeois-lady chic, and this was one of those powerhouse performances. An homage to constructions—in every sense of the word—of glamour of the forties and fifties, with 48 looks that contained plenty of tweed, furs, metallic leathers, and stately handheld purses. (http://www.vogue.com/fashion-week/862272/prada-fall-2013/).

-Action: The space was conformed by moving surfaces. Images of a shadows (cats and women) overlapping with architectural details. Enlarged real momentuns. All vignettes relate to this condition.

-Time: 12 minutes in real space. The surfaces of the space, however, were running as a continuous space within a space. This time cannot be measured. All vignettes relate to this condition.

The unified space of the catwalk is wrapped by images. Each projection visually works as huge windows that open to other realities within the constructed catwalk. (Fig. 42)
Images of the video/lookbook, with its many windows opening to the outer space, could might as well be projected onto the space of the now real Prada fantasy, but they are not. Instead, the videos on the catwalk tell a narrative through shadows, of overlapping architectural elements, of openings to other spaces. There is indeed a storyline that conducts the action of the catwalk while female models walk on slow pace and fluctuated gaze. Their bodies as well as the constructed environment of moving surfaces, seem to promote a discourse on the final outcome of the futuristic/totalitaria/fascist that first come into existence on video format.

In both terrains, however, there is a clear construction of an urban setting. The catwalk as well as the video are strategies organized around fashion´s existence within a built environment, one that is formed into the flux of information, social interactions, and events that impregnates and conforms cities´s basic function as a place of visual and unexpected convergences: the walk, the talk, the mingle, the casual encounters, the boredom, the social classes, the casualty - all snapshots of realities.

Koolhaas has been widely recognized as an architect/thinker concerned with the contemporary urban scenario. Most of his urban projects describe a vision of the metropolis as a world of extremes open to every kind of human experiences (extracted from the article “Why is Rem Koolhaas the World’s Most Controversial Architect?” By Nicolai Ouroussoff, published at the Smithsonian Magazine, september 2012 ). This desire to live on the possibilities of extremes forces as a projectual practice is what has driven his ongoing experiments in fashion through the collaboration with Prada, where he has redefined Fashion´s presence in the built environment through a set of strategies that are more than just arranged around clothes: these strategies are, in reality, mechanisms for conversations between the audience and the brand.

In this Prada Real Fantasies ( both the video and the following collection ), Koolhaas questions where is in reality the place for fashion existence: Is it inside the utopian and perfect environment of the controlled digitality of video ( where everything is possible ), or is it the already known landscape of the catwalk with its space-time-action condition that situates the collection within a heterotopic construct subject to some spatial conventionalities ?

As we look at the comments on youtube on both videos ( the fashion show is also online along with the lookbook video ), it becomes clear how both mediums trigger different perceptions. For the lookbook, most of comments were
focused on the video itself, with the critique towards the tone of the visuals. There was clearly a preoccupation on trying to decipher a message, as it was difficult (at least it seems) to construct a meaning with the information presented. On the catwalk video, however, users did not perceive the constructed environment and the focus was entirely on the collection.

As fashion has historically found the catwalk to be the place where it can fully exist as such, projects like Koolhaas’ work as strategical interferences capable of exposing the catwalk system’s abilities to be unfolded into two opposite and parallel directions, occupying not one but many spaces at the same time. In doing so, the outputs from the system are endless.
4.4.3. Chanel fall/winter 2014 women's wear pret-a-porter fashion show

There is a condition studied in Chaos Theory\textsuperscript{20} called Butterfly Effect, that relates to how a small change at one place can result in unexpected and huge differences later in the process. Films have portrayed this scenario in many circumstances, such as in Brazil\textsuperscript{21}, where a small bug gets caught in the typing machine, changing the name of one of the characters from “Archibald Tuttle” to “Archibald Buttle.” This small change – from T to B - results in a twirl of consequences: the character is wrongly arrested and nightmare begins.

According to Jones (1994), chaos occurs due to the operation mode of persistently unstable systems or, as pointed out by Jensen (1987), due to the irregular, unpredictable behavior of deterministic nonlinear systems. No matter how the action is triggered, the process indicates a predominancy of instability within the system, which generates all the unexpected results.

So far, this research has considered the catwalk as a cohesive system composed by specific variables (components) that act accordingly in the maintenance of the whole. However, and as this example will demonstrate, the components sometimes trigger other actions (circumscribed in certain conditions) that directly affect the expected result (the goal), generating others if not many possible and uncontrollable ends.

Chanel’s fall/winter 2014 pret-a-porter fashion show was set up at the Grand Palais in Paris, a place that has been used by the brand since 2006, when it launched its spring-summer 2006 collection (a huge scalator-tower was installed in the middle of the space, with models descending from it). The Grand Palais is better known as a place where innovation was presented to society at the end of the 19th century, having hosted significant expos such as the Exposition Universelle in 1900. In this specific exhibition, Fashion as a system was first presented to the public through an installation piece using dummies dressed in Worth’s designs, as if they were in a some domestic environment. (fig. XX) The 1900 expo was, to a certain extent, the materialization of modernity through spectacle and the configuration of a physical space as a place for the modern citizen to look into the future.

\textsuperscript{20} Chaos theory studies the behavior of dynamical systems that are highly sensitive to initial conditions.

\textsuperscript{21} Science fiction film from 1985 about a machine-control totalitarian world of bureaucracy
MOMENT ONE : THE CATWALK SHOW

Space: Gran Palais in Paris; Area: 13,500m²; Supermarket configuration mimicking a real one, with products with Chanel Logos. The space was structured around individual islands and product stands. The configuration allowed for the models to occupy not one but many different spots within the catwalk.

Body: 48 fashion models. Young. All female.

Object: The main piece were the couture sneakers, although the Chanel jacket was again presented, now with a design that liberates the waist, creating a more fragmented image.

Action: There were two distinct moments: first the regular parading. After that, models were wondering around as if they were really experiencing a shopping spree.

Time: 18 minutes.
Chanel’s show occupied all the existing 13.500m², just like all the previous shows from 2006 until now. Such huge catwalks have redefined time, photography, status, and performance: now longer in length due mostly because of the increase route that models have to parade, the space is not defined by one background only. Instead, cameras are installed all over and from the ceiling, producing many if not thousands of different images; video cameras are installed on moving metal arms so they can navigate the space and get landscaped views of the whole catwalk, documenting the moving action that happens as a cinematic construct; the social status defined by the first row is dissolved into extremely long rows of chairs that are spread all over the space, making it impossible for someone like Anna Wintour⁴ to be seen and noticed as she arrives.

For this fashion show, Mr. Lagerfeld took us to do some grocery shopping, by turning the Grand Palais into a gigantic hypermarket that only superficially resembled what could be considered a real supermarket⁴ (Fig. 43): products on shelves and individual island as in any other. The difference, however, lies on its surfaces: all products stamped with Chanel’s logo, in a hyperreal kind of Las Vegas scenario where stamps and boxes become billboards and signals. Everything looked extravagantly fake. (Fig. 44)

Chanel’s supermarket had product islands conveniently placed as to create different moments within the space. There were no background walls or places where models could be photographed against. Instead, the whole circulation overlapped images of two or three models, since they were all walking around the same area. There was never a sense of beginning and end or even a punctuated rhythm as not one but many models entered the space and fought for the audience’s attention. The presence of many models turned the catwalk

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3. Chief Editor, Vogue America, the most important name in the fashion industry.

4. Supermarkets first appeared in 1915, as a business model developed by American entrepreneur Vincent Astor, who opened a large space where clients could reach the products themselves instead of asking for an assistant. It allowed for larger numbers of products to be displayed, at a time where mass production had reached modern life in its base. In fact, it could be argued that the first fashion show in the US where models were placed on top of constructed base as to permit more clothes at once – the first physical catwalk – could be translated as a large scale human representation of products on shelves, a precursor of what supermarkets would be few years later. This supermarket model grew tremendously as the automobile industry started selling cars to middle-class citizens that were living in suburban post-war neighborhoods in the US, which allowed for huge supermarkets (or commercial superficies as they are usually known) to be constructed outside of the big cities. From this comes the association of supermarket with suburbs/middle-class environments.
Models pretending to be shopping

Detail of Pret-a-Couture sneakers
into a place of vignettes: against shelves and islands, the models were photographed picking up products, strolling, and choosing between one box of cookies or the other. The soundtrack, a kind of remix of dance music and voices over, was announcing which one was the best cured ham. The models, in fact cloned girls wearing the already famous Chanel jacket (revisited again and again and again), were parading around and minding their own business, as if they were really inside of a supermarket, recreating a hypothetical world where someone wearing expensive Chanel’s clothes could easily be seen carrying a bag of tomatoes. Chanel tomatoes perhaps. (Fig. 45) (Fig. 46) (Fig. 47)

As everything designed by international brands as Chanel, nothing is occasional. The supermarket concept was (and still is as it continues to be subject to discussion online) a strategy to displace the exclusive fashion’s territory into a pop and not-glamour landscape, as part of a marketing maneuver to restablishing Pret-a-Couture as the idea of a product that is neither haute couture neither pret-a-porter, neither luxury neither consumption. It is like a neutral and foggy territory, just like a supermarket immersed in the Gran Palais: you see it, but you do not grasp it.

In this fashion show, the object Pret-a-Couture were simple sneakers that were manufactured as if they were a piece of haute couture, with finishes and luxury materials. The whole performance was built around the sneakers as the central piece, with models walking around as much as possible to show off the new piece or, perhaps, to highlight how alleviated is to break free from the high heels’ dominance. As explained by Mr. Lagerfeld himself on Chanel’s website: “In the history of fashion, around 1800 to 1840 or 1845, women had flat shoes. Even with a ball gown, they had flat shoes. it gives a new, modern attitude to Couture. What is better about Couture than the feeling of now? Paradise Now.” (Fig. 48)

The first clash within the space is born between physical context (the supermarket) and object (shoes). It is now clear that Lagerfeld’s intention in portraiting a supermarket is almost like a joke/comment on social differences, as if sneakers belong to suburbia while high heels belong to first class’s flight tickets. The image of models – all extremely young and similar in appearance – collides with the actual Chanel’s audience, that is most of older and mature rich women. As an attempt or message to be sent, the sneakers represent an important shift in recognizing that there is in fact something going on within the fashion industry, to the point where an international and powerful brand such
MOMENT TWO:
THE COLLAPSE OF A SYSTEM

Space: Grand Palais in Paris; Area: 13.500m2;
Supermarket configuration mimicking a real one, with products with Chanel Logos, is now resumed to a destroyed space: all products were removed from the shelves by members of the audience.

Body: Overlapping and anxious bodies, photographed bodies, performative bodies; security guards, audience, celebrities, fashion models.

Object: products on the floors, fragments of the set, cameras, ipads

Action: Member from the audience removed all products from the shelves, apparently following a voice over that suggested for the removal of perishable items (fruits and vegetables). The action is filmed and uploaded online. It immediately becomes hashtag, and trendtopic. The whole aftermath basically put the collection on a secondary level of importance as the destruction of the set became the main issue discussed on online fashion magazines and blogs.

Time: Ongoing. Even today, the event is discussed and many other interpretations of the phenomena have appeared;
Chanel delivers a product that blurs the boundaries between couture and pret-a-porter. Not only that: a product that perhaps will not be consumed by its targeted audience, and too expensive to be consumed by a younger one. Sneakers were not, however, the only point of friction within the super-hypermarket.

The show was being transmitted live through Chanel’s website, while tablets, cameras and smart phones were seen rising above the audience as portable gazing machines documenting the event. At the end of the show, a voice over announced ‘Dear valued customer, the Chanel store is now closing. Please feel free to pick up your complimentary fruit and vegetables as you leave’ and guests were invited to take home some perishable products. The result, however, was unexpected: people flew over all the items on display (according to fashion.telegraph.co.uk, the doormats were the hit), destroying the before well organized shelves, tearing objects apart, grabbing as many things as possible, and proving that the power of a brand can turn a simple onion into a luxury product. (Fig. 49)

As this final unpredicted action took place, space and time were fragmented into possibilities, into other spaces and into other times.

The first and initial space was the real one, where the action happened: the models, the objects, and the parading around with carts. This space existed in a physical reality and would be, eventually, transformed into digital as videos and visual documentation worked as the mediation between audience and consumers. There was a fixed time – a schedule – when to start and finish. The final performance lasted 18 minutes, not including the before and after the presentation, where people usually mingle around, socializing while being fashionable. Apparently, this catwalk model maintains the system’s consistency with its structure as all components seemed to work cohesively in achieving the goal which is, in theory, to showcase a collection. In Chanel’s case, however, the collection was set aside as the prevalent theme was the introduction of the concept of Pret-a-Couture. As of today, the idea of pret-a-couture (which is not something new, going back to 2005, it was just momentarily outfashioned) has become a trend topic as many brands, including Yves Saint Laurent, have utilized it in order to boost sales and marketing. Also, because the Pret-a-Couture was only recognized in the way the sneakers were produced (a low class product with high end finish), the whole collection was reduced to one accessory only – the shoes.
Are bloggers being banished from New York Fashion Week?

By Robert Johnston 06 December '13

In other words the impressionable days of favouring a 19-year-old nobody with a seat near the front while pushing buyers to the back may well be over. And hurray to that. After all, if you have a limited space in which to seat people and you are in the business of selling...
A second space, far away from the Gran Palais and probably scattered in many places, was the virtual one. Many consumers, fashionistas, bloggers, and curious people were logged in live following the presentation. The catwalk was transmitted through Chanel’s website and registration was required ( one Like on Facebook ). The show started at 11 pm Paris time, on March 3rd 2014.

This second space, formed by a networked community of Chanel followers, inserts another layer into the already controversial catwalk at that day. As the catwalk itself seemed to provoke a discourse around “who is in and who is out” by finding a common place within the confy interior of popular sneakers, the outside consumers – the online people – experience the experience through a false idea of inclusion and a fake sense of belonging to, if understood only from the point of view of reality: the body is not there, you are not there. However, and as more and more society seems to diverge into the flux of web virtuality, the sense of belonging transmutes to a mental presence instead of a physical one: if one thinks he/she is there, here is the log in to confirm that she/he is NOW.

The third space was the aftermath, the destructed one. A place that had to be rephotographed and refilmed as to witness something that apparently went out of their hands. Videos of the set being destructed were uploaded on Vimeo, and many pictures appeared on the web, with people taking selfies ( including the models and celebrities, that at some point joined the crowd ) congratulating themselves for having grabbed some souvenir.

Aside of the condition of existing physically or not, the destruction of the sets raised questions about exclusiveness ( would Chanel clients do that ? ) and professionality (Fashion editors charged into a scrum in the bricolage aisle, literally fighting for a doormat, according to theguardian.com ). After this fashion show, three curious articles appeared ( and much more later ) focusing exactly on issues that emmerged in that day. First, an article at the Business of Fashion website called “ Are phones killing fashion ? “, stating that In the iPhone Age, fashion week has become one glorified, ridiculous, narcissistic, nauseating selfie. Later, an article published by Nymag called “ The Golden Era of ‘Fashion Blogging’ Is Over” where it is put in discussion the non-relevance of bloggers within the catwalk space, as they are not considered ( according to the industry ) qualified professionals and part of the industry. A third article emerged on the subject of exclusiveness, pointing out how fashion shows have to remain exclusive and closed to the public because this idea would destroy the very point of them. ( “ The case against making fashion week public”, on
Many images appeared online mocking Chanel’s supermarket. Some fashion designer also copied the idea (bottom, right).
Based on the mediatic reactions, mostly around status issues and privileged position within the industry, it seems that Chanel’s sneakers stepped on the postmodern condition described by Jameson (1991) when he refers to the erosion of the older distinction between high culture and so-called mass or popular culture. As he points out, the erosion of the elite/high culture (in his opinion, a distressing development of all from an academic standpoint) in favor of a growing interest on the kitsch and schlock, makes it indistinctive the line between high-art and commercial forms: It allows for the presence of some otherness that does seem not to understand the code at play within Haute Couture, and is incapable of differentiating between luxury and commercial. And, as we all know, fashion has mainly existed maintaining a distinctive separation between opposites, either past and future, old and new, high and low, rich and poor. Here therefore lies the problem with the Chanel’s Pret-a-Couture concept: It makes Jameson’s indistinctive line more evident, by combining space and action in order to liberate a pair of sneakers from its social implications as a “low class” object in favor of its understanding as an abstract object (Baudrillard, 1996).

Chanel’s fashion show introduces one example where information—here defined as the content of a message apt to trigger some action (Rosnay, 1995)—acts as the butterfly that ignites the process, twisting the concept of the fashion show as an exclusive and bourgeois place, liberating a twofold audience behavior through animalistic gestures and digital procedures. The butterfly or information, in this context, materializes through the interaction between action and space.

The catwalk received two inputs in the form of information. First, the space itself configured as a supermarket and all the already discussed attributes and relations between its physicality and the action taking place (models shopping around wearing sneakers). The result from this first configuration (as an organizational systemic model) is the introduction of the concept of the Pret-a-Couture as well as the comment on high/low class environments within the Haute Couture. The message, as in any contemporary fashion show, is distributed in bits and pieces of information scattered throughout the whole presentation. The focus is not in one point but in many, and the array of meanings superimposed is what makes this catwalk subject to different if not multiple interpretations. The multiplicity of meanings (a collection being presented by young girls wearing sneakers in a supermarket) and the bundled signs (chanel mayonese, chanel potatoes, chanel cleaning products)
define this catwalk as being a complex system\(^{22}\) that apparently starts with a basic program (components towards a goal) and sustain a permanent identity (an organizational closure defined by a constructed action).

The second input, however, reveals that the complexity of this system follows a nonlinear path, where results cannot be predicted as initially thought out. The definition of nonlinear system presents four types of behaviour (Kiel, 1997):

1) **convergence** to a stability or equilibrium: the initial moments of the catwalk presentation, where everything seems to go as planned;

2) **stable oscillation**: The final moments of the presentation where models do not parade anymore. Instead, they wonder around as if they were shopping. The action takes a different turn, out of the ordinary. Still, it is a controlled performance.

3) **unstable** and explosive: Minutes after the voice over. People entered the catwalk space as well as celebrities and models. Selfies, videos, and pictures were taken and other actions took place such as models pushing celebrities inside of shopping carts, models and celebrities impersonating shopping, audience members photographing themselves with models and celebrities. Was the action really over, although not controlled anymore?

4) **chaotic**: It is not possible to say exactly how or even who was the first one to rip the set apart. The point is that vandalism as a behaviour (any kind of it) results from the act of deliberately destroying or damaging property (Oxford dictionary). This act is, in many instances, absorbed and copied by the group that is participant of the moment. In Chanel’s case, as one person started the action, the rest followed and turned the place into a battle zone. Interestingly, immitation as discussed by Simmel (2014) is a *sine quo non* condition for fashion to exist and has permeated its history since the beginning. In this case, nothing was, at least in theory, out of ordinary.

\(^{22}\) Consisting of many diverse and autonomous but interrelated and interdependent components or parts linked through many (dense) interconnections. Complex systems cannot be described by a single rule and their characteristics are not reducible to one level of description. (extracted from Business Dictionary)
Fig. 51  
The google images of Chanel’s fashion show look like sequences of a movie.

Fig. 52  
The conservative and fixed camera angle catwalk look.
As in any fashion show, the brand expects to receive a considerable amount of media and coverage for at least the duration of the fashion week. This is reinforced by the brand’s own marketing structure that utilizes most of what was photographed and documented during the fashion show. In Chanel’s case, however, there were two different paths that were followed, each one independent from the other, but with similar striking results.

First, the conventional path of the catwalk image *per se*. As discussed earlier, the space allowed for the creation of vignettes, snapshots of a fake reality (a hypermarket) within the already fake reality of fashion shows. The images produced look like frames extracted from a high resolution video (Fig. 51), as a frozen moment in time during an action (shopping). In nothing this format resembles the already conservative catwalk look of the past (Fig. 52). As a consequence, the accumulation of images around website such as Google Search showcase a collection of thumbnails that could be might as well described as the sequences of a fragmented film or a narrative taking place.

The later pseudo vandalism is a story in its own. Such after-catwalk moment immediately generated more than 15,000 #chanelshoppingcenter on Twitter showing videos of people tearing the set apart, attempting to take home part of the experience. There are, as of today, 2,200,000 search results on Google for Chanel Supermarket. Youtube has more than 5,500 videos related to the event. Later, many “interpretations” appeared online (Fig. 50, pg. 168) and the discussion took the forums. In both cases, there was barely a serious discussion about the collection.

The final outcome of Chanel’s spectacle exposes how even unpredictable and uncontrolled events work in favor of the system. Perhaps because of the power of the boundary (brand), perhaps because of the cohesiveness of the structure that, even under stress, is still capable of reaching positive goals. The fact is that Chanel’s supermarket even today – two seasons later, which in fashion times is almost a century – still generates buzz, images, comments, and is considered as one of the best shows put together by Lagerfeld in years.

One cannot know for sure but wonder if Chanel’s sneakers23 rubber sole was really making any noise as the models walked by. In any case, it would be

23. The name “sneakers” originally referred to how quiet the rubber soles were on the ground, in contrast to noisy standard hard leather soled dress shoes. Someone wearing sneakers could “sneak up” on you while someone wearing standards can only stand on you. (wikipedia)
really making any noise as the models walked by. In any case, it would be imperceptible in comparison to the butterfly’s wings noise of information that was smashed around, as space and action crashed into one morphed non-linear organism that was basically telling the same story but with different ends.

What makes Fashion resilient is its capacity to become anything, anytime, anywhere, surviving even when under a kind of fashionable attack, no matter which systemic format it assumes. Chanel’s catwalk exemplifies this case.

4.4.4.  IN_formation system: case studies at play

The catwalk system’s hypothesis encounters, in these three case studies, a glimpse of the many scenarios where the congruency of data (spatial, visual) and action is responsible for the dissolution of the catwalk into the substance of virtuality.

At first – McQueen’s catwalk – the system ignites a swirl of changes as the real body disappears in favor of a constructed one. This predecessor of the info-body, although an analogic one, becomes the prophet of a future that is yet to come but it is announced in advance so it becomes fashionable and desirable. This other body, a smooth one where the skin is a fabricated plastic organism, reflects its shinyness upon the audience as if trying to communicate without pronouncing any words. As we look back in history, the immobilization of the models does not comply with the catwalk first intention as being the one of moving clothes. Instead, McQueen’s catwalk introduces the erasing of one component of the systemic (the female body) and its immediate replacement by an inanimated copy of another (dead) body. The information sent is one of unnecessity, as if clothes are not to be animated neither to be carried out by human beings. Perhaps, the info-bodies introduced in this research could become the new portable devices of a future fashion, as both (body and clothes) are slowly becoming pieces of a virtual constructed set.

As McQueen’s fashion show proposes a body of information that has to be totally controlled by outside forces, it brings into question information’s necessity to be free as to allow for many interpretations. Could an emprisioned body hold information to the point where its condition becomes irrelevant and the only thing that matters is the communication at play between fake non-body and the action? Probably, if we consider that information can be ANY information, even ones that are contrary to the functioning of the performance per se.
DIAGRAM IN FORMATION INTO THE VIRTUAL
MCQUEEN
PRADA
CHANEL
In McQueen’s case, the analogic bodies rotated around their axis, barely making the clothes move. This did not allow for clothes to be photographed (in fact, very little documentation exist from this fashion show. There is no catwalk lookbooks) neither all members from the audience could see the collection in full. By (not)acting, the robotic non-human bodies also promoted the dissolution of clothes, now turned into impossible objects to be looked at, inserted in a dark space that has also dissolved behind the cranky noise of the animatronics going up and down.

Systematically speaking, this catwalk promotes the temporary disappearance/modification of all components – space, body, objects, and even time as there was no sense of permanence. It was, even 15 years ago, a prelude of the current condition of contemporary catwalks, which are now subject to all possible interferences in order to produce information. In this case, the system apparently collapsed and gave raise to a new configuration where the same components where present, but now constructed with a new materiality.

This same new materiality conformed an opposite systematical arrangement within the catwalk designed by Rem Koolhaas for Prada. Although opposite in strategies, both catwalks relate in a strange and linear way as one space disappears (McQueen) while other (re)appears embedded as pure information.

Through its many video images and constructed animated frames, Koolhaas’ s design for Prada reconstructs the catwalk by reversing the process: instead of facilitating the performance initially through a physical space, Koolhaas presents a video – a pseudo narrative – that is then incorporated into the catwalk one season later. This timely break forces a rupture within the system by proposing a discontinuous temporality that moves away from the conventions of the industry in maintaining past and future as two separated entities. By doing so, the catwalk appears and disappears twice, and one is confronted with a choice between an edited performance and a controlled one. Both are unreal.

Prada’s video and catwalk are occupying the same place as both are ways of looking at the same narrative, in a time that is now compartmentalized in two different moments: one that is the video (subject to many interferences by the user) and the catwalk, that is also transformed in video. The process all over. The information at play in Prada’s material is in the form of a condensed and fragmented presentation: video, pdf, catwalk, video of the catwalk, images on google. All are one and all are data. As all the data is scrumbled into pieces
( or condensed representations ), what kind of message can be constructed with all these snapshot of information?

Interestingly, all the description facilitated by both Prada and OMA ( of the video, of the collection, and of the catwalk ) do not seem to converge in discourse. Instead, each one restructure itself around theoretical and rhetorical descriptions that do not say much about what should be the focus of all this effort – the collection. Again, clothes do no matter.

Koolhaas´s proposal continues McQueen´s effort in forcing into exhaustion the components of the system, as if trying to prove how resistant they can be in keeping up with the fashion game at play. All these attempts only diverged the components into forms of information.

Such struggle to bend the system until its find its final collapse encounters a final testing ground into the fun and sarcastic Chanel´s supermarket.

Lagerfeld´s catwalk is apparently constructed around very conservative formats. Real models walk by in a place with a specific set design with a clear message. This message, however, is what conforms this catwalk as one that steps outside of the normatives: as a supermarket is introduced within the walls of the Couture House ( a fashion institution ), it reveals a tension between what is being propagated and where the message is coming from.

Many are the layers that overlap this presentation. First, there is the rupture between what is public and private, what is domestic and what is considered as “everyday life”. In this specific context, this dual reality has to be transformed into pure exaggeration through the many surreal objects that populate the shelves of the hypermarket: only by turning the action into a pop performance, this catwalk ( and the brand ) can embrance the situation as being politically correct.

Later, as the event becomes the uncontrollable performance documented by hundreds of cameras, the space becomes an augmented territory where images and materiality form a global and inseparable space-time synergical condition. From one side, it means to open up the array of possibilities ad infinitum and accept all possible interpretations and interferences ( blogs, twitters, instagram, vimeo ). Time is fragmented and it is replaced by many if not thousands of messages into different times.
As the culmination of all the actions get into a conclusion, the whole system turns into uncertainty: system becomes vulnerable and, although under this unexpected condition, the chaos generated becomes one more of the many outputs of the system. This chaotic configuration is embraced and life goes one: many interpretations appear (mockering of the event, and other brands adopt the same approach of the supermarket) and the whole space has its materiality dissolved into the virtual.

The case studies all coincide into the formation of a catwalk system that, by utilizing information as its formal element, is capable of resisting even the most torturous conditions and distortions within the system itself. As information becomes the basic material in which the catwalk is built of, the IN_formational system proposed here might indicate not only the restructuring of a whole industry through the catwalk landscape, but also the rebirth of Fashion as kind of technology that is embedded on the substance of information, immersing for good into the realms of virtuality.
5. CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A NEW FASHION SYSTEM

Like annoucers of a future that is yet to come, fashion shows are more than just designed spectacles: they have redefined our relations to clothes, to our bodies, to our thinking and, most important, have reshaped our interactions with commerce.

The analysis of catwalks from the prism of systems and the subsequent identification of the components that conform it – space, time, action through body and objects – have revealed a spatial construct that is engaged in complexity and processes, generating strategies towards the production of newness and effective/affective messages. Also, the catwalk system has exposed itself as one sometimes composed by many systems at once, proving it to be a network of multiple if not infinite interdependent entities\(^{24}\).

Nonetheless, this complex fashion machine has been the subject of recent criticism\(^{25}\), where its relevance is questioned in relation to its efficiency in actually reaching the ultimate goal: to present a collection. As a reaction to this problem, the Pret-a-Porter industry has understood what is at stake by proposing new ways of thinking, not only twisting existing catwalk norms but also generating new ones. Such momentum indicates, as proposed in this research, a rupture within the basic core of the old system in favor of a new one.

The hypothesis introduced here is that this new system is conformed by information - IN_formation system - a system that is in the process of becoming everything anytime/anywhere, turning the fashion shows into a place for everything, anytime, anywhere.

\(^{24}\) the systems of production, image, and spectacle are, as discussed in this research, the interpenetration of accumulation of their individual characteristics into one larger entity (fashion system). Their integration conforms the terrain in which the information system hypothesis is structured around.

\(^{25}\) Bustle.com, ID.com, Nytimes.com, to cite some of the online publications that have discussed during September 2014 again the relevance of fashion shows, assuming the position that they are as relevant as they were in the past. Most of the criticism comes from fast fashion brands and independent fashion designers.

\(^{26}\) As this research evolved, this issue was identified as the result of the financial crisis that emmerged in the beginning of the century, and that enormously affected the fashion industry especially the business of fashion weeks. As a consequence, many brands and fashion designers had to rethink their modus operandi in order to adapt themselves to possible chaotic economic scenarios, finding new ways to promote their collections without actually having to rely on a construct that had presented itself, for the first time in history, vulnerable to outside and real forces.
ongoing experimentations and constant interactive fluxes, now inhabiting the liquid and ever present territory of virtuality. The IN_formational catwalk, in this sense, is a place designed to exist as a continuous source of open and free flow data that reorganizes its actions continuously through manipulable formats and variables, going beyond the simple act of showing new clothes. Such space in flux is one that perpetuates itself even when the show is over, reproducing the action ad infinitum virtually.

Through the analysis of cases as well as historical references, this research has identified this new system as one that heavily relies on the manipulation of its components until they become almost unrecognizable: the disappearance of clothes and bodies, the dissolution of the space into darkness, the introduction of video as a surface material (of space, body and clothes), virtual happenings and collapsible actions, soulless info-bodies dressed in techno-textiles, and immersive individual and collective experiences, are one of the many scenarios triggered by a series of strategical operations around copy and standardization of fashion models, accumulation and reproduction of controlled actions, inclusion and participation of networked outside players, fragmentation and transformation of space, image (re)production between actual and virtual, relation between the catwalk and its surroundings (political, social, cultural, ) and, most important, the definition of a new concept of time that moves away from the conservative temporality of seasons into an open ended global terrain of timelessness and nowness. In the process of becoming information, this new catwalk has built a strategy of thought that, interestingly enough, intersects with the lexicon of operations that is currently being discussed under architectural terms.

The current moment within the fashion industry is one where the idea of “trying and put some clothes on” is being slowly replaced by the idea of “testing, downloading, archiving, subscribing, and ordering collections”27. As this scenario approaches, what kind of mechanisms will be generated from the components of the catwalk in order to face a future where all is virtual, and where the act of looking at and buying clothes might be resumed to the clicks of a mouse?

27. e_fashion : la moda y el recto digital, Conference Museo del Traje, Madrid, May 2014 - The next three years are going to be critical for the fashion industry. 2016 is believed to be the year of e_commerce´s boom, which signifies an important shift in the relationship between body and clothes. If most of the commerce is now heading towards the digital screen, what does it mean to buy a t-shirt or a pair of paints based only on what kind sensation/emotion/affect it triggers through its virtual image?
Will we be able to, one day, plug ourselves into a Fashion Cloud and experience the catwalk directly inside of brains?
In this context, this research considers the informatization of the catwalk as a ritual of passage from a physical/real Fashion System into one conforming as a technological networked28 brain that is slowly becoming an ongoing and never ending urban flux in the dissemination of information. Perhaps, Fashion’s final entrance into virtuality is similar to what Dr. Will Caster is in Transcendence (2014): a body whose mind is transferred to a computer, and that gain autonomous life as it evolves into a form of ever-present entity (Fig. 53). If we imagine the dissolution of Fashion (as a system with all its components) into virtuality for good, the necessity of its existence in real time and place is neglected under the assumption that Fashion now is all and occupies all: a kind of information cloud that flies over our heads, and that can be accessed, plugged-in, downloaded, pirated, and hacked at anytime, anywhere.

28. There are currently about 150 fashion weeks around the world, each showcasing an average between 50 to 200 catwalk presentations. Most of these fashion weeks have propagated into different countries, where geographical conditions do not match with the international occidental seasonal temporality of fashion shows. As a result, these presentations now happen throughout the year, coexisting in many places and inhabiting a global time where permanence and physical presence are not relevant anymore. This network is also retrofeed by coolhunters all over the world that work as silent drones, observing any sign of rupture or novelty at urban levels, while Fashionistas are assuming the role of activists in spreading (share, comments, like, Instagram) and defending the brand’s ideology no matter what.
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7. APPENDIX: THE CATWALK CARTOGRAPHY
TWO COMBINATIONS: TUNICA AND TUGA (MALE)
TUNICA AND PALLA (FEMALE)

FREE FLOWING ENVELOPING GARMENTS
THE MALE BODY
THE ATHLETIC BODY
THE NAKED BODY

THE ABSENCE OF CLOTHES AS SIGN OF SUPERIORITY
CLOTHES USED IN TEXTS AS RETORICAL WEAPON
A USER’S HIERARCHY IDENTIFIED BY HIS-HER GARMENT

PUBLIC ARENAS AS SPACE TO BE SEEN
SPACES OF POWER

THE 431 B.C. - 14th CENTURY

THE GARMENT BECOMES A DRESS
PROTECTION
SOCIAL HIERARCHY

CLOTHES REPRESENTED IN SCULPTURES

AUDIENCE

ACTION

TIME

SPACE
14th CENTURY - 17th CENTURY

- **TIME**
  - 14th CENTURY
  - 15th CENTURY
  - 16th CENTURY
  - 17th CENTURY

- **SPACE**
  - CITY AS SPACE TO BE SEEN
  - IDEALIZED MALE FIGURE
  - MALE AND FEMALE FIGURE

- **BODY**
  - PROTECTION
  - ACTION
  - SOCIAL HIERARCHY
  - BLACK BECOMES FASHIONABLE AS A SIGN OF GRIEF

- **CLOTHES**
  - PAINTING AS REPRESENTATION OF FASHION
  - MANY DIFFERENT FASHIONS AT ONCE

- **AUDIENCE**
  - LE MERCURE GALANT IS CREATED - 1st FASHION PUBLICATION

- **CLOTHES**
  - BODY
  - ACTION
  - SOCIAL HIERARCHY

- **TIME**
  - 14th CENTURY
  - 15th CENTURY
  - 16th CENTURY
  - 17th CENTURY

- **SPACE**
  - CITY AS SPACE TO BE SEEN
  - IDEALIZED MALE FIGURE
  - MALE AND FEMALE FIGURE

- **CLOTHES**
  - MANY DIFFERENT FASHIONS AT ONCE

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  - MANY DIFFERENT FASHIONS AT ONCE

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  - LE MERCURE GALANT IS CREATED - 1st FASHION PUBLICATION

- **CLOTHES**
  - BODY
  - ACTION
  - SOCIAL HIERARCHY
18th CENTURY - 19th CENTURY

PARIS BECOMES CENTER OF LUXURY

BIRTH OF MODERN FASHION

SMALL BUSINESSES

SOCIAL HIERARCHY - NEW SOCIAL CLASS

MANY DIFFERENT FASHIONS AT ONCE

MALE AND FEMALE FIGURE

TIME

SPACE

BODY

ACTION

CLOTHES

AUDIENCE

MANY DIFFERENT FASHIONS AT ONCE

18th CENTURY - 19th CENTURY
19th CENTURY - 20th CENTURY

TIME

SPACE

BODY

ACTION

CLOTHES

AUDIENCE

19th CENTURY

PUBLIC SPACES

THE BODY IN THE STREET
AN INDEPENDENT WOMAN
THE MODERN MAN

THE MODERN MAN

SOCIAL HIERARCHY - NEW SOCIAL CLASS

TIME TO SEE CLOTHES

20th CENTURY

PHOTOGRAPH
CINEMA
AUTOMOBILE

INTERIOR-EXTERIOR

FLEXIBLE SPACE

BD(BRAND)

MATERIALITY

TYPOLGY

Bd(brand)

MASS PRODUCTION AND POPULARIZATION
OF FASHION SHOWS IN THE US

FASHION SHOWS

BECOME
INTERNATIONAL

SMALL TALLERS
COUTURIERS
SMALL BUSINESS STRUCTURE
20th CENTURY - 21st CENTURY

SUPERMODEL

PRET - A - PORTER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR