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Bernhard Willhelm: The contemporary and sartorial remembrance

Keywords

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Abstract

This article employs the theoretical framework of contemporaneity to investigate the practice of German avant-garde fashion designer Bernhard Willhelm. Political philosopher Giorgio Agamben and art historian Terry Smith's theorizations on the contemporary are examined alongside fashion theorist Ulrich Lehmann's reading of Walter Benjamin's concepts of Tigersprung (a tiger's leap) and Jetztzeit (now-time). Heterogeneity, disjunction and non-linear historical time are concepts manifested through sartorial remembrance in contemporary fashion. To illustrate these ideas, this study focuses on Willhelm's articulation of contemporaneity through the quotation of folk dress, cross-cultural borrowing and decontextualization. In so doing, a concept of history can be derived, whereby multiple narratives exist simultaneously, merging past, present and future.

Introduction

This article examines different perspectives of the contemporary in relation to the work of German avant-garde fashion designer Bernhard Willhelm and his business partner Jutta Kraus. My inquiry expands upon the existing scholarship of fashion in modernity and the philosophy of fashion, while using a multi-methodological framework to bridge the disciplines of fashion, art and visual culture. My understanding of contemporaneity and the contemporary can be aligned with that of political philosopher Giorgio Agamben and art historian Terry Smith. In his essay, 'What is the Contemporary?', Agamben (2009: 40) states that a 'disconnection and out-of-jointness' permeates the disposition of being contemporary. This intersects with Smith's (2009: 1) theorization of contemporaneity as 'multiplicitous in character but singular in its demands'. I argue that Ulrich Lehmann's concept that '*quotation is sartorial remembrance*' (2000: 164; author's emphasis) and his theorization of Benjamin's concepts of history: *Tigersprung* (a tiger's leap into the past), and *Jetztzeit* (now-time) run parallel to Agamben and Smith's postulations on the contemporary. This article argues that these interconnected ideas are manifest in Willhelm's methodology whereby contemporaneity is articulated through his sartorial remembrance of folk dress traditions, cross-cultural borrowing and decontextualization. If, as Lehmann suggests, sartorial fashion is the ultimate expression of the contemporary moment, then Willhelm's practice is an exemplary model of contemporary fashion.

Bernhard Willhelm in context

At first glance, Willhelm's oeuvre is difficult to classify. Menswear and womenswear collections recall streetwear gone awry and borrow from a broad cultural and social spectrum. Quoting both historical and contemporary moments, themes of past collections have included the Black Forest (A/W 1999–2000), Japanese construction workers (S/S 2005), urban black culture (A/W 2005–06), and the Iraq War (S/S 2004). Unlike his avant-garde compatriots, Willhelm's fashions more finely toe the line between decorum and taste and aim to disrupt the visual codes of both conventional fashion and avant-garde fashion. Using humour, Willhelm self-consciously absconds from the decidedly more serious avant-gardism that has come to represent Belgian fashion, explaining:

The Belgians were the exact opposite of me: unassuming and discreet. In the world of fashion there has to be the occasional indiscretion. With a lot of Belgian designers, you can look at the first or the twentieth collection and you can't tell the difference. They're still clinging to the same idea. I was always thinking to myself 'Oh, come on, lighten up!'

(Willhelm quoted in Politi 2010: 120)

This idea of seriousness could be extended to avant-garde designers in general. As a case in point, a recent exhibition at Frankfurt's Museum Angewandte Kunst entitled *Outer Dark. Continuing after Fashion* (2013) focuses on antifashion, specifically that of designers such as Ann Demeulemeester, Martin Margiela, Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto, and Alexander McQueen, all of whose fashions are considered avant-garde and which are aesthetically dark (i.e., black) and sombre in concept. Willhelm offers an alternative to the 'dark' and serious avant-gardism, and as a result, diversifies fashion and reintroduces Dadaist and Surrealist impulses to generate humour and absurdity in cultural production.

Willhelm's Spring/Summer 2007 menswear and womenswear collections feature contemporary silhouettes hybridized with Bavarian and Tyrolean folk dress: *dirndl* dresses, *lederhosen* (leather shorts), crossbar braces or suspenders, blouses, *loferl* (traditional Bavarian 'legwarmer' socks), stockings with garters and felt hats (Figure 1). These so-called traditional garments have been committed to collective memory, idealized throughout popular culture along with the alpine region from which they originate. Films such as the American musical *The Sound of Music* (Wise 1965) and its nostalgic folk-styled song 'Edelweiss', come to mind, while stereotypes such as the yodeller and alphorn player in television advertisements for the Swiss cough-drop brand Ricola proliferate. Both examples elucidate pastoral calm in idyllic rural life. The iconic image for *The Sound of Music* shows Maria, played by British actress Julie Andrews, arms outstretched and frolicking in a field against the backdrop of a mountain range. Similar imagery reappears in Ricola television spots, and while the content of the commercials has varied throughout the years, many of the advertisements from the 1990s feature a yodeller and alphorn player wearing traditional Swiss garments in an alpine meadow. This image is similarly demonstrated in the following quote from the book *Original Tyrolean Costumes*:

In the most happy manner these pictures conjure up the beautiful and serene countryside and the majestic mountains of Austria, the music of the forests and the waterfalls, the gay clangour of the cow bells, memories of deer and chamois stalking, and of the peasant dances and yodeling in which English people take so much delight.

(Franckenstein 1937: n.p.)

Representations such as these only further heighten the collective cultural memory of this mountainous geographic area. Despite this, the Alps are seen as a unified regional identity that supersedes the multiple comprising national identities.

The contemporary: A site for heterogeneity and disjunction

In *What is Contemporary Art?*, Smith (2009: 7) attempts to contain the unwieldy category of contemporary art by identifying three currents: the first embraces globalization and harkens back to mainstream modernism, the second current is attributed to decolonization and the postcolonial



Figure 1: Bernhard Willhelm Spring/Summer 2007 menswear collection. Photo by Shoji Fujii.

turn, while the third loosely groups younger generation artists who reject grand gestures in favour of grassroots approaches, networks and the remixing of the two aforementioned currents. In so doing, Smith demonstrates the plurality of contemporary art and the multiple tendencies that drive current cultural production. He elucidates the state of being contemporary and argues that contemporaneity 'requires responses that are significant in ways quite different from those that inspired the many and various modernisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' (Smith 2009: 1). Thus, contemporaneity can be seen as being outside of modernism, a way of being-in-the-world that is specific to the present. Smith further defines 'contemporary' as 'the immediate, the contemporaneous, the cotemporal [...] [and] the relation between the modern and the contemporary' (2009: 4). This interpretation itself demonstrates the multiplicitous meanings of the contemporary; it speaks of the present time, denotes co-existence and simultaneity, and is periodized as a distinct current that follows modernism, post- or otherwise. If Smith's definition of contemporary as immediate, contemporaneous and cotemporal is applied to cultural production, all that is currently being produced falls broadly within the contemporary. This, however, leads to a qualification of the definition: what range of dates encompasses the contemporary or specifically, contemporary fashion? In the ever-shifting present, the contemporary is a moving window of time. Smith (2009: 245) also suggests that 'contemporary' can be read as 'being perpetually out of time, or at least not subject to historical unfolding' and 'to be suspended in a state after or beyond history, a condition of being always and only in a present that is without either past or future'. In other words, the contemporary is not with time (cotemporal), but rather outside of present time.

It is this exteriority to present time which Agamben examines in 'What is the Contemporary?'. The essay takes Friedrich Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* (1873–76) as a point of departure, wherein the philosopher grapples with his own present. Agamben comments on Nietzsche's sense of 'disconnection and out-of-jointness':

Those who are truly contemporary, who truly belong in their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands. They are thus in this sense irrelevant [*inattuale*]. But precisely because of this condition, precisely through this disconnection and this anachronism, they are more capable than others of perceiving and grasping their own time.

(Agamben 2009: 40)

To be contemporary is to be anachronistic and outside of the present time, where present time is a site of disjunction (Agamben 2009: 41). Similarly, Wilhelm's folk dress fashions are neither historical nor fully in the contemporary moment. Although they are contemporary because they are in current production, they also inhabit a disjunctive space external to a linear concept of history. Wilhelm's

designs are situated in a paradoxical relationship; they are simultaneously anachronisms of the past and present and reflect the multiplicitous nature of time in the contemporary moment.

The sartorial remembrance of traditional alpine and Tyrolean folk dress in Willhelm's fashions serves as an example of the heterogeneous character of contemporaneity. The romanticized Spring/Summer 2007 collections feature authentic-looking, yet doctored floral motifs comprised of edelweiss, gentian and Alpine roses (Figure 2). These appear on a silhouette complete with bumbag, while the same print appears in a trench coat-like jacket. *Lederhosen* are hybridized with a mini skirt in the womenswear collection and *dirndl*n are truncated, while green *lederhosen* are worn with a bright yellow hooded sweatshirt on which a cartoon-like pattern is printed. Although these garments and looks can be labelled as postmodern in their mashup of old and new (McHale 2012), they are more succinctly tied to the idea of the contemporary. While the postmodern was more concerned with refuting grand narratives and attempting to break with modernism, the contemporary addresses the existential nature of being in the contemporary world. The further historicization of the postmodern as a transitional period after modernism in the late 1970s and 1980s confirms its outmodedness. Contemporaneity, then, is a condition separate from modernism(s) of the past, and as Smith suggests, sits both outside of present time and outside of history. It is, as Agamben states:

a singular relationship with one's own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it is *that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism*. Those who coincide too well with the epoch, those who are perfectly tied to it in every respect, are not contemporaries, precisely because they do not manage to see it; they are not able to firmly hold their gaze on it.

(Agamben 2009: 41, author's emphasis)

Therein lies a duality within Willhelm's longing and nostalgia for times past: he and his fashions are contemporary because they are concurrently in the contemporary moment and removed from it.

The very essence of the disjunctive present and time is found in fashion. According to Agamben:

being in fashion, like contemporariness, entails a certain 'ease,' a certain quality of being out-of-phase or out-of-date, in which one's relevance includes within itself a small part of what lies outside of itself, a shade of *démodé*, of being out of fashion.

(Agamben 2009: 49)

Whether it is the heterogeneity of styles or the plurality in its global forms (Smith 2009), Willhelm's designs, with their multitude of influences from across cultures and historical periods, cannot be



Figure 2: Lookbook image from Bernhard Willhelm Spring/Summer 2007 womenswear collection; 'Tyrolean lederhosen'. Photo by Freudenthal/Verhagen.

pinned down to any one style or period; they are not 'in fashion' in the sense of being on trend. They are simultaneously historical with their quotations of folk dress and contemporary in their silhouettes. As a result of this confluence, they rather seem to sit out of time, or are out of fashion rather than 'in fashion'. It cannot be claimed that all contemporary fashions have these qualities; Willhelm's clothes do not have a defined aesthetic in the way that more commercial ready-to-wear designers such as Ralph Lauren or Giorgio Armani can be associated with Americana or minimalism, respectively. Furthermore, Willhelm's fashions do not conform to preconceived notions of dress; fashion editors and writers have described his clothes as unwearable (Pfeiffer 2011). If one is to understand fashion as a social phenomenon, the unwearability of Willhelm's clothes prevents them from having any prospect of achieving status as fashion. The heterogeneity of his clothes – their lack of adherence to a style, the doubt in their existence as fashion objects – obfuscates any clear path to categorization. Willhelm's sartorial remembrance reflects on contemporaneity, a state of simultaneity where heterogeneous styles, histories, and approaches constitute a present unfettered by Benjamin's concept of universal history or homogenous, empty time. As a case in point, the Spring/Summer 2007 menswear collection melds folk dress traditions with multifarious looks including the psychedelic 1960s or its reinterpretation through the aesthetics of acid house, the 1980's music genre; a long-haired male model simultaneously sports *lederhosen*, round sunglasses with an iconic Smiley face motif, and Smiley face paint (Figure 3). While these elements are individually familiar, they are confounding when amalgamated. Willhelm's designs make sense of our contemporary moment fractured by heterogeneity; they are contemporary objects against time (con-temporary) or out-of-time. In this way, history is no longer tied to a past, but rather operates in the perpetual present. Due to constant regeneration and renewal, history and by extension, fashion, consists of the past, present and future, the distinction between which Evans (2003: 13) contends has 'almost imploded'. As such, this collapse of time disrupts a sequential understanding of historical narrative.

A tiger's leap into the past

Benjamin's use of the German term *Tigersprung* (tiger's leap) describes how fashion jumps from the contemporary moment into the past, and in doing so, elucidates fashion's disjointed relationship with historical and linear time. Due to an endless 'method of quotation' (Lehmann 1999: 301), the logic of fashion is to evoke the past within the present as new and up-to-date. Willhelm's use of folk dress is a leap into a past that itself is a construction of identity formed through history. Folk dress traditions, particularly in Western Europe, have come to serve as the signification of rural culture and peasantry through an idealization of prior historical and cultural moments. With European nation states forming in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the subsequent need for national identity, folk dress – among other forms of cultural production such as music and folklore – became



Figure 3: Bernhard Willhelm Spring/Summer 2007 menswear collection look complete with loferl, lederhosen, 'Smiley' face paint and sunglasses. Photo by Dino Dinco.

a product of, to use Eric Hobsbawm's words, the 'invention of tradition' (1992). While it can be argued that certain folk dress traditions are more developed than others (Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland are examples), these traditions experienced further revival through nineteenth-century romanticism (Welters 2005: 97, 99).

Through the quotation of folk dress, Willhelm invents his own tradition that is at once old and new, and writes a sartorial history both subjectively as a German national born in Ulm and as a fashion designer. This notion of rewriting is taken from Lehmann (2000: 232), who sees fashion's rewriting of its history as a way of understanding through looking back. Specifically, he writes the narrative of the contemporary, which itself is constantly being revised and rewritten in the continuous present. Willhelm's quotation of a storied, nostalgic past, however, is not simply a superficial replication of folk dress in the way that mainstream designers, since the 1970s, have borrowed traditional dress for 'folklore look' collections. For example, Willhelm has used the authentic Tyrolean fulled woollen fabric known as *loden* in some of his early designs, paired with contemporary silhouettes; nothing is a complete copy. He takes on the notion of tradition and goes beyond mere quotation, transforming folk dress into a contemporary fashion object embedded with historical meaning and subjectivity. As Lehmann contends:

irreverence toward the past is best achieved by quotation as imitation rather than by mimicry, since the constant change in fashion cannot be satisfied simply by a historically accurate copy. The clothes have to 'invent' the old, not mimic it.

(Lehmann 2000: 165)

Furthermore, Willhelm develops nostalgia and patriotic feeling through his appreciation of Alpine and Tyrolean folk dress traditions. Although his birthplace of Ulm is situated in Baden-Württemberg, it in fact sits on the border with Bavaria; he identifies as being both Swabian and more generally as Bavarian. The further conflation of the Tyrol and Willhelm's German-ness is a reflection of the Bavarian region that in part comprises the Tyrol. Willhelm's use of humour plays a role counterpoint to stereotypes of the German citizen as austere and stoic, and the British view of a Germany which favours, as an article in *The Guardian* states, 'black forest gateau, punctuality and efficiency' (Osborne and Connolly 2012). Willhelm's Germany is droll and flamboyant. In a promotional poster for his Autumn/Winter 2007–2008 menswear collection, he is dressed in what appears to be traditional Bavarian folk dress and poses with a giant *papier-mâché* bratwurst (Figure 4). The same bratwurst even had its own seat at the runway presentation. In the Spring/Summer 2009 womenswear collection, a model walked down the runway in an outfit that included a necklace fashioned out of clay *wurst* (Figure 5). Other models strut wearing pretzel-inspired pendants and sandals, the latter being a collaboration with Spanish footwear brand, Camper. Such displays of national pride elicit a



Figure 4: Bernhard Willhelm poses with a papier-mâché bratwurst for Autumn/Winter 2007–2008 menswear collection promotional material. Photo by Taiyo Onorato and Nico Krebs.



Figure 5: Bernhard Willhelm Spring/Summer 2009 womenswear runway model wearing a clay wurst necklace. Photo by Shoji Fujii.

nostalgic cultural nationalism rife with silliness and eccentricity rather than a 'negative nationalism' (Saul 2005) associated with racism and discrimination. Through the tiger's leap, Willhelm addresses cultural heritage that is specifically his, and forms, 'a new concept of history, a political ideal, and an aesthetic credo' (Lehmann 2000: xvii). Through his plays on Bavarian culture, Willhelm's brand of alternative German-ness simultaneously hearkens back to tradition and situates itself in the present of now-time.

Jetztzeit/now-time

Lehmann's (2000) work in *Tigersprung* excavates Benjamin's theorization of the tiger's leap in conjunction with the concept of *Jetztzeit* or 'now-time'. For Benjamin, historicism, as differentiated from history, is full of homogenous, empty time, whereas 'History is the subject of a construction whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled-full by now-time [*Jetztzeit*]' (Benjamin quoted in Lehmann 2000: 37). In other words, according to Lehmann:

the evaluation of history must be concerned with activating the past by injecting the present into it. Periods can be extracted from the false and positivist historical continuum and charged with 'now-time,' filled with meaning and revolutionary potential for contemporary (cultural) expression.

(Lehmann 1999: 298)

From Benjamin's assessment that history is discontinuous, it follows that current cultural production takes on this mindset. The contemporary moment's cross-cultural exchange is one such indication of now-time that disrupts the continuum of history. Cross-cultural borrowing facilitates taste for the new and up-to-date, the novel and the exotic. A dissection of a video for Willhelm's Spring/Summer 2007 womenswear collection illustrates how several fragments of history combine to comprise now-time. The soundtrack to the video originates from the opening theme song to the 1970s anime series *Arupusu No Sh jo Haiji* (*Heidi: A Girl of the Alps*), which itself is derived from the Swiss novel *Heidi* (1880) by Johanna Spyri. In turn, German scholar Peter Büttner has suggested that *Heidi* may have been borrowed or plagiarized from a German book written by Hermann Adam von Kamp in 1830 (AFP 2010). The anime has been translated into numerous languages including Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian and Arabic due to its continued worldwide popularity for more than thirty years after its initial airing. Willhelm's video features a few of these translations that, for the listener, might meld together into one theme song. The video manages to amalgamate these widespread points of cultural reference – from Western Europe to East Asia to the Middle East – rather seamlessly, where one interpretation of the *Heidi* theme song melds into another. The viewer's fills in the incongruencies,

for Willhelm's designs are neither exact copies of traditional folk dress, nor is the soundtrack comprised of authentic recordings of Alpine yodelling. This exercise of tracing the point of origin for Willhelm's quotation of the alpine through folk dress and music demonstrates the steady pace at which globalism in cultural production has been growing. In this case, the original film has been dubbed over several times and exists in a discourse of continual re-telling. Thus, the story of Heidi, or Adelaide, as it is known in its German incarnation, comes full circle through the filter of the global turn: from von Kamp's German novel, to Swiss literary heroine Heidi, to Japanese anime series, and finally to Willhelm's Tyrolean-folk-dress-inflected fashion. Here, the Alpine is conflated with Tyrolean, Austrian, German, Northern Italian and Swiss customs and identities. This process of hybridization is echoed in Willhelm's quote:

I think a mix of all cultures is very important for the 21st century [...] I don't want to be in this group where I only talk German. I tend to be lazy though, so I have to force myself to mix. But I think everybody has to.

(Willhelm quoted in Kowalewski 2008)

Seen through the lens of Edward Said (1978), postcolonialism in visual culture is often spoken of in terms of western hegemonic forces appropriating the exotic Other. This process raises a curious dichotomy in the example of the anime version of *Heidi*, whereby Japanese borrowing from dominant western culture is viewed more positively as appreciation rather than negatively inflected appropriation. Yet, appreciation and appropriation run parallel in fashion, for rarely do designers critically address borrowing from other cultures. Appropriation by western designers is only questioned when controversial situations arise as was the case with Dolce & Gabbana's Spring/Summer 2013 collection which was based on blackamoor imagery. In the runway presentation, models sported earrings and garments with black mammy faces, causing reactions of condemnation from the press. Investigating this dichotomy suggests there is an intellectual threshold within the borrowing process, dividing acts that constitute borrowing from those that amount to cultural insensitivity, or outright racism. Willhelm's cross-cultural borrowing invokes the ideas of multiculturalism, a type of neutral cultural globalism, free from the economic and political ramifications of globalization, that is, the reins of global capital and stigma of historical and colonial exploits. Instead, his use of other cultures' sartorial traditions is utopian, and a move toward cultural diversity rather than uniformity. In his collections, Willhelm borrows from the traditions of African, Japanese and Central Asian dress to combine a multitude of cultures into a single silhouette. With this positive cultural borrowing it is difficult to parse out the subtleties between appreciation and appropriation as Willhelm quotes indiscriminately. This is not to say that he does so without thought, but that he sees all cultures' traditions as ripe for the taking.

One of the themes that Willhelm returns to is a Hollywoodized, mass culture or kitsch American culture. Promotional images taken from the Autumn/Winter 2005–2006 menswear lookbook are styled to elicit activity in a drug den. Piles of what one can only assume to be cocaine or some other illegal drug are parted to reveal the season's looks, modelled exclusively by black men. In another image, a bodiless hand points a revolver over a mound of cocaine (Figure 6). How can these be interpreted? Are Willhelm's designs and their styling an appreciation of gangster rap as a culture, or a stereotype of young black Americans? In addition, how are the clothes to be read, as they appear to be incongruous confections of 'tribal' Africanism with urban streetwear? Here, the African and urban black experience converge and indicate a larger issue of misuse of the identifier 'African-American'. While frequently used for the sake of political correctness, the term is often mistakenly construed to represent all black Americans. As a result, 'African-American' universalizes rather than acknowledges difference within the black population; geographical diversity is not represented. In the words of ModeMuseum director, Kaat Debo (2007), Willhelm has never gone the 'easy route of politically correct thinking', and thus challenges those very assumptions that are held to be morally right or respectable. He is a self-proclaimed jester or clown who is free to do and say whatever he wants; he poses the question 'how far can you take it?' (Willhelm quoted in Harms 2007: n.p.). It seems Willhelm's mixing of cultures is intended to be fun and lighthearted. However it is unclear if such instances of cultural hybridization are missteps or intended as they appear, for sartorial quotation undergoes a process of decontextualization in contemporary fashion.

Decontextualization and fashion

Decontextualizing tendencies in fashion can be compared to the wider isolation of images from their original context in contemporary visual culture. Image hosting and sharing websites such as Imgur (pronounced 'image-er'), Pinterest and Tumblr recast images from the historical and recent past to interpret the contemporary moment. Such images are subsequently quoted and re-quoted, and proliferate through social media. In this way, the Internet and fashion can be viewed as two of the most defining entities of contemporaneity; both feed upon themselves, rely on speed, images and the constant re-cycling of trends. Like fashion, the Internet is a model for now-time, and a site which demonstrates Benjamin's (1940) theory of non-linear history. In the way that the Internet allows for the endless quotation, borrowing and sharing of images severed from their original meaning and intent, fashion's sartorial remembrance (a form of imaging itself) similarly suffers from contextual forgetfulness. Due to the ahistorical nature of fashion, cultural borrowing becomes an arbitrary practice where neither logic nor political correctness is necessary or heeded. Furthermore, as Lehmann (2010: 31) points out, authenticity is both impossible and undesirable in fashion, as it needs to remain first and foremost an indication of the present. As such, history – itself a cultural construction – is diluted or



Figure 6: Lookbook image from Bernhard Willhelm's Autumn/Winter 2005–2006 menswear collection. Photo by Freundenthal/Verhagen.

removed from successive quotations of certain cultural artefacts, garments and traditions. Cultural borrowing is the act of manufacturing newness, rather than adhering to history. Although styles may not be truly new, they are to be seen as new each time they resurface; styles are also seen to be new through the interpretation of the designer. In this way, Willhelm recalls cultural traditions and history through his subjective lens. Just as fashion's rewriting of history is a means of understanding through looking back, his rewriting of global cultures through sartorial remembrance is a process of making and making sense of now-time itself. Thus, Willhelm's sartorial remembrance is multi-layered and a manifestation of the global turn's plural and fragmented histories.

Conclusion

By examining contemporaneity, Benjamin's tiger's leap and now-time, each instance of sartorial remembrance can be understood as a fragmented interpretation of time. Fashion deviates from any universal concept of time, and thus serves as an unreliable record of the historical past. Perhaps, however, a concept of history is not so simple, for in contemporaneity, history is heterogeneous and requires not one narrative, but many. Rather than a historiography of cumulative practice, it is useful to see history as a re-mixing of forms. In this way, fashion merges past, present and future. Designers like Willhelm write plural histories and their quotations function outside of time, where fashion, as a representation of history, is non-linear. As Lehmann contends, 'even the present itself is not real; reality lies only within a particular *point* in time. Any temporal extension must be subjective, generated through memory' (2000: 162, author's emphasis).

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