

The tradition of fashion epistemology—how we know, recognize and remember fashion—plays out particularly well in the relatively de-contextualized space of the exhibition. Removed from the frantic tempo of the global garment industry and the codified commercial stages of Paris, Milan and New York's fashion weeks, fashion is able to re-adjust its gaze and arrive back at itself, as well as its many whimsical, amnesic detours through history. Fashion eschews and distorts time, and this manifests particularly clearly through its own exhibitionary form—the runway.

Clashing these two opposing modalities of cultural display, this fall Switzerland's Kunsthalle Bern will present "Passageways," an ambitious survey investigating how designers have historically used the runway to "produce" fashion with and beyond clothing. Curated by Australian curator and cultural impresario Matthew Linde, the exhibition is the outcome of a longer exploration into fashion's own dramaturgy, of which the runway is the most fundamental element. True to the signature style that Linde first developed through his mobile curatorial platform and store Centre for Style (2013–2016), and most recently with his 2017 exhibitionary musing into millennial fashion, "The Overworked Body" (held at Ludlow 38 and Mathew Gallery, New York), "Passageways" will unfold as an impressionistic and transgressive proposition on how to write fashion history with its own asynchronous temporality in mind.

In many ways, the show continues where "The Overworked Body" left off—not in any historical linearity, but through its curatorial methodologies. Visitors of that exhibition will recall the interspersing of screens playing bootleg videos of 2000s fashion shows within the clothing-heavy exhibition, and it is this resource that Linde now sets out to privilege over its material referent, the garment. An unauthorized and mostly low-res visual document, bootleg runway videos have proven themselves as a highly valuable resource in the study of recent fashion. The bootleg show video appears with the rise of portable camcorders in the 1980s onwards, some of which circulates online amongst peers. Just like *Vogue Runway* sits as the most authoritative accidental archive of fashion show imagery, it is on YouTube where much of fashion's multimedia archive must be found today.

Featuring only a sparse selection of garments—including, notably, replicas of pieces by couturiers and designers such as Paul Poiret and Elsa Schiaparelli—the exhibition will consist of videos played all over following no particular linear order, evoking Walter Benjamin's "dialectical image" of history, in which the past happens alongside the present.

Caught somewhere between the dramaturgies of performance art, music parades, and spaces of consumption, the fashion show could be understood as one of the prime image techniques of modernity, pairing spectacle and speed with commerce. While present-day presentations serve much of the same function as they did in centuries ago, some designers have pushed to expand the possibilities and meaning of the runway, engaging it as a medium in itself. For example, the exhibition will include Cyprian-British designer Hussein Chalayan, who in the 1990s used the runway to clash dress with forms of installation and performance art. There's Walter van Beirendonck's "Wild and Lethal Trash" (1993–1999), a collection exploring carnivalesque masculinities through line-dancing techno-cowboy clothes, and which experimented with nascent web broadcasting technologies. And finally, there's Martin Margiela, who for his Fall '98 presentation abandoned the show logic altogether, presenting his garments on uncanny dolls produced by stylist friend Jane How. These examples prove how the fashion show can inform and even augment the very process of garment design, while challenging how we might remember these histories in a retrospective museological context. **K**

PASSAGEWAYS: On Fashion's Runway

words by Jeppe Ugelvig

CURATED BY MATTHEW LINDE, "PASSAGEWAYS: ON FASHION RUNWAY" WILL BE ON VIEW AT KUNSTHALLE BERN THROUGH 2 DECEMBER 2018. IMAGE COURTESY OF KUNSTHALLE BERN AND WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK