Conscious Collaboration: The Contemporary Dialogue between Fashion and Architecture

by

Gavriella Wolf
Class of 2015

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Departmental Honors in Art History
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**Acknowledgments**

THANK YOU…

- To my thesis advisor Joseph Siry, whose help I will be forever grateful for. Thank you for taking a chance on my unconventional thesis topic and always offering exactly the advice I needed throughout this writing process. I honestly don’t know if I would have been able to have such an engaging and enjoyable time writing this year without the inspiration and openness I received from you.

- To Nadja Aksamija for enabling and encouraging my work within the art history department, and for reading my thesis. To Katherine Kuenzli for being my first art history professor since I transferred to Wesleyan my sophomore year, and showing me just how wonderful the art history department is here. Further, for meeting with me, despite your demanding schedule, to offer advice and insight. To Susanne Javorski for helping me with my research on many occasions and for showing me the wonders of the Wesleyan University library system.

- To my parents, for encouraging me to take a chance and go to Wesleyan, and for providing me with so much love and support that I have felt competent enough to take on the world and also a thesis. Thank you to my siblings, grandmothers, and extended family members for always making me feel incredibly loved and lucky.

- To my wonderful friends and housemates at Wesleyan. Thank you for keeping me sane, smiling, and sometimes thinking about things other than my thesis. Thank you Jake for listening to my ramblings about fashion designers and architects you may or may not be interested in, and for literally and metaphorically holding my hand this year.
Introduction

Fashion and architecture are two design practices that today cross paths, overlap, work in dialogue, and are occasionally conflated as creative strategies dependent on branding, presentation, and emergent technologies. After being initially drawn to striking visual comparisons between garment and building, I began to investigate the contemporary relationship between fashion and architecture, and how the relationship between the two media has become more fluid due to the work of certain designers in each field. There has been an acceleration over the past twenty years of architects moving into fashion design, as well as fashion designers citing architecture as an important influence on their work. Fashion today bears the stamp of architectural techniques and inspiration, while architects themselves have gained increasing visibility in the fashion industry. My thesis is asking why this happened, and what has allowed for this dramatic shift from a century ago, where the two practices existed mainly apart from one another. Initial comparisons of the two evoke the metaphor of a skin, protective in its surface while presenting aesthetic qualities through its primary material. Using tectonic strategies and new technologies, architects and fashion designers alike are bringing innovative thought to their understanding of skin. Relating to the surface, both types of artists today must mitigate the tension between interior and exterior, a cover or a reveal. I am working to examine the contemporary dialogue between fashion and architecture, and how the artists working between these two practices face similar challenges and use similar technologies to move forward and succeed in their respective industries. Earlier interactions between fashion and architecture going back to the era of Art Nouveau
were more focused on aesthetic similarities than actual collaborations between industries. But since the early 1980’s, there has been a new level of interaction between these fields that has become a subfield in itself relative to ongoing practices in both media. This pattern of activity over the last twenty to thirty years is the central focus of my studies, gaining momentum since the advent of digitization.

First I will be examining a few key architects who have designed fashion of their own, independently and in collaboration with major lines. Certain top architects of the industry have recently experimented with crossing over into the fashion world. Zaha Hadid is a tremendously successful architect, and her reputation for wearing daring fashions at public appearances and supporting the work of her favorite designers has lead to her designing fashion of her own. She is preceded in this practice by Frank Gehry, whose career raises the controversial point of glamorous and ubiquitous architects becoming “starchitects,” who frequently go beyond the boundaries of designing architecture. This reveals Hadid and Gehry to be extremely conscious of their own brands as well as daring in their design experimentation outside of traditional architecture. Other architects have collaborated on clothing lines, and partnered with fashion designers on a number of projects as well. Contemporary architect Rem Koolhaas has a celebrated relationship with fashion designer Miuccia Prada, and Koolhaas’ nephew, Rem D. Koolhaas, has a shoe line of his own, which often nods toward architectural work as inspiration. Though the two practices have their obvious differences, each fears the existence of their own ephemeral nature in a way that the outside practices would not assume, and these artists strive to remain relevant amongst passing fads and styles. Therefore, both the
fashion designer and the architect strives to prove their worth and make their mark with a signature style that is easily identified.

Though the relationship between the two industries is reciprocal, it is not exactly equal on both ends. The extension of architecture into fashion is on behalf of certain architects who take a keen interest in fashion design, and while fashion designers nod back in the direction of architecture, they cite it differently. The fashion industry, which has significantly expanded in the last thirty years, welcomes artistic work that appears more spectacular than ready-to-wear, and certain fashion designers of this tradition reference architecture in their garments in more ways than one. Japanese designer Issey Miyake uses techniques found similarly in architecture to introduce unique form into a flat surface, and calls upon recent technologies to do so. British and Turkish Cypriot designer Hussein Chalayan similarly relies on technological fabrication, but does so often to make clothing that more closely resembles architectural structures than wearable garments. Miyake and Chalayan, as well as numerous other designers, have introduced into their practices unconventional media more commonly seen in architecture than clothing, seeking visual comparisons as well as shared strategies of design and construction. The two practices are often viewed as entirely separate, and yet they have a rich history of overlapping in the art world. In the turn of the twentieth century, architects and visual artists positioned themselves in opposition to fashion, but in holding such unwavering opinions about fashion, many produced fashions of their own to counter the dominant styles. I found this staunch opposition to fashion coming from famous architects of this period to be
intriguing and strange, as fashion occupied a space removed from the arts in this historical moment.

Beginning in the 1980’s and accelerating in the 1990’s and early 2000’s, an academic focus shifted to recognize the historical and more recent crossovers between fashion and architecture. Books grounded in architectural theory and criticism trace a historical relationship between the two practices that was previously ignored, which have largely aided my study. At the same time as these texts’ publication, museum exhibitions began cataloguing the work of certain fashion designers as relevant to the art world. “Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design,” an exhibition in 1982 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, shed light on formal analogies to be drawn between clothing and buildings. This exhibition broke ground for future museum exhibitions focusing on fashion, and in a couple of rare examples focusing on both fashion and architecture in one platform. Since then, many texts have examined certain crossovers between the fashion and architectural industries, and a few choice museum shows have placed architecture and garment side by side, making room for aesthetically intriguing formal comparison.

An initial text that found early modern roots in the relationship between architecture and fashion is Deborah Fausch’s 1994 book *Architecture, in Fashion.* Fausch describes how architecture transitioned from evading associations with fashion, due to negative connotations of the latter’s transitory nature, and moved toward being discussed as a similar practice. The two art forms both have ties to as well as differences from the traditional fine arts, and more recently have increasingly been involved in museum and artistic display. Because of this relationship, it is
impossible to have a discussion of contemporary art without describing applied media like fashion and architecture. The text functions like a reader of fashion theory, but goes beyond to assert that theoretical discussion of both fashion and architecture are thoroughly intertwined. Fausch includes essays by prominent historians on the two subjects of fashion and architecture, including Mary MacLeod and Mark Wigley, and discusses the work of both modern and contemporary architects and fashion designers.

Published in 1995, Mark Wigley’s *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* was revolutionary in that it opened a mainly unseen dialogue between the historical practices of fashion and architecture. Wigley describes the shift in modern architecture at the end of the nineteenth century, towards a more fashionable domain. He uses the metaphor of white paint, and anything that might coat a wall, as clothing or ornamental dressing that must be expertly arranged and designed.¹ Focusing intently on architects of the turn of the twentieth century, Wigley draws parallels between the work of different artists who had likely never met, like Henry van de Velde, Peter Behrens, Adolf Loos, and Le Corbusier, proposing that there was a mutual awareness of certain ideas linked to design, fashion, and the applied arts. Wigley’s text shows insight into why architects have evaded being equated with fashion designers, speculating that they all fear that their work will be discarded the way clothing lines seemingly come and go in the public sphere. These lingering ideas are important when considering the work of contemporary front-runners whose work exemplifies the growing relationship between fashion and architecture, and understanding how this emergent relationship
is entirely related to the changing times. His main theme of white clothing, both revealing and concealing the body, provides for an interesting comparison with white walls often used in modern architecture. Wigley discusses the key concept of whitewashing to promote an illusion of cleanliness. This can be seen in interior space and in clothing; Wigley calls upon the idea that one could put on a clean white shirt instead of bathing, a thought comparable to painting everything white. Drawing stark comparisons, Wigley says, “Modern dress is, by definition, modern architecture.” He describes how artists in the turn of the twentieth century, including van de Velde, Behrens and Loos, both applied their architectural theories to dress design and related their opinions on dress reform to architecture. On the other hand, he uses a language of superficiality associated with fashion. This reveals a major difference between the two practices evident a century ago as well as contemporarily, i.e., the fact that the architect fears their work being ruled obsolete, just as the contemporary fashion designer may know this to be an inevitability.

Central to my research were two texts on fashion by Bradley Quinn, *Techno Fashion* (2002), and *The Fashion of Architecture* (2003). Both of these texts argue for a public recognition of the myriad parallels and overlaps between architecture and fashion. *The Fashion of Architecture* uses a number of fashion designers and architects as examples of artists who have looked at clothing and architecture as a similar means to specific encounters with the body, the urban environment, and a larger artistic context. Quinn cites the work of contemporary architects, fashion designers, and installation artists that work with similar strategies of addressing common themes of an urban environment, body, and shelter. Quinn also draws
familiar formal comparisons between fashion and architecture as art objects. He discusses the body and how it relates to architecture and fashion’s abilities to both protect and reveal, selectively. In this text, he does not examine the technical practices of these artists regarding fabrication and construction, so much as the forms of their completed works. He focuses on sheltering the body as fashion designers and architects alike have considered structure similarly. Quinn claims: “Like architects, conceptual fashion designers experience space as one act.” He also examines artistic examples of photographers and installation artists that find work to mitigate these discrepancies between clothing and building.

Additionally, Quinn’s prior text, *Techno Fashion* (2002), examines the fashion industry only, but reaches toward architecture as he explores the work of numerous fashion designers using technological practices reminiscent of those used in architecture. He examines the practices of many fashion designers, including Miyake and Chalayan, who use innovative techniques requiring newly available technology. Another specialty text, Ruth Hanisch’s book, *Absolutely Fabulous! Architecture for Fashion* (2006), examines the specific interaction between the two industries of architecture designed for fashion houses. The text uses high quality images of examples of flagship store and boutique architecture, which can be examined as unique projects where architects collaborated with fashion designers to convey the aesthetic of the latter’s brand through their own architecture. Hanisch’s recognition of contemporary architectural styles as well as their relation to the design world at large has allowed me to understand the importance of collaboration when multiple
industries’ work is at stake. Hanisch touches on the broader relationship between architecture and fashion, but mainly looks at this one kind of interaction.

Also substantial for my studies were a number of fashion theory and architecture readers, comprised of significant essays and lectures that revolutionized fashion and architectural ideology both of modern and contemporary periods. Malcolm Barnard’s *Fashion Theory* reader (2007) and Peter McNeil and Giorgio Riello’s *The Fashion History Reader* (2010) both allowed me to set my discussion of fashion and architecture in a broader context of fashion history. Choice essays from each reader led to a better understanding of fashion’s consideration as an art form, and the social contention surrounding the rise of the fashion industry in the twentieth century. Gerda Buxbaum’s *Fashion in Context* (2009) is a collection of essays on contemporary fashion in the context of larger issues of design, industry, technology and the arts. She ties together theoretical issues of fashion with regard to place, culture, consumerism and the like, but her selected lectures place these issues in the real world, treating their contemporary applications in and around the fashion industry. Buxbaum’s recognition of fashion as an interdisciplinary subject captured my attention, providing support for an understanding of its applications within the broader art world as well as its relevance to many issues of our contemporary moment, like developing applications of technology. Select essays distinguish a relationship between fashion and architecture, recognizing their shared strategies.

In the past thirty years, there have been two significant museum exhibitions on the overlapping practices of fashion design and contemporary architecture. It is necessary to recognize the role of the museum in both drawing attention to fashion as
an art form as well as critically examining the two practices of fashion and architecture in a public platform. From the MIT show in 1982 entitled “Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design,” to the 2006 exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, entitled “Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture,” there has been considerable institutional support for these aesthetic comparisons of the two artistic practices, setting their relationship before the public eye. Both shows drew in many people with little knowledge of the relationship between the practices, and focused on many projects by both fashion designers and architects that create unconventional forms looking more like sculptures than anything as utilitarian as a garment or building. There is a certain aesthetic appeal in placing a building and garment next to each other and drawing conclusions about their shared formal qualities. These public exhibitions employ this strategy, and while the aesthetic qualities of such comparisons are entirely relevant, it is also necessary to get beyond the surface of a garment or building and look to the shared conceptual and technical strategies that enabled their creations. To do this has been a struggle for me, as the aesthetically appealing surface comparisons drew me in to the topic in the first place. “Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design,” at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1982 was one of the first public displays to acknowledge fashion as a valued medium among the arts. The exhibition made a cultural space for the tradition of fashion’s display in the museum, which has grown significantly since then. It featured fashion designers whose work echoes architecture in form and thought, including Miyake and other international artists whose designs have been likened to works of art.
“Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture,” at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, in 2006, revived this museum based focus on the relationship between the two industries more than twenty years after M.I.T’s exhibition. In the period between the two shows, comparisons and overlaps of fashion and architecture multiplied, but no major museum focused on these comparisons quite like these two examples. “Skin + Bones” has been largely cited by publications in fashion, architecture, and academic reviews, drawing public attention to the striking similarities of clothing to architecture, as well as to the shared formal issues that both types of designers encounter in their individual work. Additionally, Hodge’s text of the same name accompanies the 2006 exhibit, comparing the practices of architecture and fashion design from 1980 to the present. Along with an overview and beautiful images of the exhibition, Hodge, with the help of Patricia Mears, also includes a series of essays on design projects by fashion designers incorporating architectural practices into their work and architects exploring techniques typically used in the creation of garments. What is helpful about such texts is that they use very contemporary examples, thinking about the future for the two practices as they incorporate technology and strategies of redefining the surface. That being said, the text and exhibition are almost ten years old at this point, and thus the technology discussed has been used more so and with newer developments, rendering a contemporary text somewhat dated. This is a difficulty in writing about a field that is ever changing as the technological boom has proven to do, and with fashion’s frontrunners constantly trying to move forward, following their more recent work has been a challenge.
One difficulty in finding literature for my studies was how recent many of the collaborations I was interested in are. Zaha Hadid’s designs for fashion labels both major and largely unknown have yet to be discussed in any academic forum, and were only subject to minor reviews across websites dedicated to architecture and design at large. On the other hand, designs and clothing lines that make an impact in the fashion world are often discussed in fashion publications as well as art and fashion scholarship. The fact that Hadid’s work in the fashion industry is not widely discussed either indicates that her designs did not impress the industry, or that they had such a limited release that they went largely unnoticed by the fashion world, or simply that not enough time has passed for her work outside of architecture to gain serious academic attention. It is also a possible combination of these factors, but I felt that the range of her experimentation in and around fashion design was entirely worth exploring in my research.

The aforementioned sources are a small selection of the range of titles in my complete bibliography found at the end of the thesis, and were most helpful to my research. Despite the scholarship on this relationship between fashion and architecture, it is a relatively new area of study, with much left to be said and understood. My research delves beyond these texts to understand the enabling strategies and motivations behind this complex relationship. In certain cases, when one can see the building or the garment as autonomous structures, they can mimic one another. This requires a garment viewed as severed from the human form, often presented in exhibition or display as an art object of its own, and viewing a building as a structure without a context. There are subtleties that create this illusion of
similarity between the two; the fabric of a piece of clothing appearing stiff as standing walls, or the surface of a building looking soft and delicate like vulnerable fabric laid out. These illusions rely on a host of technologies that were not available until quite recently, technologies in fashion similar to the digital fabrication tools that architects rely on. It is impossible to look at either practice in the last thirty years without seeing the influence of technology and how it has aided and shaped the work of the artists. Not only does it make existing techniques of fabrication easier and more efficient to accomplish, but technology has also opened up the possibilities of creating that which previously may not have seemed possible. In allowing fashion designers to use architectural media and forms in their garments, manipulating them into something wearable, and allowing architects to make a hard surface appear soft and malleable, technology is bringing the two practices closer to one another.

Overall, I am seeking to answer why fashion has been turning to architecture and architecture to fashion. Do they evoke one another for techniques, design ideas and innovation, or for a larger sense of their public appeal? Ironically, it seems to be that fashion designers are seeking to find a permanence to ground their work, while architects are looking for a sense of currency and marketability in their designs. The historic lack of attention to this relationship contrasts with the accelerated study of it since the start of the 1980’s. One must ask why attention was turned this way in the contemporary moment, when authors began writing about architecture and fashion in terms of one another, and museums put garments and buildings side by side. Wigley, Fausch, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were pioneers in examining and working through this relationship. The fashion world has expanded and grown
tremendously in the past thirty years, opening up to artistic and business-oriented models of exploration. Additionally, different design media that are not always so easily identified with the fine arts have come together to be enjoyed, examined, and appreciated under one roof. Architecture, interiors, fashion, and similar realms of design came from different places and are contemporarily treated as artistic practices aimed for use in the mainstream. In the 1980’s and 1990’s, different designers from haute couture to sportswear were fusing ideas of architecture, fashion and interior design, often playing with the traditional boundaries between these practices using emergent technologies.4

This thesis examines the separate activity of the contemporary architecture and fashion industries by focusing on certain key figures in each field that work with the other. As I have found, though there is a great deal of collaboration between the two industries, their relationship is not so simply reducible to parallel practices. That which is occurring in the fashion industry’s engagement with architecture is not mirrored in the activity of architects. Architects who are exploring fashion are literally designing fashions of their own, something that could not occur the other way around. I am gathering the fashion design and related work of key architects, as well as the architectural work of key fashion designers, and placing it together under a magnifying glass. The architects to be examined have numerous projects that can be labeled as experimental fashions; Zaha Hadid has often collaborated with fashion labels and designers, but she has not sent an independent collection down the runway, nor does she publically plan to. The fashion designers whose work I explore are often labeled experimental and avant-garde, but they also seek wearability and cultural
accessibility in their designs, despite their frequent comparisons to sculpture and art objects.

One key theme I have returned to repeatedly is the branding and self-presentation of these designers. Despite the desire of many to protect a kind of artistic integrity, each figure must inevitably keep their brand afloat and moving forward, and to do this, each designer plays a dual role as both artist and businessman. Though marketing is a recurrent theme in fashion, the more “avant-garde” a designer is labeled, the more often they are excused from such discussions of branding. I find that in seeking to understand an artist’s motivations, it is not productive to assume that more visually artistic looking designs come from a designer uninterested in money or branding. Each figure I study is successful in their original fields of fashion or architecture, and this cannot go unrecognized without an acknowledgment of their cooperation with mainstream expectations of brand expansion and self-promotion. An additional tool that certain designers use to convey a kind of aesthetic while also furthering their own brand is the creative display and exhibition of their work. The role of the museum returns as an important factor, but I also examine the boutique as a platform for display and expression of the nature of the object being produced. Both kinds of exhibitions allow artists to convey either a utilitarian or a spectacular, artistic character of their work. The runway show tradition serves as a final platform of display that different designers have interpreted very differently, depending on the brand that they wish to convey.

Moreover, some designers attempt to combine these elements in work that carefully considers both form and function. This is not an easy task, and I have found
that the issue of technological advancements is central to enabling work that combines art and utility as well as that which combines fashion and architecture. The contemporary nature of this work makes it difficult to trace the newest of practices that have yet to be discussed, but I have gathered the work of key artists whose work is only possible with the help of millennial information and technology. It is clear that technology is central to the brand of certain fashion designers and architects, and for others, it remains a crucial yet unacknowledged practice. My thesis draws important parallels between the technical practices as well as the formal issues that arise in the design of both fashion and architecture. Going a step further, however, it also questions the motivations behind the newly developed relationships between the two industries. I will both identify what enabled these developments as well as the reasons why key players in fashion and architecture have taken an interest in participating in each other’s medium. Zaha Hadid, Issey Miyake, and Hussein Chalayan are all standouts because they have forged this communication with other media. Each of these artists has different reasons for their personal interest in the opposite industries of architecture or fashion, but they have found this crossover dialogue to be paramount to the achievement of an avant-garde brand.

1 Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge,
2 Ibid, 133.
Chapter 1:
The Fashion of Early Modern Architecture

Though it has noticeably accelerated in the past thirty years, the relationship between fashion and architecture has a long history. Fashion and architecture’s intertwined roots can be most helpfully examined beginning with the turn of the twentieth century and moving through early modern art and architecture. Starting with Art Nouveau and progressing toward interwar architecture, patterns emerge of architectural ideas being applied to other art practices, and causing those media to take unconventional forms. Most prominent figures in this interwar period are all considered to be visual artists and architects, not figures in fashion, mainly because at the turn of the century and the early twentieth century, fashion was in no way considered to be an art. Though architecture was established as an art form, it was also considered in a separate realm from the fine arts. However, key figures in the Arts and Crafts movement as well as those working within the movement known as Art Nouveau brought their understanding of the fine arts to the architectural field. In addition, many prominent architects designed garments of their own or wrote extensively on their own distinct opinions of the subject of fashion. From here, links between architecture and forms of the applied arts take hold, spreading into notions of the garment. To understand how fashion was historically considered in this period, it must be viewed in terms of the other arts, and this relationship is entirely framed by architects who established a dialogue of sorts between different applied artistic forms. The accounts that follow represent a succession of artists within a larger tradition and demonstrate my conscious selection of stories out of much more complex
biographies. Beginning with ideas of dress reform and anti-fashion, artists maintained diverse opinions as to what fashion was and, in contrast, what they imagined it could be. Following the turn of the century, artists begin to see positive analogies between architecture and clothing. Vestiges of this early modern period persist in both the architectural and fashion industries today.

Fashion as a term has carried varying meanings between the early modern and contemporary periods of art. Historically, the term “fashion” had a set of negative connotations due to the ephemeral nature of style. The need for designers of dress to constantly change and adapt has been seen in direct opposition to the search for an aesthetic truth or absolute ideal of beauty that many fine artists have pursued. Providing some background for the establishment of fashion as a growing practice, I will describe the nineteenth century mainstream of fashion design before detailing the forces that opposed it. Charles Frederick Worth is thought to be the first fashion house designer, establishing his couture clothing line in Paris in 1858. He started his business with a set of designed model garments (rather than making them specifically for the customer), sewing his name into the label with the idea of branding his products. Worth promoted and marketed the crinoline, a cage-like structure that sits below the fabric of a dress skirt, attempting to maintain an air of exclusivity by denying certain lower-class patrons entry into his shop. As worth learned and contemporary designers know, fashion requires continuous marketing, because the constant changing of products means that there will be more goods than buyers and more goods than any one buyer might need. Nonetheless, fashion has remained coveted, condemned, and objectified in the eyes of both artists and patrons. The
question of whether or not fashion is art has been asked and reimagined as early as the mid-nineteenth century, and continues to be posed today.

Fashion began to be more generally accepted as an art form in the mid to late nineteenth century. Mary Merrifield’s *Dress as a Fine Art*, written in 1854, Margaret Oliphant’s *Dress* of 1878, and Mary Eliza Hawei’s text, *The Art of Dress*, written in 1879, all contributed to a public recognition of artistic dress.⁵ According to pioneers of the movement, dress reform as a concept generally encompassed a turn away from the structured bodice, popularized by the crinoline and the corset, in fashion in the mid-nineteenth century. At the time, women were expected predominately to inhabit the domestic sphere. The crinoline reinforced this position, sheltering a woman’s body while restricting her body’s movement, confining her to a tight space and literally keeping the outside world at a distance.⁶ The crinoline, and the dresses covering them, required a large amount of fabric. They therefore looked and were quite expensive, and were favored by the wealthy classes.⁷ However, the industrial revolution saw the rise of manufacturing technology, which made fashion, textiles and crinolines nearly mass-produced, possible for many women to wear and be a part of.⁸ Because of these new manufacturing possibilities, clothing that was formerly popular only among the elite became attainable to the masses. In turn this changing relationship allowed garments or commodities to be understood to be “in fashion,” a concept not quite understood in this way prior to the nineteenth century.

Dress reform developed out of multiple artistic communities as a backlash to the prevailing restrictive and voluminous women’s clothing. This reform ranged from the adoption of trousers worn by women, to changing of undergarments, and the
adoption of what was seen as “artistic dress,” the latter in particular bringing many artists and architects into dialogue with fashion. The abolishment of elaborate, heavy skirts in favor of pantaloons was a cause spearheaded by women’s rights activists in the 1850’s, including Amelia Bloomer and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Amelia Bloomer published “Dress Reform” in the publication The Lily on March 5th, 1853, explaining her hope that wearing pants would start a liberation for women, encouraging “women’s right to fashion her own dress according to her own taste and necessities,” and that pants would one day become seen as fashionable. Within each facet of the dress reform movement was a sense of liberation. Whether in losing the corset, wearing pants instead of skirts, or in the artistic dress movement, there was always a purpose of freeing the woman’s body. Interestingly, the main proponents of artistic dress in the turn of the twentieth century were all men working in an already established artistic field. The dress reform movement was most strongly focused in Germany, where it was called Reformkleidung. The International Congress for Women’s Welfare and Endeavors took place in Berlin in 1869, where dress reform and its relation to fashion at large were discussed, under the subgroup of the Association for the Improvement of Women’s Dress. Similar movements were rising in tandem in England, with the Rational Dress Society, the British counterpart of the German Group, founded in 1881. Dress reform was adopted into the arts in England, beginning in the 1850’s and diffusing outward toward other artistic communities. Artists of both the Arts and Crafts and the Pre-Raphaelite movements adopted different facets of dress reform.
Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris

The Pre-Raphaelite movement helped establish an artistic notion of “aesthetic dress” that emerged from painting and countered the mainstream of fashion. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of artists preceded the Art Nouveau movement in advocating that painting and the applied arts could work in harmony. These artists equated utility and beauty in their paintings of women, portrayed as intelligent, emancipated figures, which is reflected in their free-flowing garments. The Pre-Raphaelite artists painted women as mythological subjects, figures out of medieval and Renaissance-like scenes, and the clothing they were depicted in reflected this influence. Artists of this movement, like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, painted women in soft, naturally draped dresses that revealed their bodies rather than overburdening them with fabric (Figure 1.1). The Pre-Raphaelite artists tended to depict women more sensually with large sections of their bodies exposed. Their women were never depicted in crinolines, directly opposing the mainstream fashion of the time. As this more natural clothing became a trademark of the movement, women associated with the Brotherhood began to dress without corsets and crinolines, in what they named “aesthetic dress.” These women entered the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood circle originally as models for paintings, but they adapted to the artistic and literary ideas of the members, and aesthetic dress was a result.

This idea of aesthetic dress served as another mode of dress reform, distinct from the fixation of Amelia Bloomer and other Suffragists on the trouser, and became most popular in the 1870’s. Aesthetic dress was characterized by features reminiscent of the Renaissance, including full sleeves, a high, unbound waist, and in general
included more loosely draped dresses without the structure of a crinoline or corset of any kind. The fact that this clothing was such a departure from the mainstream was consistent with the view of the Pre-Raphaelite artists that their movement was a break from the conventional art of their time. With the Arts and Crafts movement simultaneously on the rise in England, prominent figures like William Morris advocated the reform of everyday life using decorative arts and a total artistic environment, and this approach inevitably applied to clothing as well. Morris said that clothing should drape over the woman’s body, neither accentuating nor ignoring its shape. His appreciation of drapery in women’s dress was in stark opposition with the bustles and corsets found popular at the time.

William Morris saw the Arts and Crafts movement as an opportunity to give craft the same high status as the fine arts. It is important to recognize that in the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, the applied arts were still considered as entirely separate from the fine arts. William Morris spearheaded the Arts and Crafts Movement in England, looking at artistic applications in interior design, architecture and fashion. Morris saw the high arts of painting and structure as sadly inaccessible to the general public and he strived for dissolution of any boundary between art and life. He felt that clothing figured prominently into his movement, as it brought art into everyday life. Different figures including Morris and John Ruskin, the critic and writer working in dialogue with artists of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, depicted clothing reform in their visual art and wrote about the matter extensively, applying their strong aesthetic ideas to clothing of both women and men. The aesthetic focus on dress began in the Pre-Raphaelite circle and extended beyond, as
Morris carried the idea of dress reform into the Arts and Crafts movement. Morris’ clothing had an artistic but rational approach, and demonstrated his different preferences of design aesthetics for men and women.\textsuperscript{22} This view can be examined through Morris and other artists’ differing opinions on what dress and fashion might mean for men versus women. Fashion was associated with frivolity and adornment, traits men easily assigned to women but rarely to themselves. Morris designed dresses for his wife, Jane Morris (Figure 1.2), which contrasted in style with his own unique, work-uniform style of blue smocks.\textsuperscript{23} Despite these differences, Morris, with the help of Ruskin, made it clear that clothing was rising in artistic importance. His dresses for Jane matched his own architectural interiors, bearing the same patterns and lines. Additionally, Jane modeled for Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, showing a fluidity of stylistic ideals about women’s dress between Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites.\textsuperscript{24} The modern design movement was founded on Ruskin’s and Morris’ philosophies, leading the way for design to be applied in different media, including architecture.

\textbf{Henry van de Velde}

Henry van de Velde applied the stylistic characteristics of Art Nouveau to his complete aesthetic environments, formulating his own strong opinions about and against fashion. Van de Velde abandoned painting and the fine arts in 1893 for the decorative arts, reading the teachings of William Morris and John Ruskin.\textsuperscript{25} Van de Velde felt strongly that art needed to be revitalized through everyday objects, a belief shared by the artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Following the principles of the
Arts and Crafts movement, van de Velde saw the pedestal the fine arts were placed upon and wanted to see art infused with the conditions of everyday life and interaction. What set him apart was his deep interest in overall environment, wishing to improve common living conditions through art, a kind of extreme artistic ideology. In 1895, van de Velde built the Villa Bloemenverf (Figure 1.3), outside of Brussels, as a private home for his entire family. The artist intended this space as a model of the applied arts in a total environment, created for the individual to use and enjoy in a private sphere. Like Morris, van de Velde wanted to conceive of and design everything in his surroundings, from the interior design to the ceramics to the textiles. He coined the term “Gesamtkunstwerk,” meaning a total work of art (Figure 1.4). As a consequence, van de Velde designed dresses for his wife, Maria Sèthe (Figure 1.5). He did not regard her garments, however, as fashion, but rather as a necessary aspect of the total environment. The artist wished for every element of the home to match, his wife included. Thus her dresses were very simple and pared-down, not acknowledged by van de Velde to be true high fashion. Contrasting these efforts for his wife, van de Velde’s own clothing was not of his own design, but made by a respected couturier. This fact may be explained by the artist’s clear beliefs that men’s clothing was more rational than women’s clothing, but it contradicts his prominent aesthetic vision for the Gesamtkunstwerk as well, incorporating women’s dress but ignoring men’s where he did not wish to include it.

The dresses van de Velde designed fit the Art Nouveau aesthetic, and while they were significantly more pared-down than the prevailing fashions, they incorporated designs and elements of his painting into the fabric. Images of van de
Velde’s dresses often showed his wife posing in his total environments (Figure 1.6), with her back to the camera. This pose may have been adopted to present the dramatic designs of the back of her dress, but also to maintain a sort of anonymity. Photographs of his dresses served to demonstrate the continuity between the designs, frequently swirls characteristic of Art Nouveau, as repeated in both the dress and the wallpaper and the art displayed on the walls. In 1900, van de Velde published his book, Die künstlerische Hebung der Frauentracht [The Improvement of Women’s Dress]. Though he took an anti-fashion approach, denouncing the mainstream of dress, van de Velde took careful interest in the fashion industry, using aesthetic principles applied to both his architecture and his dress designs. Though the dresses began as an extension of the home, van de Velde began to display his dresses in a number of reformist dress exhibitions. Though the primary locus of design was the home and private sphere, the individual was expected to make an entrance into society outside of the home. In this way, the home served as a site of artistic creation for dress reform, whose ideas were then disseminated into the artistic community. Van de Velde saw his work as a rebellion against fashion, viewing his own creations as art rather than simply clothing. When examining his full body of work, an abstract style embracing curving lines is repeated as a motif throughout, and it is clear that van de Velde designed dresses in order to demonstrate the same aesthetic principles as his architecture.

Peter Behrens
German painter, designer, and architect Peter Behrens similarly joined the dress reform movement as a consequence of his involvement with the applied arts. Behrens too envisioned the incorporation of applied arts into the realm of true fine arts. He is an important figure in the examination of the conversation between architecture and fashion, as he influenced the design aesthetics of many of his successors, including Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier, all of whom worked in Behrens’ office in 1910-1911, and some of who went on to further the discourse. Born in Hamburg in 1868, Behrens came from an affluent family and lived comfortably enough to explore the arts as his primary life’s work. Behrens was initially a painter, moving between Realist painting, Impressionism and the Dutch Luministen movement before settling on graphics and graphic design (Figure 1.7). The latter aided his turn toward the design of interior spaces in 1900, which he decorated with his own graphic woodcut prints. Behrens was greatly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement before establishing himself as a prominent figure of Art Nouveau and joining the German Werkbund organization founded in 1907, ironically moving away from the natural motifs of Arts and Crafts and toward industrialization. He experimented in the production of porcelain, glass, and furniture within the Werkbund movement, some of which would continue to appear within his architectural works. As he branched out into other media, Behrens painted less and less. His painting style was not revolutionary, more a conglomeration of borrowed traits of other leading artists. His painting contributions were much more substantial when incorporated into his applied artistic works, including interiors and architecture.
The earliest recorded architectural project by Behrens was his own house in Darmstadt, completed in 1901 (Figure 1.8), and part of the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony, heavily influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement. The house at Darmstadt was a cube-like structure with a simple, compact plan. Like Morris and van de Velde, Behrens integrated applied arts into the contents of the house’s interior himself, mixing media to create carpet, lighting, furniture, and linens (Figure 1.9).

The double doors at the front of the house display Art Nouveau shapes and the eagle’s wings motif of the movement. At this point in time, Behrens crossed a bridge from one realm of painting to design. The artist wanted to aestheticize objects that don’t have the level of visual consideration that works of fine art were normally given. As he moved from painting to textiles and eventually to dressmaking, there was a tension created as Behrens tried to bring a fine art perspective to what was thought of as applied art or craft.

Windsor summarizes Behrens’ thoughts on architecture in relation to the fine arts with a statement from the artist, written following the realization of his own house at Darmstadt: “Architecture is the art of building, and comprises in its name two ideas; the mastery of the practical, and the art of the beautiful.” Behrens wished to bring art to everyday life as well as to explore the many practical applications of the fine arts. This interest spread to fashion through his design of artistic clothing. In 1901, Behrens participated in the Division for Artistic Clothing as a part of the Dresden Exhibition of Art and Industry, and started designing clothing for his wife Lilli for the Leipzig Exhibition of Artistic Reform in 1902, after which he continued designing and producing dresses (Figure 1.10). Behrens, who belonged to the United
Workshop of Arts and Crafts, a German organization working to raise support for the applied arts, got involved with dress reform as an extension of the Arts and Crafts.\textsuperscript{40} Overall, Behrens’ dresses have been characterized as simplified princess-cut gowns modest in nature.\textsuperscript{41} They fit in with the larger scope of dress reform design, which included empire, princess and modified princess cuts, meaning patterns with six pieces, three in front and three in back, and with a bodice ending just below the bust, with loose fits skimming over the body and full sleeves with small gathers. Many of these dresses had pleats or gathers in the skirt to contain their fullness, and they ranged in fabric choice depending on the intended setting, from silks to heavier wools or velvet.\textsuperscript{42} It is notable that, while as a part of the dress reform movement, both Behrens and van de Velde wanted to change the way that women dressed, and that neither truly viewed their clothes as fashion.\textsuperscript{43} However, their dress designs had little impact on public consumption. Similar to the effect of their one-of-a-kind interiors, their dresses are looked at through an art historical lens but their ideas and designs did not make any significant inroads into the mainstream of design.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{Adolf Loos}

Breaking with Art Nouveau and concentrating on a different approach to modernity within design, Adolf Loos was a Viennese architect of the early twentieth century who vehemently opposed ornament in both architecture and fashion. Born in 1870 in what’s now the Czech Republic, Loos studied architecture in Dresden from 1890 through 1893.\textsuperscript{45} Loos appreciated the English Arts and Crafts movement, but had a new perspective on interior design. His interests lay in utilizing craft but not the
full program and ideology of the decorative arts. In his 1897 article, “Our School of Applied Art,” Loos defended his opinion that the Arts and Crafts industry should not suffer at the hands of high art. He looked to the Arts and Crafts movement in England as a model for how popular craft could be. Loos also believed that more fine artists should turn to craft, rather than craftsmen turning to the fine arts. Around 1900, the architect wrote on men and women’s fashion separately, characterizing them differently and seeing more achievement in the work of English men’s tailors than women’s designers. Regarding men’s clothing, Loos argued that dressing well is a right and privilege. He disagreed, however, with the German ideal of clothing being beautiful, saying that it is best to be well dressed and not beautifully dressed, an arguably separate concept. Opposing the nature-inspired delicate touches of Art Nouveau, Loos said that the most esteemed man will dress to attract as little attention to himself as possible, fitting in with whatever cultural sphere he might frequent.

In 1896, Otto Wagner, the Viennese architect and teacher, argued that to pursue modernity in architecture, one must examine the relationships between fashion and style at large. Wagner wrote strictly about men’s dress, advocating a utilitarian style without unnecessary embellishment. Loos and Le Corbusier both drew on his teachings when promoting their own aesthetic viewpoints. From this point onward, fashion and modernity began to be seen in an important relationship, and architects like Loos wanted their designs to bear the same clean, modern trademarks as the tailored clothing they advocated. Loos equated subtlety with modernity, criticizing German culture in his 1898 essay, “Men’s Fashion,” for having too many instances of individuals, “fops” as he calls them, standing out because of the way they dressed,
foolishly, in Loos’ eyes. On the other hand, Loos praises the work of the best tailors, the true dictators of style. He claimed that the best came from England and many to Vienna, where many individuals are well dressed and as a result, standards of fashion are high. Loos mentioned a Viennese exhibition committee displaying the work of the top tailors, calling their garments true examples of art. Though Loos appreciated craft over fine art, he felt that the most well executed crafts could be distinguished as works of art in themselves.

While Loos appreciated the striving of men’s fashion toward aristocratic elegance, he notes that women’s fashion represents a regressive standpoint. In his 1902 piece “Ladies’ Fashion,” he equates women’s clothing with frivolous eroticism, calling it their main instrument in provoking the desire of men. Loos disliked the way women’s clothing had been used, in his opinion, to make the woman’s body a mystery to men. Loos saw the embellishment and ornamentation of women’s fashion a sensual addition to the body, and he argued that fashion should not be so focused on the body it clothes altogether. He claimed that in the aristocratic classes, women of the time were joining men in their restrained, tailored good taste. Loos strongly disliked the decorative, colorful aspects of women’s clothing, as well as long skirts with excessive fabric, finding them unnecessary. This stance is reminiscent of the dress reform argued for earlier in the nineteenth century. Loos directly equates status with taste, writing, “the lower the cultural level, the greater the degree of ornamentation.” However, he was not entirely pessimistic about the future of women’s fashion. Loos wrote that when women would eventually be allowed to be gainfully employed as men were, utility would come into play for women’s fashion,
and they would be allowed to wear trousers.\textsuperscript{56} He supported the emergence of new sports and athletics into popular culture, insinuating that they would change fashion for women and not only men.\textsuperscript{57} As he suggested that progress and modernity would result in clean lines and simple design, Loos argued that the onset of modernity would mean that working women would wear clothing without frills, ribbons or bows, and they too would embody modernity as their well-dressed male counterparts.\textsuperscript{58} That being said, Loos’ writings on the progress to come for women were less than enthusiastic, which may explain why he took more personal interest in tailoring, and why he did not explore his own capacities for dressmaking.

Loos had strong opinions that dress should be a turn away from the conspicuous consumption of the bourgeoisie. He felt that garments should function like a mask, creating a barrier between the private and public. As mentioned above, Loos believed that ornament indicated eroticism or playfulness, both traits that did not belong on the outside of a body, exposed.\textsuperscript{59} He looked down upon the constant changes in women’s fashion, which he viewed as a wavering idea about what women should be, with fashion fluctuating between embracing or rejecting the natural shape of the woman’s body.\textsuperscript{60} Inspired by the writings of Wagner, Loos, regarding clothing’s simplicity and interactions with the body, said, “the material dressed should never be mistaken for the dressing.”\textsuperscript{61} Certain comparisons can be made between his ideal garments and the buildings he designed, as they maintained clear breaks between interior and exterior. Loos hated how exaggerated van de Velde’s fixation with the total environment was. Though Loos appreciated a clear set of aesthetics being applied widely, he detested such an excessive approach to everyday
Loos’ architectural aesthetic matched that of fashion, that embellishment and ornament indicated a recession of style. The Goldman & Stalatsch building Loos completed in 1911, commonly called the *Looshaus* (Figure 1.11), demonstrates his aesthetic as applied to architecture, of simplicity and a kind of geometric elegance, countering what was popular in Viennese culture. Despite his rejection of Morris and van de Velde’s work, Loos, too, was very tied to the Arts and Crafts movement. Additionally, both Loos and van de Velde took an anti-fashion approach to both their designs and writing. They differed, however, in their interpretations of what anti-fashion might mean in relation to architecture. As both van de Velde and Behrens extended their ideas from the movement toward architecture and dress, Loos focused on the modern and hoped it would bring a new stylistic approach to the applied arts.

**Le Corbusier**

Le Corbusier rose in prominence in the twentieth century, eventually inheriting the Loos aesthetic of a clean modernity applied to all facets of design. Le Corbusier, born Charles-Édouard Jeanneret in 1887, worked originally as a decorative artist, heavily influenced by the German Arts and Crafts movement. Though he attempted later on to distinguish himself as an architect only, beginning with his name change in 1920, his architecture does not entirely break away from the aesthetic he applied to décor. With the encouragement of his Swiss Calvinist parents, Jeanneret studied nature and drew and painted actively. With a French identity adopted later on in life by the artist, he rarely mentioned that his place of birth, La Chaux-de-Fonds, was in Switzerland. At age fourteen, Jeanneret latched
on to Charles L’Eplattenier, an artist and architect, as a role model and teacher of creative outlets and aesthetic principles at Ecole d’Art of La Chaux-de-Fonds.\textsuperscript{69} L’Eplattenier pushed the boy to try to design buildings, and Jeanneret reluctantly took his advice, committing himself to architecture.\textsuperscript{70} At age seventeen in 1905, he designed his first building, Villa Fallet, on the outskirts of the town.\textsuperscript{71} Jeanneret recalled that John Ruskin’s writings on architecture served as a beacon for him, inspiring spiritual purity of form, which eventually translated into his simple, bare designs,\textsuperscript{72} although his early houses like the Villa Fallet (Figure 1.12) were notably ornamented. Because Ruskin wrote of the importance of continental architecture and design, Jeanneret left for Italy in 1907,\textsuperscript{73} the first stop in his many years of travels.

Jeanneret wrote extensively as he traveled around the world, documenting all that he saw with photography, sketches and writings. He wrote of achieving purity in art, praising objects of the applied arts that maintain a spare surface, free of décor and excess. Consequentially, he grouped clothing along with these objects.\textsuperscript{74} As he travelled, Jeanneret shaped his own personal style, requesting fashionable but practical garments to be sent from his parents when he was as young as twenty.\textsuperscript{75} He began to show a personal concern with self-presentation, and took solace in his personal objects to counter his anxieties about his artistic identity. Jeanneret traveled to Vienna, Paris, Munich and Berlin, studying under different architects, including Peter Behrens himself.\textsuperscript{76} Jeanneret, however, never settled in one place for long, showing a kind of insecurity as an artist. This insecurity is further seen in his constant change in architectural style, shifting influences and referring to different movements, until he reached his later interest in white, cubic forms as indicative of the modern.
Specific to his viewpoint was the idea of whitewashing, wanting to achieve absolute purity in art, architecture and clothing by crafting only in white, or painting a layer of white over every possible surface. The origins of whitewashing date far back, to the eighteenth century. Jeanneret was a key figure promoting this effect in modernity. His writings show his insistent rejection of the sensuous superfluities of ornamentation. As is discernible from his written documentation of his travels, he first described his enamor with this purist, white aesthetic in architecture in 1911 when traveling through Eastern Europe. The whitewashing of Greek monasteries influenced Jeanneret’s later style, characterized as a functional, bare aesthetic with exposed roughness, shockingly bright white walls and pops of color accentuating them. The house he built for his parents between 1911 and 1913, called the Maison Blanche (Figure 1.13), was based on the styles he had seen, with white walls and blue floors. The house was built to overlook the Swiss landscape.

Following his travels, Jeanneret moved to Paris in 1913 and sought out a social circle of fashionable artists. In doing so, he met the prominent fashion designer Paul Poiret, spending his time with Poiret’s friends and eventually designing a house for him. In this way, Jeanneret became a part of the fashion world, which is interesting considering he would soon after write extensively of its negative attributes. While in Paris, he read Adolf Loos’ essays on modern architecture and “Ornament and Crime.” Following this time, Jeanneret’s work began to show a Loosian influence, taking on more cubic, simple forms. In the later 1910’s, Jeanneret wrote about fashion and distinguished it from couture, describing the latter as an art form and the former as a frivolity. Jeanneret described the couturier as someone who
conceives and constructs, injecting design and innovation into his unique works.\textsuperscript{83} Like Loos, he denounced fashion because of its adoption of ornamentation and excessive décor. His involved role in fashionable circles and own adoption of clothing demonstrate that the architect was not so far removed from the world of fashion, however. The artist agreed with the Loosian viewpoint that fashion could be inextricably tied to modernity, and must be considered in terms of its aesthetics to become modern as other art forms were so doing.\textsuperscript{84}

In 1920 Jeanneret began to call himself “Le Corbusier,” indicating intent to announce a new phase in his career and a reinvention for himself.\textsuperscript{85} His white villas of the 1920’s (Figure 1.14) demonstrate Le Corbusier’s application of whitewashing in architecture,\textsuperscript{86} as discussed above. This model reflects the influence of Loos’ modern viewpoint of geometric simplicity, with clean surfaces and occasional use of whitewashed walls, as demonstrated in his Looshaus. The architect preferred flat, concrete surfaces to the ornate facades and decorative programs of times past, which lingered in the cityscape of his hometown.\textsuperscript{87} In 1922, Le Corbusier became romantically involved with Yvonne Gallis, a couture model and salesgirl.\textsuperscript{88} Gallis, who he would marry and live with for the next thirty years, had a distinct flirtatious, Mediterranean look that she accented with dramatic makeup and bold accessories. As evidenced in both his writings and his artistic works, Le Corbusier regarded a coat of paint on a building as coat on a person, equating the treatment of physical walls with garments, both as skin. In his opinion, each additional artistic or decorative touch to these walls must be very carefully executed to maintain the purity, simplicity and consequently modernity of the work.\textsuperscript{89} Like Loos, he wanted art to be like the fine
work of a tailor, refined and pared-down. Though his architectural work is generally simple as well, Le Corbusier did not appreciate the exposure of the structural bones of a building, just as he did not appreciate the reveal of skin. He felt that clothes were meant to mask, not interact with, the body. This idea carries out into even the more seemingly exposed of his buildings. When structural elements that support the architecture are shown, Le Corbusier definitively and forcefully coated everything in white. In the year 1929, he wrote *Precisions: on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning*, in which he included excerpts about clothing. Le Corbusier praised the work of fine men’s tailors, but found much of men’s fashion lacking. Unlike Loos, he found a certain spirit in women’s dress, encouraging menswear to learn something from women’s wear when approaching modernity. His attraction to Gallis and admiration for her image indicates an appreciation for ostentatious women’s dress, and his own image would come to reflect this.

Le Corbusier is a prominent architectural figure that is often referenced as important in the early signs of a relationship between architecture and fashion. He insisted on the whiteness of walls to the extent that this aesthetic overshadowed all known to the public about the early modern architect. His work is characterized by sloping walls and a bare geometry, using color as an accent. In addition to this, however, Le Corbusier is one of few architectural figures whose name summons an image as well, and whose brand is synonymous with a mode of dress. Le Corbusier’s contemporary image is synonymous with personal style, a reflection of his tailored suits, bow ties and trademark spectacles (Figure 1.15). His wife was similarly characterized by her own dramatic mode of self-presentation. With unwavering level
of taste as applied to all forms of design, Le Corbusier unintentionally brought modern architecture to a similar platform of discussion as fashion, a place it continues to be today. Additionally, his extensive writings in letters and other forms of documentation give clarity to his own anxieties about his artistic image and accomplishments as an artist. This level of intimacy is not always available with artists and public figures, but it factors into why contemporary architects and those of the past like Le Corbusier hone in on their personal styles to the meticulous level that they do. Le Corbusier changed his name, changed his city setting and changed his tailored clothes with the anxiety of an individual extremely concerned with their own mark on the art world. Today, contemporary architects align themselves with fashion designers and individual aesthetics in order to create and maintain their own brand.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the applied arts gained prominence in North America and Europe in order to bring art closer to the public. Many of the artists examined above had begun branching out of the fine arts into architecture, a large-scale application of the applied arts. While design of interior space often came next, many of these artists of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century moved eventually into fashion. The connection between architecture and fashion is thus an expression of an overarching desire to bring art to the everyday environment. The nineteenth century and interwar modernists are interesting to explore today, because their involvement in fashion and architecture also reaches into a number of other artistic applications, including painting, textiles and furniture design. Because
of this, the contemporary relationship between fashion and architecture appears as part of a larger dialogue between artistic industries.

Architects associated the transient nature of fashion with ornament, being entirely superficial. It is interesting to note that many architects felt strongly enough to create clothing of their own, feeling their training in the arts allowed them to do so, but there were no dressmakers of the time branching into the other arts. Van de Velde and Behrens, along with Gustav Klimt, Walter Crane and others, all aided the development of artistic dress, but none were simply dress designers. This notion of artistic dress and dress reform applied amongst the arts was important for figuring fashion’s role among the arts and establishing fashion as an art form to be considered alongside architecture. The artists examined here had some distinct interests in and opinions on fashion, but these were largely from an “antifashion” or reformist viewpoint. They were not trying to break into the mainstream or work their way into the garment-making industry, but rather to establish an opposing stance on what the mainstream might be producing in fashion.

In this early modern period, fashion was a concept, not an industry, and certainly not an art form. The design and production of garments, however, offered opportunities for art and dress to coalesce, providing a new platform for aesthetic ideas to be carried into everyday life. Aesthetic similarities can be drawn between the architecture and dresses designed by these artists, but they considered their dresses to be more of an avant-garde experimentation than work within an established fashion industry. There are a number of figures in the architectural world that have reached into fashion design, and those explored here are merely a selection. The succession of
canonical artists discussed in this chapter illustrates an evolving relationship between fashion and architecture. As these artists worked near an avant-garde practice, they perpetuated the universal distaste for the mainstream culture that housed fashion. In contrast, as will be discussed in the next chapter, architects of the contemporary moment who are currently designing clothing of their own are very much interested in being in fashion. These contemporary architects are attempting to bring creative innovation to a mainstream world, unlike their avant-garde predecessors.

In addition, many artists of this period wrote in support of craft, a category they regarded as including dressmaking. Notions of craft and the applied arts brought practices of architecture and dressmaking to a similar platform of design. Both van de Velde and Loos, two artists with very different aesthetics, worked with ideas dress reform and architecture, but were divergent in their viewpoints on what the relationship should be between a garment and a building. In contrast, Behrens looked at dresses as sculptural forms, hoping to make dresses into a kind of architecture. Today, the word “craft” bears a different set of negative connotations as something lesser than art. In this earlier period, however, artists like Loos and Le Corbusier favored tailoring as a mode of self-expression and eventually a craft, viewing dress as on the same level as their own applied arts. That being said, the artists referenced in this chapter did not consider fashion equally for both men and women, but rather believed fashion had a different definition for each of the sexes. This is presumably because they believed that men and women had distinct roles in the home, workplace and society. Fashion does not make these distinctions today, and perhaps this
discrepancy is why fashion in the early modern period was assigned descriptors both feminine and pejorative, associated with frivolity and preoccupation with the home.

As demonstrated in the writings of Loos and Le Corbusier, the idea of modernity has been important within many time periods, as architects like Loos looked at the writings of Wagner to learn about taste and modernity as applied to fashion to inform their own architectural designs. This focus on modernity is not so different from contemporary architects who are currently reaching into the realm of fashion and inquiring about the passing styles of clothing. They are doing so seemingly to inject a sense of currency and modernity, the latter of which seems to constantly mean something new, into their own work within the architecture industry. Lastly, one final link can be made between the early modern and contemporary artists regarding self-presentation. Though Le Corbusier’s concern with image was obvious, the artists explored before all sought to define a trademark style. As van de Velde meticulously applied his painted designs identically on his dresses and his interiors, and as Loos wrote about a tailored and clean aesthetic, each artist wanted to preserve their image through a style that could be easily identifiable as their own. This is evidenced both in how they maintained strong stylistic traits throughout their different artistic outlets, and how they presented themselves as public figures. Like Le Corbusier, contemporary architects have sought out methods of dressing that will become a part of their brand, figuring their trademark personal styles as equally important to their trademark, recognizable buildings. After all, whether they are opposing the mainstream or eagerly supporting it, these artists of the early modern and contemporary periods are seeking to be preserved and remembered.

2 Ibid, 14.
3 Ibid, 15.


7 Ibid.
8 Ibid, 97.
10 Stern, *Against Fashion*, 82.
11 Ibid, 15.
12 Ibid.
15 Ibid, 95.
16 Ibid, 96.
17 Ibid, 100.
18 Ibid, 99.
19 Ibid, 5.


22 Ibid, 112.


27 Ibid.
28 Ibid, 14.
34 Ibid, 8.
36 Ibid, 18.
37 Ibid, 23.
38 Ibid, 23.
39 Cunningham, Reforming Women's Fashion, 177.
40 Ibid, 194.
41 Ibid, 198.
42 Ibid, 175.
44 Ibid.
48 Ibid, 39.
49 Ibid, 40.
51 Ibid, 53.
52 Loos, Ornament and Crime, 41.
53 Ibid, 42.
54 Ibid, 107.
56 Ibid, 110.
57 Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses 129.
58 Loos, Ornament and Crime, 111.
59 Mcleod, "Undressing Architecture," 64.
60 Loos, Ornament and Crime, 108.
64 Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, 130.
66 Ibid, 180.
69 Ibid, 33.
70 Ibid, 34.
71 Ibid, 36.
72 Ibid, 38.
73 Ibid, 39.
74 Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, 16.
76 Ibid, 74.
77 Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, 5.
78 Ibid, 9.
81 Ibid, 181.
83 Ibid, 184.
84 Ibid, 18.
85 Ibid, 5.
88 Ibid, 193.
90 Ibid, 21.
91 Ibid, 187.
Chapter 2:

Zaha Hadid and Architects in Fashion

Contemporary architect Zaha Hadid is a prime example of an architect who has increasingly expanded her design territory into the fashion world, merging interests and exploring connections between the two industries. Hadid is the head of the British architectural firm, Zaha Hadid Architects, known for trademark neo-futuristic buildings with undulating curves that mold the shape of the ground, as they seem to bend into their respective landscapes. Hadid has explored developing technologies available to architectural practice, employing advanced techniques as early as the 1980’s, before such technology was available, to the present. Like Adolf Loos, Hadid avoids excess cladding or ornamentation in her designs, instead embracing the sculptural possibilities of concrete. However she goes a step beyond Loos’ utilitarian ideal and box-shape buildings as she transforms conventional elements like windowsills and doorframes. Her structures are simple only in their monochrome, uniform surface qualities, but the shape and form they take is entirely unique and futuristic, appearing to swoop in and out of the landscape with a swift motion. Hadid has also ventured into fashion world on many occasions, increasingly so since the early 2000’s. Her desire to translate a trademark architectural style into a fashion aesthetic is apparent, as Hadid has long worked toward a recognizable, unconventional style that she is today recognized, applauded and criticized for. Hadid is well aware of her personal brand, and expanding it to the fashion world allows her to cater to new audiences and introduce new opportunities for revenue. Though her love of fashion is apparent, it is difficult to say where Hadid’s personal interest ends.
and where her brand’s best interest begins. This chapter seeks to track Hadid’s motivations as an architect entering the fashion industry and helping expand the world of design to include architecture and fashion under one roof.

The fashion industry is notorious for its dominating issues of branding and marketing, which, incidentally, the contemporary architecture industry is not so severed from. Celebrity status has found many ways to be incorporated into the promotion and marketing strategies of designers of the fashion industry. Celebrities have long been used as marketing tools for designers to boost the success of their brands. In the 1980 film *American Gigolo*, Richard Gere’s character boasted a wardrobe full of Armani suits, significantly increasing sales for the designer, and encouraging Giorgio Armani to continue dressing Hollywood stars. Many other designers followed in this tradition, bringing the career of celebrity stylist to new prominence. The relationship between ubiquitous brands and celebrities has gone a step further as stars have inserted themselves, at least on the surface level, into the design process. Fashion stylist Andrea Lieberman wrote in 2004 that with music and film industries in a state of flux, stars turn to other money-making projects, such as designing clothing, accessory and perfume lines. Celebrity fashion lines became increasingly popular around the millennium, and have ranged in success, raising questions of the star’s motives and actual talent. Jennifer Lopez was one of the first mega-stars in 2001 to launch her own clothing line, with Beyoncé Knowles and Gwen Stefani following suit in 2004. Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen have multiple projects in the fashion industry, including their upscale, more mature line The Row, a more bohemian, youthful line called Elizabeth and James, and lower budget collaborations
with Walmart and JC Penney. Their projects have been so successful that The Olsen twins are today regarded more as fashion industry insiders than actresses or socialites. All these forays, however, involve designers supplementing the work of the star, whose designers take whatever input they may receive from them and turn it into a marketable product.

Another trend involves existing brands welcoming a star into their executive team on collaboration. Examples include Lindsay Lohan for Ungaro and Sarah Jessica Parker as an executive for Halston. In this case, their face is associated with the already-established brand, be it a luxury label or a department store brand, and, more importantly, their involvement in the collaboration is difficult to trace. Supermodel Kate Moss’ line for popular British retailer Topshop was one of the more well received collaborations, which sold much more successfully than the aforementioned examples. Moss, however, is credited with “co-designing” the line, which leaves ultimate responsibility in questionable hands. Often in these cases, behind the popular celebrity name and picture is a design team and band of specialists, who were likely to be more heavily involved in the logistics of the project than the celebrity themselves.

A star familiar with these kinds of design collaboration, Hadid is well known enough in the fashion industry that she is welcome into this tradition. Artists, celebrities and figures in power have a long tradition of using their names to brand themselves and expanding such brands with artistic collaborations. Design projects beyond their own expertise would not be possible to execute without a full team working behind the scenes, and ultimately, the individual’s name is appropriated and
borrowed to label the project, whether the star put in the full load of work or not. In the *New York Times Style Magazine*, Suzy Menkes says skeptically of this trend, “It all started with celebrity endorsements. No one really imagined that Jennifer Lopez was cutting and stitching the outfits that bore her name when she first introduced J. Lo in 2001. It was just a branding exercise, like Gwen Stefani’s L.A.M.B. or Elizabeth Taylor’s White Diamonds.” Hadid’s collaborations with different fashion lines fits into this trend, and when she is examined not simply as an architect or designer but as a famous person, her forays into the fashion industry complement a history of celebrity branding.

Additionally, there are different types of design commissions and collaborations that occur between artists of different industries. The tradition of established fashion designers working with artists of other design industries has ranged from fashion-specific projects to obvious marketing ploys devoid of fashionable connotations. These practices have dated back to the mid-twentieth century. In the 1930’s, Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, who competed against the likes of Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel, brought in Surrealist artist Salvador Dali to collaborate on her designs. Dali provided a humorous lobster print for her dresses (Figure 2.1), and further worked with Schiaparelli on her entire collection entitled *Circus*. Schiaparelli worked mainly with Dali but also collaborated with a number of European avant-garde artists on small projects in the 1930’s, including Giacometti and Man Ray. Like Coco Chanel, Schiaparelli was one of the first fashion designers to expand her brand to include perfumes, and she again worked with Dali to create bold and memorable labels and packaging for their bottles. In the
past twenty years, contemporary fashion designers have done similar artistic collaborations to enrich their design aesthetics. As the creative director for Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs has collaborated with popular artists Stephen Sprouse and Takashi Murakami to give new dimension to the brand’s monogram pattern, most commonly seen on handbags.\(^{11}\) English fashion designer Matthew Williamson, who has specialized in textiles and prints, has collaborated with Coca-Cola on limited edition bottle designs, stationery for Smythson on Bond Street, and more affordable clothing collaborations for H&M and department stores Debenhams and Target.\(^{12}\) Affordable collections for mass retailers like these, which make up another popular trend in the industry, can be seen as an attempt at the democratization of high fashion, and have attracted many famous designers toward temporary collections for stores like Target, K-Mart, and H&M. However, projects like Williamson’s Coca-Cola bottles inevitably raise questions of the purity of a designer’s intentions. Whether these are unique design opportunities or marketing ploys is unclear.

Michael Graves and Frank Gehry, two architects predating Hadid’s rise to fame, were not so divorced from the history of celebrity brand consciousness. Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1934, Graves studied architecture at the University of Cincinnati before getting his masters in architecture at Harvard in 1959.\(^ {13}\) Graves went in and out of popularity in the second half of the twentieth century as he worked first in a modernist and then in a postmodernist architectural tradition, before re-emerging in the 1990’s as an important figure in product design.\(^ {14}\) In 1986, his building designs for the Disney Company impressed the corporation. Graves then went on, with Disney’s commission, to design hotels for Disney World in Orlando,
Florida, (Figure 2.2) completing the design of their complete interiors as well. This work launched Graves’ collaborations with Disney in other product design. His sterling silver tea service began as a product for Disney, but gained attention of other retailers and product developers. Alberto Alessi, of the eponymous kitchen utensil company, approached Graves to make more of his popular tea services as a marketing ploy for museum display (Figure 2.3). Instead, the services began an unprecedented reign of sales, and Graves expanded their manufacture and design. He was open to and welcomed by many forums for design, including costumes and sets for the Joffrey Ballet and even a shopping bag design for Bloomingdales, in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s.

Graves’ work with the Target Corporation began when the company hired him to design an architecturally appealing construction fence for one of their projects. In 2000, Target returned to Graves for a large collection of colorful household projects (Figure 2.4), for which he’s known today. The collection is inexpensive and appreciated for its introduction of contemporary design into everyday items, and this has lead to its vast popularity, and subsequently, Graves’ brand as a product designer. Over time, Graves’ name began to be associated less with architecture and more with design on the whole, as he designed jewelry, rugs, furniture and more for different clients around the globe. Graves’ architecture and products can all be identified by his playful color use, and as he signed on to major collaborations with Alessi and Target, this charm combined with his postmodern style encouraged his success. Despite the success of these collaborations, Graves has been criticized as an architect who “sold out” for a more lucrative practice. The architecture industry prides itself on
prioritizing public works over profit, and Graves’ turn to the design of consumer product rebranded him in many ways, as a commercial capitalist rather than an artist.

In contrast, Frank Gehry is a Canadian-American architect who was born and worked in the same period as Graves, but with a very different, albeit expansive, legacy. Born in Toronto, Canada in 1929, Gehry was one of the pioneers of the Deconstructivist architectural style, which developed in the 1970’s and 1980’s following Postmodernism. This style favors sculptural assemblage of elements that make up a building over more traditional methods of construction. The predominantly Western style brings the idea of pure form to light with principles of disruption and dislocation, and Gehry’s most famous works have a certain novelty and draw due to their highly unusual appearance. Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, opened in 1997 (Figure 2.5), and propelled his career as an icon, both in the architectural world and in the greater realm of design. Gehry became known for his trademark style of titanium cladding on a grand scale, which helped increase his extreme popularity and the tourist appeal of his buildings. Gehry has achieved his unique designs with three-dimensional scanners, which create digital images of the paper and cardboard models he creates in his workshop. Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum was one of the first major architectural projects to employ digital fabrication technologies, applied to a large-scale building. Gehry’s team discovered CATIA, a software program used in the aeronautic industry, when searching for technologies to aid the construction of his Fish Sculpture for Barcelona Villa Olympica, and for future projects. Gehry exemplifies how central digital manufacturing has become to contemporary architecture.
Gehry designed furniture in the second half of the twentieth century, but it wasn’t until the completion of his museum in Bilbao that he began to expand his brand. Gehry experimented with the design of household products, and his line of corrugated cardboard furniture for Bloomingdale’s, designed in the 1970’s, has skyrocketed in price since the millennium. Gehry also designed jewelry for different collaborations, most notably with Tiffany & Co. His jewelry designs have been compared to the steel waves of his Walt Disney Concert Hall, and have a novelty appeal for this aesthetic comparison. Frank Gehry as a brand evolved into a new level of celebrity that has developed over the past twenty years. His legacy has greatly impacted contemporary architectural tradition, and set precedent for the Hadid’s diverse body of work.

The contemporary idea of the “starchitect,” an architect who has risen to celebrity status, is popularly used in the mass media, and has been applied to a number of architects who expanded their own brand beyond buildings alone, and toward realms of fashion, product and interior design. The term was originally employed by journalists to categorize artists like Gehry, whose popularity has expanded beyond the field of architecture. In the late 1990’s, when Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum was making waves with an elite status, the term “starchitect” was first used to describe the architect whose aesthetic reputation preceded him. The word has been used scornfully, as many architects, including Gehry himself, have expressed distaste for such a frivolous-sounding classification. In a 2013 interview, Gehry asked not to call him a starchitect, and went so far as to say he did not think of his name as a brand. Gehry did, however, note that if the world did not
have starchitects, architecture would not be in the media at all.\textsuperscript{29} Nevertheless, Gehry’s name is inextricably linked to a celebrity status, and the obsession with the work of starchitects has often been described as “the Bilbao Effect.”\textsuperscript{30} As the term has developed and spread in use, along with certain architects’ names come an association of celebrity appeal, glitz, and glamour. Though Gehry may frown upon its use, removing ideas of artistry and inserting a material culture, it certainly benefits his name and the names of the other starchitects in making their person and their work more desirable. Following Gehry’s rise in fame, he explored a new kind of design in the fashion world, which is hard to imagine would have been acceptable or possible prior to his ascension to starchitect status. In 2008, Gehry worked with his son, artist Alejandro Gehry, on a collaboration with shoe company J.M Weston (Figure 2.7). 

Gehry said of the relationship between footwear and his own profession, “Shoes are very architectural and always have been, and even more recently there are new shoes like Miuccia [Prada’s]- they’re buildings.”\textsuperscript{31} As another example, though Graves isn’t as often associated with the term “Starchitect,” for his buildings do not bear the same trademark as Gehry’s or Hadid’s, he is not so far from this practice of architect-turned-celebrity. Graves has become a household name, partially due to his mastery of brand expansion. In 1999, he was named \textit{GQ} magazine’s “Man of the Year,”\textsuperscript{32} a kind of star title Hadid would soon inherit from popular publications as well.

People working behind the scenes, like architects and fashion designers, used to be just that, behind the scenes. With newer developments of who can be a celebrity come new expectations of professional self-presentation. In a critique of the contemporary starchitect system, one writer mentioned that as of lately, photographs
of architects are more likely than photographs of their architecture to illustrate their biographies. The image of Le Corbusier in his spectacles and bow tie returns to the scene as architects’ names conjure images of not just their work, but themselves. The manner in which they dress themselves is implied to be important, and the brand of the architect is no longer only an issue of their architectural work but comes to include their public image, personality traits, and outside interests and talents. That being said, starchitects who design within other media are not simply celebrities, but have some artistic experience. Though many architects receive the rights to a collaboration because of their celebrity status, celebrities don’t think of fashion as an artistic medium in the way that artists like architects working in another design medium do. These figures are not so easily categorized, which is why it is difficult to determine Hadid’s precise role within the architecture and fashion industries.

The Life and Career of Zaha Hadid

Zaha Hadid was born in Baghdad, Iraq in 1950, but has been based in London, England since the start of her architectural career. She began studying architecture at London’s Architectural Association in 1972, working for architect Rem Koolhaas’ Office for Metropolitan Architecture simultaneously. Soon after Hadid graduated the Architectural Association in 1977, she was made a partner at Koolhaas’ office before establishing her own practice in 1980. Hadid first began to find her own voice as an architect with the Malevich-inspired Tectonic Bridge design set over the Thames, based on the avant-garde artist’s abstract drawings and conceptual ideas. As her graduating thesis for the Architectural Association, this project (Figure 2.8)
demonstrates Hadid’s unique style and method of constructing images of alternate realities with abstract forms emerging from a landscape. 

Early on in her career, Hadid was more known for her compelling drawings and paintings of imagined buildings and designs. It wasn’t until around the year 2000 that she began more active design and construction, with the Center for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1999-2003 (Figure 2.9), the Phaeno Science Center in Wolfsburg, Germany, 2001-2005 (Figure 2.10), and the Central Building of the BMW Assembly Plant in Leipzig, Germany, 2005 (Figure 2.11). These examples of Hadid’s earlier successful works coincide with her rise to fame and the beginning of her expansion and development as an icon.

The Phaeno Science Center exemplifies Hadid’s use of digital design to create unusual shapes, and is one of her most well recognized buildings. The project was to be an interactive museum built entirely on one level. Hadid needed to find a way for her design to both blend in smoothly, connecting to the nearby AutoPark while standing out against the surrounding buildings deemed “Volkswagen-Town” of Wolfsburg. Hadid approached this challenge by constructing a poured concrete structure with multiple paths running through its open ground level, connecting it to the surrounding city while contrasting with the brick landscape. The main exhibition space is supported by concrete cones that alternate sitting below the main floor to support it and other cones that are puncturing through, providing support for the steel roof. The full structural system allows for the support of a large volume that sits all on one level, as the funnel-shaped concrete cones are inverted to balance weight (Figure 2.12). Inside the building, some of the cones are positioned to allow visitors...
to walk through them, while others are used to provide lighting.\textsuperscript{42} The cones lift the body of the building, accentuating the structure’s great weight.\textsuperscript{43} Phaeno has been recognized for its unique use of seemingly seamless concrete that also has a strange, almost porous quality due to the scattered placement of windows, as well as the molded cones. The undulating, coffered ceiling of the raised main exhibition floor lends to the fluidity of the form. The visual impact of the connection of the ground with the cones, as well as the precast concrete mass’s wrapped shape has led the building to be compared to the form of a crouching lizard.\textsuperscript{44}

The science center is futuristic but practical as well (Figure 2.13). The layout of the space enables a change of exhibitions with simple additions of ropes and partitions, shifting the visitor’s axis of vision and movement. Parallels have been drawn between the massive concrete design and Le Corbusier’s 1950’s Marseille apartment blocks, similarly raised on supporting pilotis.\textsuperscript{45} Hadid’s work with concrete, however, is a break away from the simplified forms of Le Corbusier’s modernist designs, as she eschews traditional structure by allowing curves to merge wall with ceiling and floor. The concrete cones are both structurally innovative and lend to the futuristic quality of the building’s interior. As Hadid designed Phaeno, her fame propagated. In 2004, Hadid was awarded the annual Pritzker Architecture Prize, becoming the first woman to win the prize.\textsuperscript{46} From the early 2000’s forward, she has taught architecture at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and at Yale University in Connecticut.\textsuperscript{47} The year 2004 marks a threshold for Hadid, where she was awarded the prestigious Pritzker Prize and began building the very structures she is known for today. Starting in this year, there is increasing recognition and press for Hadid, both
as a prominent architect and a woman of power. From this point on, she expanded her brand into one still primarily of architecture but also of design across the board, experimenting in fashion, interiors, and furniture design.

Built after Hadid’s rise in fame, the MAXXI National Center of Contemporary Arts (Figure 2.14), built in Rome in 2010, works on similar principles of Phaeno while challenging conventions of the art institution. The National Museum of XXI Century Arts, shortened to MAXXI, was to be built for the Roman government-funded Fondazione MAXXI for Art and Architecture as early as 1999.\(^\text{48}\) Hadid entered and won a competition to complete the design. The difficulty of the project lay in its location in the Flaminio district, just outside Rome’s historic center.\(^\text{49}\) The site for the museum was to follow the route connecting the Tiber River to the Via Guido Reni. In addition, the plan aligned with the site of former army barracks, and MAXXI was required to acknowledge this history.\(^\text{50}\) Hadid accomplished these challenges by treating the building like a river, wiggling in form around the surrounding buildings as an allusion to the Tiber, and with “streams” within as interior gallery spaces that take different paths which converge and cross over one another.\(^\text{51}\) Additionally, the entrance to the museum is positioned on the axis of the connection of the Tiber to the Via Guido Reni, and architectural junctures are carefully aligned with the urban grids beneath the site (Figure 2.15). The space stretches out like an urban field rather than a stacked building of conventional form,\(^\text{52}\) despite its three stories contained within. The building curves as if malleable, as Hadid does not use walls conventionally to separate spaces and display art. The museum’s walls are more fluid in curved form and function, as they transition from
solid partitions to projection screen to canvas, with inserted windows opening to enable views of the city outside. These unique choices give a great deal of freedom to the museum curator while challenging conventions of looking at art. The interior design of MAXXI demonstrates Hadid’s unique tension between futuristic shapes and a soft, seamless fluidity that she achieves with smooth, often concrete, surfaces punctuated by futuristic elements created with the aid of technology. Both the Phaeno Science Center and MAXXI tap into the urban location while functioning successfully as isolated institutions. This achievement, coupled with the unique technological futurism of the final formal product, place the two buildings among Hadid’s most successful projects. Since gaining recognition for works like the Phaeno Science Center and MAXXI, Hadid has had more freedom to experiment with unconventional media, including fashion.

**Hadid in Fashion**

In addition to her extensive career in architecture, Hadid has publically supported the work of various fashion designers, and referencing them as important sources of inspiration for her own work. In 2005, Hadid served as an architectural critic in the Phaidon text, *10·10_2: 100 Architects, 10 Critics*. Providing her voice as an architect, critic and designer at large, she cites fashion designer Issey Miyake as one of ten prolific references in the media inspiring her architecture, along with fellow fashion designers Hussein Chalayan and Yohji Yamamoto. Issey Miyake is a Japanese fashion designer whose style is innovative in shape and structure, frequently using bright color to create a sense of simplicity within a complex, sculptural form.
His work evokes architecture in a number of ways, going beyond conventional patterns of garments and exploring the breakable boundaries between form and function. Like Hadid, Miyake’s brand has expanded artistically with the rise of digitization and the possibilities technological advancements have provided for the realization of a garment. Within the section on the critics’ selected images in 10·10_2: 100 Architects, 10 Critics, Hadid displays photographs of Miyake’s A Piece of Cloth (A-POC) fashion line, including the A-POC 12 “Angle” Shirt, and Miyake’s garments entitled Shell, Staircase, and Escargot. On her own, Hadid has also been featured in numerous fashion publications as a prolific figure in the design world. This has much to do with the fashion statements she has made when wearing bold and interesting garments and putting together daring ensembles for her own public appearances. Generally, Hadid is known for making seemingly seamless architecture without visible edges on her concrete surfaces. This desire to pursue the breakdown of edge, boundary between inner and outer, can be seen in the complex pleats and folds of the innovative garments that Hadid has chosen to endorse, or even to design under her eponymous brand. The architect has been known to wear Issey Miyake jackets, which alone often look more like sculptures than garments, upside-down. By reorienting traditional forms of garments or buildings, Hadid creates more abstract forms that interact with the body or landscape unconventionally. Her penchant for wearing unique garments and ensembles herself has lead to general recognition within the fashion world, as a starchitect as well as a fashion icon.

Since her rise to starchitect status, Hadid has received great attention by the media outside of the architecture world, including large fashion publications like
Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar. What’s curious is the changing relationship she seems to have with fashion, and the break between what she says of her engagement with fashion and what she has actually accomplished as a professional. When asked about her overlapping interests in architecture and fashion in 2008, Hadid said, “Contemporary society is not standing still—fashion and architecture must both evolve with the patterns of life. I think what is new in our generation is a new level of social complexity, which is reflected in its architecture, art and fashion.”58 This view suggests Hadid’s expectation that architecture must keep up with and reflect the larger evolving design world. As an architect and a tenant of one realm of design, to stay in the forefront of contemporary society, she must be connected to the other branches of design. Though her love of fashion seems genuine, Hadid is also doing what she can to keep her own brand current, relevant, and interesting to the public. In a 2011 interview with Vogue, Hadid said,

I have been interested in fashion since I was a kid. Then I lived in London, where it was more about costume and a personal statement of who you are than about fashion. In a sense, I’m into fashion because it contains the mood of the day, of the moment—like music, literature, and art. I am also very fascinated by the way one can transform cloth and make it do things that it doesn’t always do. Architecture is how the person places herself in the space. Fashion is about how you place the object on the person. That’s why for a long time I liked some of the early Japanese work by Issey Miyake and Yohji Yamamoto— they were so structured that it was like wearing a different material. With shoes it’s all about sculpture—how to design a column. They have to land somewhere.59

In addition to grounding her love of fashion in art, this quote also demonstrates her interest in fashion to be relevant to architecture. As Hadid recognizes, Miyake and other designers see garments and shoes as sculptural structures, drawing a comparison between building and fashion design. Similarly, in a 2012 interview with Time Magazine, Hadid said, “There is a connection between architecture and fashion
because of the way the body is placed within that space. I'm interested in fashion because it's the immediate thing that shows you the temper of a particular moment."  

When asked her favorite thing to design in addition to buildings, in the same *Time* 2012 interview, Hadid said, “I would have liked to design clothes, but there are so many great designers, I leave it to them.”  

These statements are interesting because they were made after Hadid was already involved in the fashion world, having already produced shoes and costumes for a number of brands. Though she has not designed a clothing line of her own, she is in many ways a designer of fashion. What brought Hadid from an admirer of fashion to a dictator of it? To understand her gradual transition from a stylish architect to a starchitect with a vast array of fashion design projects of her own, her work in and around fashion must be examined chronologically.

An earlier example of Hadid’s interdisciplinary work is her set and costume designs for the Metapolis Ballet in Charleroi, Belgium (Figure 2.16). From 1999 through 2007, Hadid’s creations for the ballet translated architecture into movement, putting architecture in direct dialogue with fashion. The main set pieces that Hadid designed are three aluminum bridges that can be slid and rearranged into many different configurations, which dancers do throughout the performance. The costumes that Hadid designed for the dancers are bold and asymmetrical, with graphic color blocking. They range from unitards to geometric skirts, some one-legged and some one-sleeved, mimicking the odd angles the designers make with their bodies in the space. As the dancers move around and about the translucent aluminum bridges, they are thought to be wearing the structures, and their odd
costumes are additional, intermediate layers to be worn and interacted with. Hadid’s work for the ballet is interesting because it predates both her major rise to fame and also her transition into the fashion industry. Yet this project demonstrates her acute awareness of the body’s relationship to the space it occupies, and how clothing and structure can come together to convey an aesthetic message. In extending her work from stage architecture to actual costume, Hadid played with the idea of fashion design, something that would recur later in her career.

As Hadid gained recognition in the fashion world, in 2007, Karl Lagerfeld, the distinguished chief fashion designer of Chanel, commissioned her to create a mobile art pavilion for the clothing line. The pavilion was to serve as a display and container for twenty works of art made by international contemporary artists, all inspired by Chanel’s iconic quilted purse. Hadid’s translation of the Chanel aesthetic into a unique architectural work exemplifies another kind of artistic collaboration, in which a specialist is introduced to incorporate the design aesthetic of a well-known brand into another outlet of design. The pavilion (Figures 2.17, 2.18) is a white, portable enclosure made up of smaller arc segments that has an arching, quilted appearance, also inspired by the Chanel quilted 2.55 purse. The bubble-like container was designed to be portable, and each arc segment can be easily dismantled and reassembled, which has allowed the pavilion to exhibit in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Manhattan, London, and Moscow. Hadid has said that the curvilinear form of the building could not have been conceived without digital imaging software and new technological advances, which is true of many of her other contemporary architectural designs. The structure has a futuristic appeal, as if it floats above the
ground it’s positioned on. Perhaps its actual mobility lends to this illusion, but the white, windowless units give the effect of a space station, which allows the pavilion to stand out in any of the metropolises in which it lands. In a review of the container, Michael Polsinelli called the structure “a convergence of fashion, art and architecture.”69 The conflation of the three industries, once seen to be separate, demonstrates the more recent connection between architecture and fashion under the larger umbrella of contemporary design. The Chanel pavilion was Hadid’s first major collaboration with a fashion brand. Following this project, she began to design actual fashion, in the form of footwear, swimwear and accessories. Perhaps it was the Chanel container that clarified fashion, art and architecture’s connection, making it an easier jump from one realm of design to another.

Hadid’s first public foray into the realm of fashion design was in 2008, in a collaboration with Brazilian footwear brand Melissa (Figure 2.19). Like many of her building designs, Hadid’s shoe for Melissa appears to be without edges, seamlessly transitioning from toe to ankle to heel with fluid lines that crossover and curve with one another. The shoe almost looks as if molded from a block of wax,70 though its seamless appearance is just on the surface, hiding the junctures of the shoe beneath. These designs bear a certain resemblance to the overlapping arcs of Hadid’s aluminum bridges at the Charleroi Metapolis Ballet. Hadid continued her experimentation with shoe design from 2008 through 2009, with a collection of shoes for the high-end company Lacoste (Figure 2.20). On the website for Zaha Hadid architects, Hadid displays digitally-produced images of curving, fluid forms that slowly become apparent to be abstract designs for her Lacoste shoes. The design is an
attempt at utilitarian style, taking an ergonomic shape to provide comfort, appropriate to the athletic nature of the Lacoste brand. Hadid said of this collaboration, “I have always been interested in the concepts of abstraction and explosion and the dynamic fluid grids of the Lacoste design are direct evolution of these ideas… The grids expand and contract when wrapped around the foot to create the fluid forms that follow the contours of the foot.”\textsuperscript{71} Her boot for the Lacoste collection looks similar to the flat shoe, only it has a wrapped piece that winds up the leg, which was inspired by an alligator tail. For this design, Hadid’s team used the rapid-prototyping technologies they usually employ for modeling a building.\textsuperscript{72} Hadid’s designs for Lacoste convey her aesthetic of seamless, fluid lines, while looking entirely different than those for the Melissa footwear collaboration. In this way, Hadid is catering to the Lacoste brand; a brand based in preppy and sporty roots, something Hadid has not linked her own personal style with. As promotional texts on these projects often remind the reader that Hadid’s technological practices for fashion design are similar to those she uses in architecture, the media has spread the idea that architecture and fashion have much in common behind the scenes.

Hadid’s public involvement with the fashion industry has ranged from her own work as a designer to her renown for making bold choices with her own clothing. In 2012, \textit{Glamour} Magazine named Hadid “Woman of the Year.” This American fashion magazine focused on Hadid’s achievements as a woman who broke through a male-dominated industry, praising her designs for their graceful fluid appearance.\textsuperscript{73} Yet the magazine also calls restates her nicknames of “The Z” and “The Lady Gaga of Architecture,”\textsuperscript{74} reinforcing her celebrity status and daring image that has linked
her with fashion icons. This feature is not uncommon, as recently fashion has shown more interest in architecture as an influence on design as a whole. In following years, Hadid would be featured in prestigious fashion magazine *Harper’s Bazaar* for both interviews and features, and eventually listed as one of *The Guardian’s* “Best Dressers in Britain.” It is possible that Hadid’s interest in fashion is connected with her image as a frontrunner of contemporary design. As someone who is praised for her work in one major design sphere, it is not unrelated to love the work of another. As she is represented in *Harper’s Bazaar*, Hadid is labeled as someone relevant to the fashion world. Along with a handful of other contemporary architects, Hadid has been called a “starchitect,” making her more than an expert in her field; she is deemed a celebrity whose work evokes images of glamour and avant-garde chic. This label not only boosts her image as an architect, but also justifies her experimentation in other areas of design, such as fashion, deeming it inevitably cool. Hadid is also widely admired by the younger generation of architects, potentially setting a model of the possible expansion of an architectural career within the larger design world.

Hadid’s gallery, separate from the Zaha Hadid Architects offices, is a space for the immediate consumption of fashion objects, and consequentially, it further rounds out her brand. In 2013, Hadid began exhibiting work by fashion designer Elke Walter in her London gallery. Walter’s garments are uniquely draped instead of cut, to look different on each body, and because of their volume, the layers of fabric move as the body moves. Like work by Issey Miyake, Walter’s garments take on a sculptural appearance that both interacts with the body beneath but also seems to take its own form. Hadid has worn pieces by Walter at public appearances and in photo
shoots, making known her personal preference for the designer’s one-of-a-kind, voluminous garments (Figure 2.21). Her display and sale of the garments in her own professional space signified a step beyond appreciation of the designer and a relationship more akin to an endorsement. Walter’s clothing is not the only fashion exhibited in Hadid’s gallery. The architect’s own fashion projects in collaboration with different brands are all available and on display in the space. The incorporation of fashion into an architectural gallery (Figure 2.22) may round out the architect’s body of work and make their brand seem more expansive, but it also changes the nature of the space into an open possibility for buying and selling. Hadid’s large-scale architectural projects take years to realize, while the sale of clothing, shoes, and accessories is an opportunity for instantaneous monetary exchange. Thus while Hadid may truly love Walter’s garments and her own fashion designs on top of that, their sale in her gallery is also a marketing strategy that may supplement her revered architectural practice. Moreover, Hadid’s decision to open a gallery space in addition to her offices can be explained by the larger starchitect tradition. In 1994, Michael Graves opened up his Graves Design Store in Princeton, New Jersey (Figure 2.23). The store is a small retail space that carries his watches, jewelry, leather goods and other product designs. This capitalized on Graves’ success as a brand and not an architect, and Hadid’s expansion of her own brand to include a boutique-like gallery follows a similar pattern. The starchitect is assumed a level of commercial appeal, and the immediate sale of their designs in a storefront supports their marketing interests.
While wearing Elke Walter and publicizing her love of fashion in 2013, Hadid returned to shoe design, this time making a shoe that appears entirely anti-utilitarian, with a stacked, cantilevered heel measuring 6.25 inches high. The *Nova* shoe (Figure 2.24), designed for footwear brand United Nude, draws on architectural principles to appear unsupported by a heel while standing stable. United Nude is the shoe brand of Rem D. Koolhaas, the nephew of contemporary architect Rem Koolhaas, and who has designed additional shoes inspired by famous architectural works. Hadid’s shoe for United Nude is made of vinyl, rubber, fiberglass and leather, and its metal-like exterior lends it a hard, steely appearance similar to many of Hadid’s buildings but rarely seen on a shoe. According to United Nude as well as Hadid’s firm, the *Nova* uses a new technique called rotation molding, made possible with recent technological advancements, which allows the shoe to look smooth and seamless while maintaining comfort. In this way, Hadid has made technology into a central selling point for her brand. The shoes have a radical appearance overall, looking like futuristic works of art over any kind of footwear. There has been a recent trend in similar shoe designs, however, where graphic platform heels are made without an actual heel to stand on, relying on structural elements that allow one to walk on them. Hadid’s shoes have been sold by a number of retailers that specialize in more avant-garde designs, but their two thousand dollar price for a pair makes them less than accessible to the general public.

The shoes have also been recognized for bearing striking resemblance to the design of many of Hadid’s buildings. Indeed, a comparison can be drawn between the *Nova* shoe and MAXXI (Figure 2.25). The shoe’s striations wrap around the form
like jagged pieces of metal, despite their hidden leather interiors and flexibility to the touch. MAXXI’s walls and ceilings are broken down into rib-like lines both on the interior and exterior, merging the urban space with the exhibition space. Concrete fins extend down from the roof, some containing light fixtures and other utilities, and some providing for temporary partitions that aid exhibition space. The walls twist in places to become floor or up into the ceiling, changing the box form of the traditional art institution. The ribs of the ceiling echo the lines of the walls, lending the space a fluidity that contrasts with the sharpness of the ribs and fins, which jut out harshly.

Similarly, the Nova shoe uses the repeating striations to cover up breaks and junctures in the shoe’s form, faking a kind of seamlessness. The repeating striations are divided into sections that extend in different directions. As the concrete fins accent different walking pathways within the museum, the rubber ridges covering the exterior of the shoe subtly indicate different parts of the foot while also carefully masking technical features of the structure beneath. Overall, the cartoonish dynamism of the shoe conveys futuristic aesthetics, while combining with Hadid’s clever cantilevering.

MAXXI, too, has futuristic elements that parallel the formal attributes of the shoe, including fluorescent tubes, glass roofs, and forking stairs that serve more aesthetically than functionally. Elements of the building that are cantilevered laterally or are hung from above appear to be floating, using similar structural techniques to the floating heel of the Nova. As both projects demonstrate, Hadid’s approach is far from minimalist. Despite her love of media with inherently smooth and simple surfaces, she consistently rejects traditional, simplified form for ones that will make a dramatic statement.
For the summer of 2014, Hadid collaborated with swimwear line Viviona on a line of swimsuits (Figure 2.26). All one-piece swimsuits, Hadid did her best to eschew the typically simple lines of such garments. Making what the brand is calling “parametric swimwear,” Hadid created unusual shapes and lines by making patterns out of the voids sewn into the suits. “Parametric” refers to the parameters and physical contours emphasized in the cut-outs of Hadid’s swimsuits. Generally used as a mathematical term, it is not a phrase ordinarily used in fashion, nor does Hadid employ it often outside of the discussion of her swimwear line. Because of this incongruity, “parametric” becomes a marketing gambit more than a formal descriptor of her fashion designs. The suits range in modesty depending on the placement of the cut-out shapes and holes, some flirtatious-looking and some creating bold graphic prints. All of the swimsuits are black, rendering the removed parts or voids a potential for drama. It must be noted that the Viviona collection demonstrates the lack of critique Hadid has received in fashion literature, as the only available texts on this project are promotional. Though the swimsuits safely relied on an already established brand to align Hadid’s name with, they were sent out into the consumer market, barely making a splash.

The swimwear collection demonstrates how Hadid’s fashion designs have not all received the same amounts of attention, reflecting on the questionable nature of her insertion into the fashion industry. In British publication the Telegraph, Albert Hill questioned whether Hadid had extended herself beyond the wide range of her talents when designing for Viviona Swimwear. The critic said that the line of swimsuits was far from Hadid’s finest work, her successful cases all being her
architecture. The fact that Hadid was called out by a general newspaper for her work in fashion is notable. Though she is celebrated in the fashion world as a talented architect and icon in her own right, Hadid’s fashion designs have received little to no mention in major fashion publications. Her inability to make a dent in the fashion world with her designs either indicates that her work was not marketed as traditional garments for sale, or that they contributed little to the realm of fashion design.

Perhaps to defend her image as successful above all, Hadid’s fashion designs were advertised in limited release, as kinds of art objects rather than merchandise for sale. Moreover, though Hadid has received ample praise from fashion magazines like *Glamour*, which use her to top lists of power figures and trendsetters, these magazines do not review her fashion designs. Her pavilion for Chanel made headlines as a luxury fashion brand fused with futuristic architecture, but her shoe and swimwear designs can almost exclusively be read about on faux-publications and promotional texts online. It seems that the more legitimate journals and reviews of fashion prefer Hadid remain closer to her comfort zone, designing architecture for fashion like the Chanel pavilion, and wearing bold clothes rather than designing them.

As a culmination of her steep rise to success within architecture and design at large, Hadid both designed and participated in the 2014 exhibition at London Design Museum entitled “Women, Fashion, Power.” The exhibition (Figure 2.27) focused on 150 years of fashion worn by female figures of power, whether in politics, business, popular culture, or the arts. It aimed to illustrate how inspirational women have used fashion as a tool of empowerment and self-expression. Hadid was one of twenty-six women in the show who were asked to lend one or more garment or outfit of their
own, demonstrating how they use their own personal style to convey strength and artistry. In addition to being featured, Hadid designed the architecture and layout of the exhibition itself, using neon signage and mirrors against white backgrounds, partitions, and pedestals for the clothing, along with graphic lighting and other accents. Co-curator of the show Colin McDowell told DeZeen Magazine that Hadid “chose herself” to design the exhibition, though it was a choice that he and the other curators strongly agreed with. By voicing her desire to design the show, Hadid further inserted herself into the dialogue of architects involved with fashion. Being the first woman architect to win the Pritzker Prize, Hadid’s involvement with the exhibition further advanced the celebration of women in power. This project also reflects on Hadid’s inspirational role as a woman in a male-dominated industry, and how the media has appropriated this image toward her success. While in the past twenty years Gehry has been showered with the attention of a true celebrity, he could not play quite the role that Hadid does as a celebrated woman.

Zaha Hadid’s interests in the fashion industry can be traced to a true love of style and also to keen knowledge of brand marketing, the latter of which designers have long recognized as vital to their survival. It is impossible to read into her design endeavors without a layer of skepticism toward her attempts to capitalize on new opportunities made available by an expanding fashion industry. Branding and brand expansion have been crucial to the success of any kind of designer, be it fashion, architecture, or otherwise. In 1957, Christian Dior realized that luxury goods could be manufactured as mass product, which he said was crucial to his brand’s success.
Later in the 1960’s, Pierre Cardin, Dior’s protégé, expanded his eponymous brand to the extent that manufacturers put his name on household objects to give them fashionable appeal. In 1995, Tom Ford took over Gucci and brought the label back to success by re-branding the Gucci name to be synonymous with sexuality, through advertising and other marketing strategies. The Gucci brand’s sex appeal, coupled with its expansion into accessories meant that many could afford at least a piece of Gucci, and everyone wanted to. In the same vein, Prada created an image of a creative, intelligent woman to associate with the label. Brands seek to have strong associations with their name in order to identify an audience and corner that market, and architects are not excluded from this practice. Thus, an architect like Hadid’s exploration of other design opportunities beyond her expertise can be seen as brand expansion, or the opportunity to introduce new income stream.

Hadid’s efforts to make her design aesthetic prominent have succeeded in that the key words “seamless” and “fluid” architecture have lent her brand a quirky and daring sort of grace. Hadid was introduced into the fashion world because of her notable personal style, but examined as a celebrity and not only an architect, she follows a tradition of celebrities drawn into the fashion industry. Her design collaborations are best examined not as the work of a fashion designer, but a star architect who, like many other famous individuals, collaborated with already-established brands. Along with other architects who have risen in fame to the point that they are deemed “starchitects,” Hadid is grouped into the category of celebrity who has enough success in her main domain to be allowed to venture into other projects. Alber Elbaz, renowned head designer for Lanvin, responded to the trend of
pop-stars-turned designers by mockingly saying, “and maybe I should sing”

Criticism of Hadid’s collaborations such as that by Hill echo this sentiment, that the
architect may have proven her talent in many outlets, but her passion in another is not
enough to make her an expert.

Surpassing the specific role of architect, Zaha Hadid is a design icon in her
own right. While architecture is her clear strength, she is now accepted as a master of
design, allowing her to practice with many media. Hadid has chosen to work with
brands that will certainly deliver her brand deeper into the masses of consumption,
like Lacoste and Chanel. However her lesser-known brand collaborations like Melissa
and Viviona reveal Hadid as an individual trying to experiment with a subject she is
not so familiar with. Though Hadid has long since been accepted as a power dresser
and welcome totem in the fashion world, she has not mastered fashion design, nor is
such mastery of fashion necessarily part of her objective. Along with the likes of
Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, Rem D. Koolhaas, and other contemporary architects,
Hadid is doing a great deal to bring design as one united amalgamation to the
forefront of popular culture. As Gehry and Graves have demonstrated, if the culture
of celebrity branding predates the concept of the starchitect, once the architects rise to
this stature, their status becomes worked into larger ideas of celebrity and inevitably
branding, allowing them to consider brand expansion to new forums of design.
Moreover, once ideas of branding become expected for artists and not just celebrities,
as the latter traditionally would be expected, any artist who wants to succeed as Hadid
clearly does must involve themselves with this kind of branding. A set of expectations
has developed that push the individual to feel concerned with self-presentation; it’s
not just a choice, but a process that engages with the norms of the field, as Hadid has
become expected to expand her brand beyond architecture. It’s clear that she has a
true love of fashion, but her motives behind pushing her own name toward ubiquity
are not so simply identified. The challenge of self-presentation has been redefined to
expect the desire to succeed as a celebrity where artists wouldn’t ordinarily feel
compelled to be grouped into this category. As a successful woman in a profession
previously dominated by men, Hadid has become a celebrated icon for many
audiences, in and out of the architecture world. As a creative professional, she
embodies the idea of the starchitect as a cultural figure who works beyond the typical
boundaries of one practice.
Chapter Appendix:

Complete works by Hadid that relate to the fashion world*:

1999-2007: Set and costume design for the Metapolis Ballet in Charleroi

2006: “Icône” handbag designed for Louis Vuitton’s “Icons” exhibition

2007: Chanel Contemporary Art Container designed for various locations

2007-2008: Design for Atelier Notify in Paris’ fashion district

2008: Neil Barrett Flagship store designed in Tokyo

2008: "Celeste” necklace and bracelet designed for Atelier Swarovski

2008: Shoe design collaboration with Melissa Footwear

2008: Shoe design collaboration for Lacoste

2010: “Glace” five-piece collection of bracelets for Atelier Swarovski

2012: “Frozen Aura” dress designed for the World Wildlife Fund

2012: Perfume bottle designed for Donna Karan

2013: “Nova” shoe designed for United Nude footwear

2013: “Skein” jewelry collection for Caspita

2013-2014: Stuart Weitzman boutique interior design in Hong Kong

2014: “Silene” bracelet designed for House of Aziz & Walid Mouzannar

2014: Swimwear collection in collaboration with Viviona Swimwear

2014: Silk scarves designed honoring the Innovation Tower and Dongdaemun Plaza

2014: Silk ties designed as inspired by “Array” seating design

2014: Women Fashion Power exhibition design for the London Design Museum

*Works and projects in boldface have been previously discussed in this chapter.


3 Ibid, 107.


5 Ibid, 110

6 Ibid.


11 Ibid, 133.

12 Ibid, 57.


14 Ibid, 10.

15 Ibid, 12.

16 Ibid, 14.

17 Ibid, 15.

18 Ibid, 21.

19 Ibid, 16.

20 Ibid, 18-19.


22 Ibid, 269.


28 Aspden, "Interview: Frank Gehry."

29 Ibid.


32 Iovine, Michael Graves, 7.


34 Jodidio, Philip. *Architecture Now! Museums.* (Cologne: Taschen, 2010), 166.

35 *10·10: 100 Architects, 10 Critics.* (London: Phaidon, 2005), 5.


37 Ibid, 18.


44 Ibid.


46 *10·10: 100 Architects, 10 Critics,* 5.

47 Ibid.


49 Ibid.


51 Pearson, “Maxxi,” 82.


53 Ibid, 175.

54 Ibid, 419.

55 Ibid, 430.


57 Ibid, 229.


61 Ibid.


64 Ibid.

66 Polsinelli, “Zaha Hadid Packs Chanel.”
68 Ibid.
69 Polsinelli, “Zaha Hadid Packs Chanel.”
70 Sokol, "Architects Tread in New Territory: Shoe Design."


72 Sokol, "Architects Tread in New Territory: Shoe Design."


74 Ibid.


78 Hadid, _Zaha Hadid: Testing the Boundaries_, 7.


80 Iovine, _Michael Graves_, 20.
81 Wardrobe Building,” 145.


83 Ibid.

85 Pearson, “Maxxi,” 82.
86 Hadid, _Zaha Hadid: Testing the Boundaries_, 175.
87 Pearson, “Maxxi,” 82.


89 Gibberd, "In at the Deep End."


92 Ibid.


94 Ibid.

95 Ibid, 17.

96 Menkes, "Red Carpet Baggers."
Chapter 3:

Issey Miyake, Hussein Chalayan, and Architects of Fashion

As we have seen, architects are newly exploring their own professional capacities for design by reaching into the fashion industry. On the opposite end of the spectrum, fashion designers have credited architecture for inspiring their work and artistic processes, but have made no public attempts at becoming architects of anything other than their own clothing. Japanese fashion designer Issey Miyake embraces the possibilities of technology for the manufacture of clothes, while working with a unique architectural quality and level of artistry. Zaha Hadid has worn Miyake’s unconventional designs at many public appearances, praising the architecture and structure of his work. Miyake employs technological practices to manipulate textiles and play with the surface of a garment in an unusual manner. His clothing line Pleats, Please works with pleating to change conventions of seams and boundaries, while resulting in a functional and accessible garment that is easy to wear. In contrast with Miyake’s modus operandi, many other fashion designers who evoke architecture in their work have created sculptural garments that are less practical than they are avant-garde. Designer Hussein Chalayan’s extravagant runway shows emphasize this avant-garde nature, drawing connections between fashion and artistic exhibition. Popular fashion designers today have benefited from the ventures that architects have extended toward the fashion world, and a reciprocal kind of engagement with architecture has resulted. Developing technologies have proved to be the predominant enablers of this kind of crossover activity, and have allowed for fashion designers to achieve status as innovative, avant-garde artists. Issey Miyake,
Hussein Chalayan, and numerous other fashion designers demonstrate how contemporary practices allow themes of surface architecture to be seamlessly integrated into their garments.

Both museum exhibitions and the rise of the runway show allowed fashion to become more associated with art in the public consciousness. In 1983, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, with the help of *Vogue*, held its first-ever fashion design retrospective for Yves Saint Laurent¹, explicitly linking fashion to the art world. Even more contemporarily, since 2009, there has been an increase in the display of fashion in the museum, as retrospectives of designers’ work, and of entire fashion movements, have become more common.² The concept of the fashion show, however, has come a long way since the late nineteenth century, where Charles Frederick Worth’s wife would hold events wearing his clothing, acting as a kind of moving mannequin.³ In 1910, American department store Wannamaker’s showed live models dressed in their fashions in the Philadelphia store, adopting the European practice, but not yet on a runway.⁴ The Paris catwalk of the 1920’s involved models walking in a kind of chorus-line formation.⁵ In the 1940’s, American fashion publicist Eleanor Lambert organized the first “press week,” a week dedicated to the revealing of new fashion design collections for the press and fashion-involved public to see,⁶ though it didn’t have the same runway connotations as contemporary fashion weeks. It wasn’t until the early 1990’s when fashion week became a fixed event for designers to show their collections in tents in New York City’s Bryant Park, and in the spring of 1994, the first designer collections held their runway shows, as they are known
today. Since the contemporary establishment of the runway show practice, designers have experimented with the catwalk as artistic exhibition.

Though the runway show, also called the catwalk or fashion show, is for some designers merely an organized presentation of their new collections, certain designers, including Hussein Chalayan, Alexander McQueen, and Martin Margiela have all used the runway as an artistic and at times theatrical platform to convey the emotional or humorous concepts behind their work. Whether or not a garment is wearable is irrelevant at this point, as highlights of the runway are often treated as art objects used to accent the collection, despite their non-utilitarian function. A clear distinction has emerged between the runway and the real world, and throughout the year, crowds flock to the fashion week tents to catch a glimpse of a spectacle. Despite the true high-concept artistry put into some of these designers’ work, the runway show maintains a certain amount of spectacle value. Fashion shows can be examined both as artistic works and marketing ploys, though museum exhibitions in the fine arts are not exempt from the same criticism. Like art galleries, fashion shows are meant to be carefully curated environments that bear no indication of the depth of processes of designing and constructing the work on display. Ceri Isaac comments on the theatre of the catwalk, as witnessed in Hussein Chalayan’s fashion shows, “Another similarity between the building of a collection for a fashion show and the development of a dramatic production is that for both the event and each garment to be successful, the director and all those taking part must be constantly open to entirely new directions of action and last minute changes.” The amount of creative
direction funneled into a fashion show demonstrates that the catwalk is a separate entity from the ready-to-wear yet equally fashionable shops.

While the work of these more thematic runway shows is not always so evidently wearable, designers have also presented “ready-to-wear” collections to be sold to a broader market. These collections are not necessarily more accessible in price, but the garments of ready-to-wear shows are less often comparable to works of art or architecture, despite the intricate work and artistry that must go into their designs. If the catwalk indicates a kind of spectacle, then ready-to-wear work, though also presented on a runway, aims at being more easily consumed. The concept of ready-to-wear emerged in the 1960’s, when fashion decentralized and became dictated bottom-up by youth subcultures and lifestyles. As haute couture seemed less relevant to the burgeoning cultures of streetwear and casual fashion, luxury design houses developed prêt-à-porter, or ready-to-wear, collections, beginning with Pierre Cardin in 1961 and Yves Saint Laurent in 1966. These collections made it more possible for the average consumer to own a piece of high fashion. The ready-to-wear phenomenon couples with the kind of brand expansion previously explored, where a label incorporates accessories, footwear and perfume into their design house, to make the brand more attainable and appeal to the widest range of consumers. Some ready-to-wear collections reach a broader market than others, depending on the complete aesthetic of the design label, as some are intrinsically more accessible in their overall appeal. Other designers pride themselves on producing wearable art, which often appears more sculptural and architectural than a ready-to-wear piece.
Above all, there are designers like Issey Miyake that succeed in combining utility and artistry to make fashion that is spectacular, architectural, and wearable.

**Issey Miyake**

Issey Miyake was born in Hiroshima, Japan in 1968. As a child, Miyake wanted to be a dancer, which perhaps explains his later fascination with dance as it moves a garment. He enjoyed drawing and studied graphic design at the Tama University in Tokyo, but simultaneously developed an interest in fashion. Miyake drew inspiration from his sister’s American fashion magazines, and he said of this in 2001, “I felt, through the images I saw in the magazines, that fashion could be like beautiful architecture for the body… I was amazed at how architecture and other design fields completely ignored fashion design.” Miyake graduated university in 1965 and went to Paris, enrolling in the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne to learn pattern making and sewing. During this time, he was heavily influenced by the work of sculptors in the fine arts like Alberto Giacometti, and high fashion designers like Cristóbal Balenciaga. Miyake worked in Paris under Guy Laroche and Hubert de Givenchy as an assistant designer before traveling to New York City in 1969. There he carefully studied the American art scene while working for renowned fashion designer Geoffrey Beene, deemed “the Godfather” of modern American Minimalism. Miyake was inspired by the great effort Beene dedicated to making a garment look simple in form. Miyake’s aesthetic today is artistic and eccentric but also simplified to accommodate the wearer, which reflect this early influence. In
1970, he returned to Tokyo and set out to establish his own fashion house, the Miyake Design Studio, that same year. \(^{19}\)

Miyake’s early works as a designer varied in style and color palette, before he reached his current status as a technological fashion experimenter in the mid-to-late 1980’s. Many of Miyake’s early designs, like the *Cocoon Coat* (Figure 3.1), emphasize mass to make interesting shapes. The exaggerated oversized swath of fabric relies on air and movement to propel its layers up and out. His work for 1983-85 exhibitions entitled *Bodyworks* mimics different media in sculptural forms in order to interact distinctively with the body (Figure 3.2). Miyake also injected architectural structure into these earlier works, creating a *Rattan Bustier* in 1982 out of bamboo and rattan. \(^{20}\) The garment thus became a rigid cage for the body, using materials more commonly used in buildings than in clothing, but manipulated into something wearable. This approach demonstrates Miyake’s ability to see beyond the inherent texture of a medium. He ignores conventions of materials designated for either fashion or architecture, merging their media and commenting on a surface’s ability to protect the body and carefully separate inner and outer. In 1982, *Artforum* magazine featured a model on the cover wearing the *Rattan Bustier* (Figure 3.3), \(^{21}\) establishing Miyake’s work as an intersection between fashion and art. Around 1985, Miyake’s designs became increasingly biomorphic. His *Shell Coat* (Figure 3.4) of this year is one of many of his garments that mimic both the texture and overall form of a natural object. \(^{22}\) By this time, Miyake was already experimenting with technological manipulation of textile, molding and coating polyester jersey and polyurethane. He was simultaneously inspired by the natural world and Japanese history manifested in
fashion, as he explored the use of paper and wood in creating garments.\textsuperscript{23} Miyake would continue to use unique media, but at the end of the 1980’s, the majority of his projects used synthetic fabrics, and he turned toward pleating as his main method of experimentation. Miyake officially retired in 2007, but his brand carries on with its architectural, sculptural reputation, and he maintains the directorial power for it today.\textsuperscript{24}

Miyake’s work is highly conceptual, drawing upon the designer’s Japanese heritage, as well as major themes of both nature and technology, and how the two seemingly opposing subjects can come together to produce something harmonious. The idea of a garment being made from a single piece of cloth is central to his ethos.\textsuperscript{25} For decades, Miyake has worked closely with Makiko Minagawa, a textile artist and engineer, to explore the opportunities for manipulation of various fabrics and other material through different technological processes.\textsuperscript{26} Through this collaboration, Miyake incorporated materials rarely seen in high fashion, such as hard media used in architecture, as well as synthetic fibers that are vulnerable to heat and other tools of shaping.

Despite the intricate textures that build a textile into the unique shapes Miyake masters, much of his design ethos is based on accessibility and function. The public tends to believe that the more architectural high-fashion clothing appears to be, the less wearable it becomes, and Miyake’s work is a direct challenge to this assumption. Many of his garments have a sculptural quality, as they take on architectonic shapes when worn, expanding, contracting, bouncing or hovering with the wearer’s body.\textsuperscript{27} But the use of polyester, which is lightweight and comfortable, as the main textile in
his practice ultimately produces something practical and wearable, despite its nontraditional form. Moreover, to make his garments more affordable, Miyake worked hard on the production side to bring costs down. Miyake has created a broad set of both shapeless designs and garments with exaggerated structure so that they can be transformed by the wearer and provide for variations. Since his rise to fame, he has sought out ways to democratize the fashion world, making clothes that flatter different bodies, not just accepting but also celebrating difference within his audiences and customers.

Miyake is most often recognized for his pleating technique, which serves as the foundation for the architectural quality of many of his garments. Pleating requires regularly spaced folds or creases, rapidly occurring in succession at a close interval. Bradley Quinn writes of the designer’s signature: “Miyake uses pleats to create a textured cadence across the garment’s surface as rhythmic as the stretch of columns across a classical portico.” Miyake’s original pleating technique was inspired by early twentieth century Spanish couturier Fortuny, who revived old Grecian pleating techniques into a practice entitled “the poetic pleat.” Miyake’s practice emerged before his discovery of newly available technologies. In his original process, a piece of polyester fabric is cut and sewn, ordinarily, into a basic garment, cut two-to-three times larger than the intended size of the final product. Next, it is folded back and forth repeatedly, with layers of paper separating the pleats. Finally the garment is fed into a heat press machine, which allows the fabric to retain the pleats. The paper is then removed, and the garment will maintain the shape it was given. Miyake’s Fall/Winter Mutant Pleats collection (Figure 3.5) in 1989 made extensive pleating the
designer’s signature. Though the pleats used to be woven directly into the fabric, they came to be processed by machines with the aforementioned heat presses, which allow them to stand differently in relation to the surface of the garment.\textsuperscript{34} The pleats are manipulated not only to create texture, but the garment’s entire shape as well. Zigzag, vertical, and horizontally organized pleats all provide different architectural shapes,\textsuperscript{35} and when combined, they provide strange and interesting aesthetic forms.

Around the year 1990, Miyake was increasingly exploring his pleating techniques, and eventually in 1993 developed an entire clothing range devoted to pleats, entitled \textit{Pleats, Please Issey Miyake}. In 1991, Miyake designed pleated costumes for the dancers of the Frankfurt Ballet. He was so interested in the way the garments moved on their bodies that he began having dancers, rather than models, wear the \textit{Pleats, Please} clothing on display.\textsuperscript{36} As time progressed, Miyake used his pleating techniques on newly accessible synthetic fabrics. Despite the seemingly simplistic strategy of this clothing line, Miyake has continued it successfully since this time, today still selling under the \textit{Pleats, Please} label, with different subthemes for each fashion season. In 2002, Miyake released a \textit{Fête} collection under the \textit{Pleats, Please} umbrella, which he described as focusing on the general themes of life and technology, a kind of celebration of the two. The collection’s pieces use ultrasonic waves that emit heat vibrations to shape the patterns, which will then be cut into unique forms to make up the garment.\textsuperscript{37} This is one of many highly conceptual lines Miyake produced with the \textit{Pleats, Please} philosophy, and the line has developed over the years to include new techniques and themes. Miyake’s \textit{Minaret} dress for the line (Figure 3.6), designed in 1995, has seven hoops inserted consecutively into the length
of the skirt. The effect is sculptural, as the skirt appears to expand and contract, which is further emphasized by vivid color blocking. These exceptionally sculptural garments appear to be more like art objects than wearable clothing, and have been displayed as such. In 1998, The Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris held a retrospective on Miyake’s work, entitled “Issey Miyake Making Things.” In this exhibition (Figure 3.7), garments from Miyake’s Pleats, Please line were hung from strings and stood on podiums, emphasizing their duality as wearable works of art. Miyake’s interest in the natural world, as well as individualized customer experience, come together with his embrace of technology to produce a unique take on the design world and fashion industry. In 1999, the designer said of his Pleats, Please line, “even when I work with computers, with high technology, I always try to put in the touch of the hand.” Therefore, Miyake relies on technology without often making it the face of his brand. Though his clothing lines could not be realized without emergent technology, and he gives these practices due credit, he does not make the focus on technology apparent in the finished garment.

Miyake’s emphasis on folding and pleating sheds light on the tectonic strategies shared between fashion and architecture. Both folding and pleating take flat media and give them volume, and different forms of these techniques can be found both in fashion and architectural practices. Morphosis’ Sun Tower in Seoul (Figure 3.8), constructed 1994-97, has origami-like folds of a perforated aluminum surface, similar to the folds in Miyake’s fabrics. The Sun Tower demonstrates how folds allow architects to play with light and shadow in a visually interesting manner, as well as creating volumetric form out of flatness, as is seen on garments. Similarly, Winka
Dubbeldam of Archi-Tectonics worked on the Greenwich Street Project in New York from 2000-2004 (Figure 3.9), using a kind of skin of folded glass on the structure. The crystalline façade appears to be composed of horizontal pleats, which required three-dimensional modeling software to allow the plates to fold. In a not-too-different practice, Miyake uses pleats to introduce sculptural volume into lightweight fabrics. This technique has inspired the sculptural wrapping forms of Gehry’s Walt Disney Concert Hall (Figure 3.10).

Miyake’s incorporation of architectural themes and building materials in clothing can be compared to the work of several architects who incorporate materials and techniques more often associated with fashion design. Peter Testa and Devyn Weiser are two architects seeking new construction materials for architecture that are more pliable and thus can be manipulated using techniques traditionally used with fabric, in garments. They are interested in weaving, braiding, and knitting, and are searching to find some way to integrate them into architecture. Comparably, Shigeru Ban is a Japanese architect who has been known to incorporate unconventional materials into his buildings. Similar to fashion designers who use wood and metal in their dresses, Ban used actual fabric to make up the walls of his Curtain Wall House (Figure 3.11) in Tokyo, completed in 1995. This project uses a white, two-story fabric curtain to make up the exterior of the house, paired with sliding glass doors inside for insulation. The use of soft drapery usually associated with the interior as the outer shell of the house is unconventional to say the least, providing a unique kind of privacy without appearing to entirely shut out the outer world, as the fabric remains vulnerable enough to blow in the wind and invite a peek
inside. Ban is also famous for creating paper architecture, which hosts an entire other range of possible manipulations and techniques unconventionally seen in architecture.

Opened to the public in 1998, *A Piece of Cloth*, commonly called *A-POC*, is Miyake’s second major clothing line, which aimed at revolutionizing a new form of clothing production. This conceptual line is founded on a cutting-edge manufacturing process where the entirety of a finished, woven garment is made in one single process, including the cut of the pattern, the texture of the knit, and its final production into a wearable piece (Figure 3.12). For this line, Miyake originally used continuous-knit tubes that churned out seamless garments, cut around lines determined by a pattern. When *A-POC* started, the garments were cut from tubes of Raschel-knit fabric with either extreme heat or cold punch techniques. In 2006, Miyake expanded the marketing of the clothing line to involve the consumer in both the making and wearing of the clothes. Rolls of brightly colored red, green, navy blue, and white cloth are on display in the *A-POC* shop, and customers can choose from a selection of already-cut garments or pick a color and pattern and watch the item in its quick and simple production. This approach complements Miyake’s democratic dream for fashion as he hopes to include the consumer as intimately as possible in their garment’s design and production. He calls the easy process of cutting out the final shape produced by the punches “Miyake Slice-Your-Own,” alluding to self-serve machines and services of the millennium. *A-POC* demonstrates Miyake’s attempts to make clothing universal. He encourages consumers to able to cut and wear their clothes as they please, allowing variation and chance to affect his designs. Additionally, with the changes the line underwent in 2006, Miyake further expanded
A-POC, calling the recent developments A-POC-16, to include denim and even furniture covers, toying with the idea of his brand’s growth beyond fashion.

All A-POC garments are manufactured without machine-sewn seams, resulting in final garments that are streamlined and simple. At the 1998 “Issey Miyake Making Things” exhibition, Miyake introduced the idea of A-POC, as huge rolls of fabric were displayed, unfurled to reveal garments emerging directly from the roll (Figure 3.13). This extreme seamlessness is not too different from Hadid’s rejection of traditional breaks in form. Her walls that twist to become ceiling, and shoes that cover up typical splits, seams and junctures, play with the surface qualities of media similarly to Miyake’s textiles. In addition, Miyake’s Pleats, Please garments expand and contract the surface of a textile to form illusory junctures. When examined up close, the tiny pleats appear sharp and angular, but from afar, the fabric they comprise drapes to become something soft and delicate. The pleated garments use singular pieces of fabric folded in such a way that they look to be made of many parts, as the fabric twists and turns against itself. Hadid uses related techniques to bend a surface in order to trick the eye. Her buildings twist and turn to abolish typical frames and joints that are often entirely revealed in other architecture, just as Miyake makes something deceptively simple appear intricately forged. Miyake has taken interest in the joints of a textile similarly to Hadid’s treatment of such within architecture. While Miyake recognizes the importance of architecture’s relationship with fashion, his incorporation of architecture into his garments is merely visible in the formal properties and techniques that make them up. His work does not have any kind of ideology explaining architecture’s significance and his interest in it.
Miyake’s concern with the artistic or commercial display of his garments raises questions about the recent focus on the architecture designed for designer boutiques and flagship stores. Starchitects, with their glamorous associations, are often fashion designers’ first choices for these designs. These projects demonstrate how architects and fashion designers collaborate in order to inject the traditional retail experience with art and drama, often using technological advances. One of the most well known of these partnerships in both the fashion and architectural communities is that of Rem Koolhaas and Miuccia Prada. Koolhaas’ Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) has worked with Prada on a number of collaborations and flagship stores. Of these works, the Prada Epicenters in New York City and Los Angeles (Figure 3.14) are notable for their use of computer monitors and stations integrated into the very structure itself. The screens display details of the Prada collections up-close and artistically, along with images of daily life and art history, becoming a mix of Prada-inspired art on the walls, and contributing to the overall aesthetics of the interior. The computer technology also serves to aid customers with the fitting of their selected garments, displaying how their pieces fit from various angles, and thus the monitors seek to serve both form and function of the architecture, as Miyake has struggled to achieve within his own work. In Absolutely Fabulous, Ruth Hannisch credits the success of Prada and OMA’s collaborations with a kind of matched theatricality on behalf of both brands. Prada’s trademark historical references in her collections fuse with Koolhaas’ absolute contemporary style to make projects that are intricately detail-oriented yet have an overall clean and modern appearance. Architecture similarly designed for Miyake is more focused on the design
of the interior than the exterior of the space, fusing the fashion on sale with the architectural design.

In 2000, Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec designed the Paris A-POC boutique to mimic the simplicity and the futuristic aesthetic of the brand. The space (Figure 3.15) features both rails and tracks running continuously around the shop, uninterrupted, allowing for garments to be hung and folded sparsely around the room. The rails have small accents in primary colors, inspired by the solid, primary color palette of the line. These features mimic the continuous loops of fabric that the garments emerge from, and the store succeeds in applying the philosophy of A-POC to the architecture that houses it. As demonstrated by this and other flagship store architecture, fashion designers are coming to see the architecture of a store as an extension of their own clothing lines, and are insisting that the building and interior design must convey the same character that the fashion designer projects through their products. In 2005, Ammar Eloueini designed the interior architecture of Miyake’s Pleats, Please store in the high-end department store Galleries Lafayette in Berlin, Germany (Figure 3.16). The translucent standing walls and partitions are made of aluminum angular shapes cut with waterset techniques. Polycarbonate panels are assembled with Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) machines to fabricate hard textures into what appears to be ripples and folds. Not unlike Miyake’s intricately folded textiles, Eloueini’s walls have a geometric, sculptural quality as they expand and contract. These techniques are similar to the architectural attempts to replicate pleating and folding techniques with the hard surfaces of a building, which similarly require digital fabrication. They also demonstrate Miyake’s garment
manipulation techniques being carried out through the interior, the architecture and the products for sale.

Designs for the display of Miyake’s garments demonstrate the collaborative and important relationship he agrees exists between fashion and architectural practices. As previously explored, the display of Miyake’s pleated garments and his A-POC line is essential toward conveying the message behind the brand. As pleated garments hang from strings and stand on podiums, they are represented as art objects and not simply garments. When photographed in motion, his pleats allow the clothing to change form, open and close, expand and contract. They are designed to be comfortable and easy, but positioning them as art on display also shows the complexity of a garment. As works of art, Miyake’s fashion seems to transcend the static trends meant to be worn once or twice and thrown away. The A-POC displays emphasize the consumer’s role in the construction process, and the technological innovation required to make the process possible. Though the A-POC garments are simple in cut and form, when positioned as emerging directly from the massive tubes of fabric, they appear futuristic and strange. Miyake has also placed great importance on architecture as it relates to and presents his clothing line. His Pleats, Please shops in Tokyo and Paris were designed by the same architects, Gwenael Nicolas and his staff, who also designed the bottle for Miyake’s perfume, *Feu d’Issey*. In 2000, Gehry designed the interior of Miyake’s New York City showroom in Tribeca (Figure 3.17), using his signature curvilinear, metallic ribbons to mimic Miyake’s heavily folded and pleated fabrics. Miyake has spoken of this project as very much a collaboration between himself and Gehry. The space breaks down traditional
boundaries of display and interior space, atelier and salesroom, to reflect Miyake’s breakdown of physical boundaries.\textsuperscript{62} A reciprocal nod to Gehry’s work is Miyake’s *Bilbao* bag designed for the *Pleats, Please* collection, inspired by Gehry’s Bilbao Museum. It mimics both the prolific starchitect’s work as well as the architecture of the store it is sold in, which in turn attempts to mimic Miyake’s general pleating technique. The bag is a fashionable kind of novelty item, but it also conveys the influence prominent architecture has on Miyake’s fashion designs.

Like Hadid’s seamless concrete technique, Miyake manipulates surface until it appears malleable. He is only able to work with such unconventional media due to the rise in digitization, which has revolutionized practices of design and construction. Fashion designers would not be able to make such architectural garments, whether they use architectural media like wood and metal, or apply architectural techniques to the surface of a textile, without recent technological processes of digitally aided fabrication. Similarly, architects could not make such delicate-looking forms out of a building’s supporting structure, nor would they be able to imagine new possibilities of media and techniques applied to a surface, without these new technologies. This concern with technology both aids the physical construction of a work, and it contributes to the image of the artist. In addition to *Pleats, Please* and *A-POC*, Miyake has produced a number of smaller clothing lines, many of them functioning around new technological processes. He has played with heat functions, using thermoplastic, synthetic fabrics that can be twisted, creased and manipulated before heat setting secures the forms they take.\textsuperscript{63} These technological practices enable
Miyake’s crossovers into architecture as they allow him to make unconventional, structural forms out of a wearable garment.

Hussein Chalayan

Hussein Chalayan demonstrates the artistic power of the runway show, using a fashion design practice steeped in artistry to build a bridge between fashion and architecture. Chalayan was born in Nicosia, Cyprus in 1970, moving as a young boy to London and practicing out of London today.\(^{64}\) Chalayan studied fashion at Central Saint Martin’s School of Art, where he graduated in 1993.\(^{65}\) His final graduating collection, entitled *Tangent Flows*, attracted the attention of a London boutique, which incorporated Chalayan’s designs in their window display. Chalayan’s work has since gained the attention of many and provided for collaborations with architects, artists, textile engineers, and set designers, contributing to his image as an artist within the fashion industry.\(^{66}\) Chalayan’s work is more connected to the art world than a typical fashion practice, though he is very much respected within the fashion industry. His early experiences as a Turkish Cypriot have lead him to address issues of cultural identity, migration, and shelter through clothing.\(^{67}\) Though Chalayan has lived and studied in London for most of his life, he strongly identifies as both a Turkish Cypriot as well as a British fashion designer.\(^{68}\) In this way, Chalayan exemplifies the fashion world’s many designers who are strongly tied to their heritage, but whose work doesn’t represent any kind of “national” style. (Miyake similarly connects strongly to his Japanese identity, though much of his work is shown in Paris.) Chalayan is interested in integrating clothing into an environment,
which for him involves studying identity politics and engaging with architectural clothing that both fits a location and yet stands autonomous,\textsuperscript{69} as will be explored below through his \textit{After Words} collection. As a consequence of Chalayan’s childhood displacement from Cyprus, he has engaged with place and shelter uniquely, and as a result, his fashion designs are strongly connected with themes of architecture and landscape.

Chalayan sees both clothing and architecture as a crucial zone of protection of and interaction with the body, an issue to be mitigated through different strategies of construction.\textsuperscript{70} He avoids convention in cut and proportion of a garment, making clothes that are not body-conscious but rather use the body as a base frame off of which to build a sculpture.\textsuperscript{71} He uses proportion to subvert the human body, making it more about the sculpture placed around it than what lies beneath. Chalayan was a pioneer catwalk artist in the 1990’s, when fashion became a theatrical show.\textsuperscript{72} The wearability of his runway garments, or lack thereof, has been excused due to their intriguing artistic and architectural concepts surrounding the body and space. In some of his shows, Chalayan has obscured the body to turn models into geometric, architectural forms. The models in his \textit{Panoramic} collection in Fall/Winter 1998-1999 show (Figure 3.18) were completely swathed in black cloth, with small but unexpected parts of the body revealed, and had cones extending from their heads,\textsuperscript{73} converting their bodies into proportions too abstract to identify. His use of strange textiles has ranged from fiberglass, carved wood, metal, and other sources more commonly found in architecture than clothing.\textsuperscript{74} This approach has led his work to be considered as art objects rather than clothing, but it also has provided for parallels
with architectural practice, as he subverts the expectations of texture and surface one might commonly find in fashion. In *Techno Fashion*, Quinn said of this, “Chalayan’s work represents a congruity of ideas that indicate fashion and architecture are coming closer together than ever before- far beyond the fashions of the 1920’s that echoed, in the cut of the dress, the architectural lines of buildings.” His conceptual approach to fashion as a kind of architecture rivals Miyake’s technical interest with surface properties of both clothing and building.

Chalayan’s *Before Minus Now* collection of spring/summer 2000 shows his engagement with technology to be different than Miyake’s. Chalayan’s fascination with architecture and aerodynamics of clothing plays out through his experimentation with technology, relating the body to spatial dynamics and built forms. His *Aeroplane* dress of 2000 (Figure 3.19) demonstrates this architectural fascination with aerodynamics, as does his full *Before Minus Now* collection, whose garments maintain a certain hardness and plasticity rarely seen in fashion. This collection is the product of Chalayan’s collaboration with a team of architectural engineers of the firm b Consultants. The dresses feature wire-frame architectural prints, generated using computer software commonly employed by designers of buildings, not clothing. The wire prints are subtle, with thin lines, but they stand out against the solid white bases of the dresses. The mechanical *Aeroplane* dress uses remote controls to alter its shape on the runway, and demonstrates Chalayan’s reliance on technology for the production of his garments. The dress also illustrates his use of both unconventional and conventional materials, and a common tension between hard and soft surfaces as they extend from the body. The dress’s surface layer is plastic, appearing rigid and
hard, but it opens up to reveal layers of tulle beneath, as the plastic opens and closes with the model’s movement. The architectural print overlaid on the garment separates different segments, some of which open and close surprisingly, to reveal parts of the body, or soft pink tulle beneath. Such innovative work has not gone unrecognized, and Chalayan was named the British “Designer of the Year” in both 1999 and 2000. His reputation spread as an artist using technology and unconventional materials to meld the languages of fashion, architecture, furniture and theatre, using unique runway performances and installations. Perhaps he pursued these alternatives out of artistic interest, or perhaps to perpetuate this newfound brand, but Chalayan continued working with highly conceptual runway shows that gained attention for their artistry and spectacle value as well.

Chalayan’s After Words collection of fall/winter 2000-2001 highlights his synthesis of identity politics with fashion, architecture and sculpture. The largely conceptual collection, which contributed significantly to his recognition within fashion, art and architectural circles, was introduced with a stage setting designed by Chalayan himself, for the runway show. Models entered and took slipcovers off of chairs, putting them on to reveal them to be dresses (Figure 3.20). The most famous piece of the collection was a mahogany table onstage, which a model transformed into a skirt of concentric circles (Figure 3.21). Despite the impact of the mahogany skirt, which appears to float around the body despite its implicit weight, the rest of the collection is made up of cotton dresses, which vary in cut but are more clearly wearable. By the end of the show, the set has been entirely displaced onto the bodies of various models, who leave wearing what appear to be part-shelters, and
part-garments. According to Chalayan, the collection was inspired by the 1974 Turkish military invasion that divided Cyprus and heavily influenced the designer’s childhood. He explained that clothing and architecture can become both a danger zone and a refuge, a disguise and a means of transportation, and the transformations that occurred on the runway exhibition clearly demonstrated this view. His use of architectural proportions integrate a garment into the landscape, which is accomplished most clearly in the After Words collection as the landscape becomes segmented into garments. When asked by Quinn about this collection in 2002, Chalayan said, “I think of modular systems where clothes are like small parts of an interior, the interiors are part of architecture, which is then a part of an urban environment.” Thus Chalayan’s engagement with architecture is more based on environmental ideology, and how space relates to identity. This method contrasts with Miyake’s more formal properties that parallel architectural techniques.

Chalayan is, above all, interested in clothing as clothing and not as art. His sculptural garments are sometimes functional and sometimes decorative. Yet his spring/summer collection in 2007, entitled One Hundred and Eleven, took his reputation for technological innovation and his mastery of runway spectacle to the next level. The collection makes intricate technological construction appear deceptively simple on the catwalk, ultimately producing a theatrical show heavily reliant on digital construction and printing. The garments literally metamorphose on the runway (Figure 3.22), as enabled by computer-controlled mechanics. LED lights are strung into the garments to emphasize their changing nature and light the stage. The most famous mechanical dress from the collection shifts and transforms in shape,
from a Victorian-style dress to a flapper skirt, moving the viewers step-by-step through fashion history (Figure 3.23). As five hand-constructed dresses used intricate engineering to transform and represent different periods in fashion history, Chalayan’s dresses became interactive interfaces. In contrast to Miyake, Chalayan, like Hadid, publically promotes his interest in technology, experimenting with new tricks to attract media and public attention. Chalayan, too, has practical, simpler designs, but the over-the-top pieces that he sends down the runway, exemplified in the *One Hundred and Eleven* collection, are obvious references to architectural and technological innovation.

For this collection as well as others by Chalayan, the digital printing onto the surface of his garments emphasizes their sculptural quality. For his *Airborne* Collection of fall/winter 2007, Chalayan selected materials, both common and uncommon in clothing construction, like metal plates, silk, and wool. He scanned and digitally manipulated them into two-dimensional image copies for design use in order to create a pattern for the resulting garment. As the fashion of the *One Hundred and Eleven* collection demonstrates, Chalayan’s garments require many more pattern pieces than most, further contributing to the intricacy of his construction process. Chalayan’s approach stands in stark contrast to Miyake’s, which seeks to realize its garments using as few pieces of cloth and sewing as possible. Because of this, Chalayan relies on technology to imagine a three-dimensional form and deconstruct it into workable pieces of a garment, much like Hadid and other contemporary architects do with their initial building designs. In the same 2002 interview with Quinn, Chalayan also said,
it takes a lot of structuring to make a dress truly architectural. Architecture can be designed in a fluid and unstructured way that doesn’t look architectural, but it is still architecture. I mean, you don’t call buildings fashion just because they don’t look architectural, so why call fashion architectural unless it really is? Chalayan does not believe that manipulating fabric into architectural shapes makes it truly architectural fashion, a point of view with which Miyake might disagree. He agrees, however, that garments (like Miyake’s pleated dresses) do not need to stand like buildings to be “architectural.” Instead, Chalayan considers his garments as serving similar ideological functions as a building, providing shelter and revealing the body. His art object-like garments thus convey his ideas of body, space, and landscape, connected to his own up-rooted history. Many unconventional fashion designers explore a kind of “soft computation,” meaning the integration of digital technology into soft materials and textiles. While Chalayan has certainly incorporated this technique, he has also used digital fabrication techniques to make garments out of hard materials ordinarily seen in architecture, but not in fashion. Despite the differences in their design aesthetics, Miyake and Chalayan have always been on the forefront of technological experimentation, employing newly developing processes as they expand the construction possibilities of a garment and consequentially blur the boundaries between fashion and architecture.

The universal concern with self-presentation returns, and though Miyake and Chalayan repeatedly reject the idea that they might be more than fashion designers, both have been so highly revered for their unconventional and architectural work in
the fashion industry that they have become icons of art and design as well. Further, their concern with the display of their garments shows a deeper understanding of presentation and its ability to perpetuate a brand. Miyake’s focus on the architectural environments in which his clothing is sold shows an understanding of how fashion, art, and architecture can come together to make a brand. There is a visible tension between clothing standing free in exhibition and Miyake’s interest in them being wearable and hanging on a body. He struggles with the discrepancies between wearability and a more artistic quality. Chalayan’s runway shows demonstrate a larger concern with spectacle and how it can sell a brand, but Miyake’s more modest approach to his image has consequentially shaped his own image as well. Similar are Hadid’s designs for both fashion and architecture, which straddle the line between function and aesthetics. As both fashion and architecture grapple with the difference between their own utility and art, an uncertainty arises about the nature of the object being produced. When examining Miyake’s dresses on display, one asks if it is fashion or art. Both Miyake and Hadid pride themselves on making works that are aesthetically striking, but at a certain point the aesthetic priorities appear to overtake functional concern. This has been a recurrent issue for both architecture and fashion separately, one that takes on special resonance where the two disciplines converge.

It is also important to note how the term “avant-garde” has evolved from a political concept applied to the arts to an adjective used casually in mainstream fashion and design culture. The avant-garde, which originally proliferated in European modernist tradition, called for an advance forward, or progress, often accomplished by revolution. The term came to be applied to the arts in the
nineteenth century, and has become more widespread since then. Within the arts, the avant-garde involves a social critique of the dominant culture translated into artistic form.\textsuperscript{93} Though the architects and fashion designers that have been examined here have certainly advanced their industries and applied great innovation and artistry to their work, few if any have intentionally injected any social or political critique into their art. This is likely because, unlike fine art, both architecture and fashion must be accepted by the mainstream for it and the designer’s future work to survive.

If avant-garde practice indicates merely a tendency to move beyond conventions in place, then it is understandable why Miyake and Chalayan are both described as such. Yet their unique use of media and form is not employed to overthrow the dominant paradigm, nor would either of them consider their fashion practices to be aimed at such a goal. Many critics of Chalayan’s fashion would say that his work contains an important social message, but Chalayan himself might deny such a statement. Both he and Miyake claim to be fashion designers first and foremost; their innovative work might have larger social implications, but these implications are simply a consequence of their work, not their determined mission. On the other hand, though architecture has had a longer history associated with the fine arts, its commercial underpinnings are subtler than fashion’s blatant consumerism. Both strive to produce art, but rely entirely on the mainstream of business. This is what is confusing about calling Hadid or Miyake’s work avant-garde; though they both use unconventional techniques to make unusual, artistic forms, they also both entirely embrace and are celebrated by the dominant culture of architecture and fashion, respectively. Because of this divergence between the
historical notion of the avant-garde and its present use as an adjective, to look at fashion and architecture being described as such, it must be recognized that this term is being applied only to refer to the formal artistic properties of the work in question.

The work of fashion designers deemed avant-garde like that of Miyake and Chalayan almost makes one forget that fashion is, rather bluntly, a commercial endeavor. Despite the praise Chalayan has received for the artistic concepts he injects into his fashion, he is not exempt from concerns of brand marketability. In fact, as Hazel Clark writes, “sustaining marketable and conceptual activities in parallel is characteristic of the work of many younger fashion designers.” Chalayan’s brand indeed reaches beyond the catwalk art and toward other selling platforms, such as British high street retailers Marks and Spencer and Topshop, with whom he has collaborated. Thus a fashion designer can be praised for their creativity and ingenuity, but they are still selling and presenting themselves as a brand above all. Moreover, Chalayan is well aware of his artistic and technological reputation, and it is possible his work continues to follow this vision in order to maintain this image.

With many of the applied arts, from fashion to architecture, being brought into one amalgamation of design, all types of designers are both artists and salesmen to some extent. Within both industries of architecture and fashion, there is an inevitable and deliberate merging of commerce and creativity, though many designers of fashion and architecture will deny any commercial interest. While architects design for specific clients, they must maintain their broader appeal in order to continuously draw new clients in. On the other hand, fashion designers design for a general market made up of fashion’s own producers and general consumers alike. To continue
successfully, however, both architects and fashion designers strive to maintain a certain image. The importance of technology brings together the art and business ends of fashion, sparking the public interest and opening up innovative possibilities. As Chalayan said in 2002 of his unconventional practices, “This way of thinking about fashion is still quite new to the fashion world, but it’s what is moving things forward. The fashion audience doesn’t really know about technology or architecture, but they soon will.” Similarly, Chalayan’s own understanding of architecture and technology is on the brink of a full recognition that all of these elements can come together to make an enterprise. The art and business ends are necessary components that, with the help of new technological practices, will allow fashion and architecture to meet in the middle.


5 Riello, *The Fashion History Reader*, 470


7 Ibid.

8 Geczy, *Fashion and Art*, 22.

9 Ibid.


11 Ibid, 66.


13 Ibid.


16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid, 28.
19 Ibid.
23 Ibid, 25.
26 Ibid, 25.
27 Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 164.
32 Ibid, 11.
33 Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 164.
36 Ibid, 12.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid, 14.
40 Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 19.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid, 88.
43 Ibid, 19
47 Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 164.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid, 16.
51 Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 164.
53 Ibid, 14.
55 Ibid, 18.
56 Ibid, 90.
57 Hanisch, *Absolutely Fabulous!*, 43.
59 Ibid.
62 Saiki, *12 Japanese Masters*, 189
64 Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 60.

Ibid.

Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 60.


Ibid, 28.

Ibid, 29.


Black, *Fashioning Fabrics*, 84.


Ibid, 30.


Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 16.


Ibid, 29.

Ibid, 30.

Hodge, *Skin + Bones*, 60.

Isaac, “The Cat Walk As Spectacle,” 59.

Ibid, 60.


Isaac, “The Cat Walk As Spectacle,” 61.

Ibid, 65.


Buxbaum, *Fashion in Context*, 144.


Ibid, 112.

Geczy, *Fashion and Art*, 72.

Epilogue

After reviewing the boundary-crossing careers of Hadid, Miyake, and Chalayan, one asks what has changed over the past twenty to thirty years to accommodate this dialogue between two industries that once seemed so far apart in goals and practices? In recent years, the design world has evolved to represent a larger construct, absorbing both the fine arts and other realms of design that were not always considered seriously as artistic practices. Architecture, fashion, and interior design, once deemed largely separate, are all now regarded as aspects of design culture, under one roof, and have been granted the respect of the larger artistic community. Additionally, interdisciplinary work between fashion and architecture is enabled by their shared and similar technological practices and approaches to surface. This larger question of media convergence under the umbrella of design has led to an even more focused and well-developed relationship between architecture and fashion. Moreover, major issues of mutual acknowledgment and self-presentation have emerged from artists working in any of these practices, shedding light on marketing strategies and brand-expansion opportunities that are entirely connected with these interdisciplinary projects. The contemporary idea of the “starchitect” both reflects and amplifies the mass media’s interest in the design world as relevant to popular culture, and certain contemporary architects and fashion designers alike have, too, become so concerned with their own brand that it affects the professional choices they make.

One major change since the start of this contemporary period that has much to do with this new relationship is the expansion of the fashion industry. The fashion world has undergone a significant amount of change and growth in the past thirty
years, opening up avenues for new connections between producers of fashion and related fields. What once was a narrow market catering to only the most elite classes has become an expansive and all-encompassing industry providing hundreds of thousands of jobs in a range of positions, from the creative end with fashion designers to the business end with wholesale and retail marketers. As of 2011, according to New York City’s Economic Development Corporation, the city’s fashion industry was employing 165,000 people and producing $55 billion in sales each year, and $9 billion in tax revenue.¹ The fashion industry is a major source of income and job opportunities, and positions within the industry are so diverse that there is a kind of fluidity between fashion careers. As an outcome of this growth and flexibility within the fashion industry, other forms of design have been brought closer to fashion. *Vogue, Harper’s Bazaar,* and other fashion magazines often feature architecture and interior design amongst their pages, and the formal and artistic comparisons being made make this development seem natural. As fashion has reached out toward other practices of design to recognize their ties, the design world has responded to acknowledge that these different practices have a great deal in common, and can be productively examined next to one another.

The work occurring within each industry is not an exact parallel. There are fundamental discrepancies between fashion and architecture as both businesses and artistic practices. Architecture is more often associated with the fine arts, due to its history more thoroughly entwined with them, and fashion has been generally recognized as a fundamentally consumer-driven industry. It was not until more recently that critics and scholars began to note that fashion is also an art form, and
connect the artistic importance of fashion design to that of other design forms and the applied arts. Though, as we have found, there have been past links between fashion and architecture at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the historical rejection of fashion from the arts lead to architects of that time refusing to have any involvement with fashion. Fashion and architecture were thought to be entirely separate issues because of the treatment they received from different parts of society, and the artistic community’s disapproval of the aristocratic mainstream that dictated fashion.

One major difference between the two industries is the fact of permanence. In most public and some private works, architects seek to build something that will stand as an enduring work of art that can function indefinitely. In contrast, the work being produced in the fashion industry is by its very nature ephemeral, depending on change and making it a somewhat unsustainable practice. More importantly, at the very least, designers are expected to prove themselves and churn out new work every six months. Many collaborate on other lines and brands to develop their profile. Because of this, despite the artistic nature of many designers’ work, the sheer volume of fashion being produced cannot all remain in the memory of the fashion world as an artistic community. Competing against this fact are the standout designs, runway shows, and collections that remain in the public memory and are referenced again and again, but this is obviously different than a building not only appreciated but also utilized continuously. On the other hand, there has been recent debate over the supposed permanence of architecture. Buildings once thought to be enduring within a landscape have been reconsidered as the city around them changes and so do the
architectural styles being favored. While this level of impermanence by no means rivals the fashion world’s basis of “in one month, out the next,” it suggests that there is more similar activity occurring than the public may think. Certain fashions may root themselves in history more than they are credited, and certain buildings may not acquire the permanence intended. This slightly pessimistic view of architecture stresses the importance within both industries of an artist’s trademark stamp buried with their talent. No fashion designer can be confident that their work will stand the test of time, and this is no longer a guarantee for architects either, meaning that their work must meet a number of artistic and professional criteria to be remembered and honored over time.

Despite the importance of artistry for many, fashion is above all a business, making marketability important for even the most avant-garde designers like Miyake and Chalayan. Designers generally work for larger global conglomerates, and it’s rare for design houses to be run independently. Their designs must be commercially viable to succeed, but often without the appearance of being commercial. Thus even though Chalayan’s runway designs feature unusual pieces that aren’t easily worn, he must supplement the collection with simpler designs that will be wearable and more easily consumed by the public. Hence, more accessible collections are accented with spectacular, art object-like designs that draw attention to the overall show.

Architecture, too, is a business, but the more explicit ties the practice has held historically to the fine arts make its dependence on business a fraught one. Though the industry prides itself on artistic integrity, designers within it will not succeed without certain acumen for marketing and networking. Competitions in place to
design high profile buildings are common in the architecture industry, and Hadid has entered and won numerous competitions that have ultimately lead to her fame. These practices to determine which architect will complete a project shed light on the competitive and brand-conscious activity behind the scenes of the architecture world. The industry has maintained a kind of façade that its key players are interested in art over business. However, influencing emerging architects to shy away from knowledge of business and trade does more harm than good. Architecture often doesn’t yield high pay, so when architects design for non-profit projects, they work with a very different financial model than fashion designers. Architectural projects that engage in a kind of public service are fairly low paying, and because of this, are often designed by more idealistic architects. In fashion, no matter how commercial or avant-garde, merchandise is priced in order to generate maximum profit, leading to designers with more overt business interests. While the fashion industry is more explicit in its reliance on business and marketing, it would do both industries well to accept that art and commerce should not necessarily be so detached.

Architects and fashion designers also have different ways of generating business, and must generally speak to different clients. Architects are called upon by clients and presented with very specific projects, while fashion designers design for a broad audience. That being said, high fashion designers often speak to a narrower audience than they may suggest to the public, as editorial teams and producers of fashion, like the team at Vogue, are directly targeted with each fashion show. Furthermore, architects cannot design with only their client in mind, as their buildings will be seen by the public and potentially will serve to generate future business and
additional clients. While the public interested in fashion is broad and diverse, there are many niches within the market interested in different styles and aesthetics, and these niches are aware of which designers will fulfill their needs. Americana and sportswear are terms associated with certain high fashion labels like Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger, which would never be associated with the avant-garde sculptural work of Issey Miyake, but are equally well respected in the fashion world. These markets within one industry carve much out narrower clientele, and therefore cannot be summarized as the consumer base as a whole. Additionally, accessibility of a clothing line ranges from wearability to price, and within these categories are very specific audiences that fashion designers must speak to. Though a client calls upon architects directly, architects, too, know their aesthetic and what kinds of projects they will likely be asked to participate in. Within architecture, there too is a range of practices and specializations that lead to certain niches within the industry. Both fashion and architecture are expansive fields of work, and to some extent, the artist decides what kind of client or audience they will be speaking to when they open their practices.

The relationship between fashion and architecture has grown more in the past thirty years than in the past one hundred years, partially because fashion has made great strides more recently toward being considered an artistic practice. The positions fashion design and architecture held in relation to mainstream society in the nineteenth century pitted the two industries against one another. Fashion was considered a frivolous luxury afforded to the elite class only, and those opposed to the dominant class, including avant-garde artists and architects, fervently opposed
fashion as a direct outlet of the aristocracy. Contemporary starchitects like Zaha Hadid would likely be disdained by the early modern architects for her glamorous ties to mainstream culture and celebrity. Hadid, however, is not so different from Loos and Le Corbusier, but perhaps is more straightforward in her concern in crafting her own image. Additionally, Hadid’s shoe designs as compared to her building designs are analogous to van de Velde’s dresses compared to his buildings and interiors. Both artists carry out their signature styles from medium to medium, maintaining an artistic reputation and an easily identifiable trademark that carries from fashion to architecture.

Looking back to the rise of fashion as its own concept in the nineteenth century, its definition was much narrower than it would be today. Thus, to reject fashion in all it stood for meant mainly that these historical architect-artists were rejecting the privatization of dress to further distinguish the upper class from the masses. Additionally, fashion suggested the dictation of taste on behalf of the elite, and the public’s consequential desire to follow these trends. Though fashion today has some of the same connotations, it has expanded to welcome any kind of clothing, accessory, or shoe design, by any person, famous or unknown, wealthy or poor, similar to the contemporary definition of art itself. Examining the work of van de Velde and Behrens, their submissions to the dress reform exhibitions would today be recognized as fashion, despite the anti-fashion intent behind them. Today, subversive and alternative dress cultures are fashion nonetheless, whether or not they conform to the dominant perception of fashion. In the nineteenth century, the number of fashion designers was very small, and Charles Frederick Worth is one of few recognizable
names in fashion history. In the twentieth century, more designers like Chanel and Poiret began to be recognizable by name, as branding emerged as a legitimate aspect of fashion, though the idea didn’t quite crystalize until the end of the century. By the millennium, hundreds of designers around the world could be easily identified by the public. Within the thousands of fashion designers that practice today, hundreds are thought to be successful, and this range provides for great difference of aesthetic and artistic styles, appealing to a broad range of people. In the nineteenth century, an artist like Issey Miyake whose clothes are considered quirky and avant-garde, would not have been successful, and might have more in common with van de Velde and his unusual dress designs. In fact, the commercialized idea of the avant-garde has proliferated to the extent that artists like Miyake have made it their entire brand. Therefore, the antagonistic relationship between architecture and fashion of this early modern period is not so easily identified with the relationship emerging contemporarily. Artists of both periods, however, have much in common as they concern themselves with developing a clear aesthetic easily applied to different artistic media, as well as how their artistic integrity upholds to their audiences.

The trend, toward public recognition that architecture and fashion might both inhabit the common realm of design, has led to additional reflection on this historical narrative that indicates that architecture and fashion may have had some original ties to one another. In the summer of 2014, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City put on an exhibition entitled “Charles James: Beyond Fashion.” Though James is known for his works in the mid-twentieth century, this retrospective was highly influenced by the role of architecture in fashion, and may not have been contemplated
in the absence of the recent interplay between the two fields. The architectural forms that support his trademark ball gowns (Figure 4.1) are more easily identified today, once the connections between architecture and fashion have so widely been recognized. The exhibition was designed by the esteemed architectural firm, Diller Scofidio & Renfro, which successfully highlighted the architecture and engineering behind James’ designs. The hand of technology was a prominent feature in the exhibit, with mechanical hands that zoomed in on the gowns to display their architectural features on screens, despite it not having been around during the designer’s actual reign. Despite focusing on a twentieth century artist, the exhibition was deeply interspersed in the contemporary dialogue between fashion and architecture.

Though fashion and architecture have been exchanging ideas and showing reciprocal interest notable within the design world, there is much that separates the two practices. The architects and fashion designers that have been explored here are notable within their practices, because they are making connections within the disciplines. Within the architectural and fashion communities, however, only a relatively small number of architects and fashion designers are participating in this conversation. Their dialogue, however, demonstrates a recent shift in the art world to have more in common with mainstream culture than its historical predecessors would have accepted. Much of this new relationship is credited to technology in various applications that have aided the construction practices. Not only has technology permeated and changed the fabric of the fashion industry as it has most commercial enterprises, but it has opened up the possibilities of artistic innovation, design, and
construction. In many fields, including both fashion design and architecture, digital manufacturing has usurped traditional techniques of work completed by hand, becoming favored as a solution to a common issue of labor. The continuing necessity of hand labor plays into controversy within both the architecture and fashion industries, but digital techniques serve to reduce this need as technology advances. Whether digital fabrication aids the construction of shapes and forms unique to fashion or architecture, or if it simply accelerates the construction practices more conveniently, technology has been found invaluable to architects and fashion designers alike. When looking toward the future of design, technology has been a central idea, crucial to be understood by all and to be integrated into artistic practice. Within practices of art made for direct consumption, technology is expected to become a part of design to aid both the consumer and the designers and manufacturers. New forms of technology will thus become central to every facet of the arts, from the design and conception of a work, to its realization. Also, with Miyake’s focus on consumer participation with A-POC and Koolhaas’ Prada store monitors as examples, technology is steadily being integrated into the audience side of fashion and architecture as well.

Fashion designers and architects demonstrate an acute awareness of the ease with which their brand can be proven either invaluable or obsolete. The adaption to technology is natural to many artists and designers, but for others, it is strange and new, and only accepted because the artist fears it to be absolutely necessary. Hadid, Gehry, Miyake, and Chalayan have all welcomed and experimented with technology, but it is hard to identify who is genuinely curious about these new practices, and who
involves themselves because they know that technology’s centrality to their industry is inevitable. Different kinds of artistic media all struggle to keep up with an ever-changing culture surrounding them. The arts have evolved into an extensive design world that looks to the work of prominent artists as a beacon of light moving into the future. As Hadid has suggested, one can either constantly adapt or fall behind, and her approach has been to expand her own brand to include different kinds of design in addition to the architecture that made her famous.

Hadid’s genuine love of fashion has pushed her in that direction outside of the architecture industry, but she has also done so because the changing design culture encourages this adaptation. Similarly, Miyake and Chalayan inject architecture differently into their fashions, but they may not have sought out these connections without societal pressure to stress the innovation of their own brand. These three artists are a selection of designers similarly communicating with other media, but they are by no means representative of the entire fashion or architecture industries. They, like many other artists, share a range of related issues, including digitization, technology, marketing, exhibitions, and the form and function of their work, but Hadid, Miyake, and Chalayan are a specialized subset of the architecture and fashion worlds that they work within as they inject unique artistry into their designs. They share a common idea that avant-garde status is best achieved with crossover activity, and find it to be the best way to make the conventions of their medium unconventional. Hadid, Miyake, and Chalayan each have their own reasons for taking interest in fashion and architecture, respectively, but they share the common desire to bridge across media and earn the branding of an avant-garde, innovative artist. As the
design world swells to encompass different practices of design, branding and marketing become more obviously important to architects, as they are being increasingly associated with fashion designers, the most stereotypical businessmen within the arts. This developing relationship between fashion and architecture would not have been possible without such a changing design culture as enabled by shared technological strategies, but daring and experimental key players like the artists explored here push the relationship into explicit territory.

2 Ibid, 4.
6 Ibid.
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