HAUTE COUTURE

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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PARIS

FASHION is contested terrain. What is beautiful or fashionable --- who defines, determines and governs? COUTURE as a dominant representation of fashion used to be directly connected to the state. How many shows per year, persons you have to employ, skills you have to demonstrate; it was all highly regulated for a long time. COUTURE represents ideas of inclusion versus exclusion, in terms of work, economics, status and culture. It is a form of business that flourished as tightly protected and regulated, and now it is a sector that has lost much if its significance in business terms and influence, and it is more an object of prestige for a few of the major fashion houses. It is a massively expensive advertising campaign, yet also represents a crucial crafts sector in France and other European countries. It encompasses tensions between empowerment and exploitation, high and low culture, fast and slow fashion, conspicuous consumption and deconsumption, shared popularity and individual expression, criteria of beauty and use (Korica and Bazin, 2019).

COUTURE has long served as a metaphor for rapid changes, and for superficiality and for the transience of social conventions, but also as an expression of status and formal position (Bauman, 2010), from sumptuary laws to uniforms to the Emperor's new clothes. Gilles Lipovetsky (1983, 1987) has celebrated the democratization of society away from dress control towards individualized identity; Elisabeth Wilson praised the 'pointlessness of fashion' (1985, p. 245), adding that it at times can bring forward what has been marginalized with a revolutionary force: 'Out of the cracks in the pavements of cities grow the weeds that begin to rot the fabric' (ibid., p. 245). And Rene ten Bos (2000) has tried to convince us to see the virtues that come with the *temporariness of the present*, arguing that management studies is really all about fashion.

Recently, a clothing brand called its collection HA~~U~~TE COUTURE: triggering awareness of an evolution from HAUTE COUTURE to HATE CULTURE. The claim was 'the more hate you wear the less you care,' to reappropriate hateful labels such as 'faggot,' 'nerd' or 'wannabe,' and to de-sensitize yourself to ridicule, repression, exclusion and violence. Wear and proclaim derision and discrimination in order to escape their power. But is escape really possible?

Quilting and patchwork/doll-making have served as a model for a reliance on traditional, folk or minority knowledge (Letiche, 2009; Rippin, 2010). COUTURE could well provide a framework for creative arrangements of thoughts, theories or (top) models, wherein elegance and taste intertwine with epistemological, political and ethical concerns. Serres (1997) proposed the image of Arlequino, whose

brilliant coat was made of others' (sometimes rejected) pieces, as the model of thinker, researcher who is third-instructed, whose learning from the others provides a key for personal thinking and wisdom.

The needle and the thread remind us of the rhizomatic nature of organisation (Deleuze et al., 1987), as well as the social complexity of organizing represented as tapestry in writings of Edgar Morin (2005) and others. They evoke craftsmanship set by Richard Sennett (2008) in opposition to the dark sides of industrialisation. In its guise of fast fashion, COUTURE showcases the exploitation of humans and non-humans, while slow fashion and upcycling movements promise a turn towards ecology and sustainability. Yet many reactions remain locked within the framework of the same economic system implicated in the exploitation, and HAUTE COUTURE, with its system of stars and its emphasis on big business of luxury helps us see the Janus-faced identities of consumerism.

The fashion industry itself offers fertile terrain as a focal point of social, economic, environmental and aesthetic considerations. Morton (2013) indicates that the design, sourcing, manufacture, sale and distribution of fashion are embodied in much larger forces extending beyond human comprehension and perception. The production of fashion also offers insights into the freedom of things-in-themselves, Kantian noumena, that challenge (often) groundless dogmas. The metaphors and aesthetics represented through fashion, particularly as embodied in the ideas and perceptions of HAUTE COUTURE, enable third-person objects or noumena into first person encounters and gets us closer to the 'zero-person' aspect of things, meaning their reality apart from any observation or introspection (Harman, 2018; Ortega, 1961).

Paris has long been the city of fashion and luxury clothing, but it has also been a city of violence, hate attacks and outrage. In this conference, we wish to explore beauty and destruction, excess in creativity and in discrimination, the inclusion and exclusion of persons, groups, privileges and rank. In praise of creativity and innovation is also in derision of conformity and the everyday; fashion may celebrate trendiness and exuberance, but it also bans and chastises. The trendy boutiques are zones of privilege and of marginalisation; street fashion tries to reverse the priorities; drab ugliness threatens all of us.

We welcome paper proposals on:

- Notions of the 'fashionable' organization
- Fashion as a form of cultural production
- Theory, fads and fashion
- Organization in the fashion industry
- Inclusion and exclusion in fashions and trends
- Management fashion and guruism
- Aesthetics of organization
- Denialism: the eternal present
- Fashion(ability) avec conscience
- Consuming life and life consuming
- The sewing of organisation
- Quilting, patchwork and Harlequin
- Naked life, coated life, costumed life
- Qualitative research as *haute couture*
- The hatred of the one you are sewn with
- The 'fabric' of organisation
- Cancellations and appropriation in fashion

- Poetics of organization
- *Inhabitant* or *exhabitant* of couture
- Correspondence: Does design needs a designer?
- Fashionability of novelty
- Beauty and destruction
- Any other papers relating broadly to themes of organization, fashion, and theory

Open stream and workshops

SCOS 2023 will also have an open stream, allowing for the presentation of papers of more general interest to the SCOS community. In addition we are open to suggestions for workshops or similar events in line with the proposed theme. Outlines of workshops should be the same length as a paper abstract and should give an indication of the resources needed, the number of participants, the time required, the approach to be taken and the session's objectives. Please identify "open stream" or "workshop" on your abstract, as appropriate.

Submission of abstracts

Abstracts of no more than 500 words, in pdf-format, should be submitted as email attachments by **Monday 9 January** to: **SCOS2023Paris@aup.edu**. You may also direct any queries to this address. The main organizers are Robert Earhart, Jean-Luc Moriceau, Natalya Shiryaeva, and Albert Cath, and the conference will be hosted by the American University of Paris, in the 7eme arrondissement in Paris, France.

Conference website

The conference website with more information about the conference, the conference fee, lodging and transportation options, and the initial conference schedule will be accessible through the American University of Paris website starting on 15 October 2022.

There may be bursaries available for PhD students and early researchers. If you wish to apply, in addition to the abstract, please submit a short summary of why you think you should be awarded the bursary and why you want to come to SCOS.

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