

factors  
inversimiles  
en  
la  
evolucion  
de:  
*La Moda*

Curated by Armando Fascon

Works by:

Manuel Abril  
Juan Alvarez  
Marisa Hernandez  
Diana Lopez  
Eugene Rodriguez



## *factores inverosímiles en la evolución de: La Moda*

**Fashion** is fabrics, patterns, textures, shapes, attachments, buttons, snaps, zippers, thread, leather and all the various synthetics and natural materials that are involved in the construction and assembly of a garment. But, is a garment not also exceedingly invested semiotically within the Social --symbolically as well as psychologically-- other than as an obvious outer covering that drapes the body? Is style not socially constructed as regards gender, race, and identity?

**Fashion** is many things to many people. To the American youth of today, fashion constitutes itself as lifestyle, as an outward manifestation of an en-coded value system that functions as a stand-in for so many statements that could be uttered, as language, but that are better stated visually through a determined use of ready-made props: clothes that are acquired and easily modified in attempts to (re)present the individuals or group members who have cultivated or bought into the "look." Insofar as clothes are able to convey meaning contextually within a given environment or social milieu --take hip-hop, for instance, or, classic *cholo/a* wear in the barrio-- then perhaps we should consider style an extension of language, or, at the very least, a variant of it (in more than just a post-fluxus sense.) Style should be seen as an endless display of signage deployed throughout the landscape like flags, albeit, worn variously upon the bodies of individuals within a given geographic area like an unspoken ideology: *an imperative to the bodypolitic in question.*

**Fashion.** Consider for a moment an aspect of the evolution of *shopping*: I wonder, when out shopping, what considerations people may harbour about being packaged. Especially curious is that species of consumer who acquiesces to designations such as *slim, regular, husky, or one size fits all.* This consideration grows more complex when you stop to analyze some of the traditional sources for much of what is topical and in style: with *grunge* or *cholo* attire, for example, the use of a dark green plaid in Pendleton shirts has its origins within the European context of a Scottish clan known long ago as the Black Watch, to whom that particular pattern is indigenous. Serious considerations, both cultural and economic, are of considerable import to the demographer who is aware of the fact of a mushrooming youth market for consumable goods, teen-age spending power gone rampant. In this context, a boutique specializing in *cholo-wear* on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles shouldn't appear so odd. Expect to see high-end designer *cholo-wear, or grunge, on Rodeo Drive or at Macy's real soon.*

**Fashion.** For adults, fashion is a bit more logical: it may be a simple way in which to navigate the workplace and the street, or, alternatively, a method by which to exalt in the theatrics of re-juvenation. All things being equal --and they never are-- fashion should also function as a simple exercise in neutrality: the "non-statement" method of (ad)dress for those who prefer to not stand out in a crowd, for those who strive for *normality.* Was it George Rickey, the sculptor, who once said, "non-style is style"? If style is socially constructed, then how about the potential for non-style constructions in the sphere of the socially sanctioned space, in the sphere of the society of the spectacle? **Fashion.** For those in the glamour industry, style becomes that obscure object of necessity --a lifeline-- by which a whole world order is held together. In the world of the glamorous, the conventions of *beauty* must be sought, attained, maintained, and, ultimately deployed in deft and artful ways, or it's back to the glue factory. And no slant intended, here, to *the beautiful people,* because without them, no Dolores Del Rio, no Maria Felix, no Angelica Maria, no Veronica Castro ¿qué no? Come to think of it, this industry *is* the stuff that holds it together, like an Elmer's for the infinite reification of artifice. **Fashion** is always located at the intersection between economics and culture. *Difference* is its ultimate consequence. Forget beauty, forget artifice, it's like, *you are what you wear on this side of paradise.* **Fashion.** Matters such as these can really go flat after a while. Andy Warhol said it best when dishing out his famous conundrum "It's all on the surface;" and, Cantinflas, anticipating Warhol by several decades, had already proclaimed, "Allí está el detalle." Still, the surface of American popular culture is anything but readymade anymore, even though the template itself is, in this digital age, traditional to the extreme. But, is the momentary co-option by dominant culture of all the un-official codes that *identify* complete sectors of the bodypolitic --*mi vida loca, y ¿qué?*-- and the multiple physiognomies of challenge that have evolved through time into these virtual "uniforms of style / instruments of resistance" not also a re-instating of the prevailing colonial standards of our time? If you asked Sun Zsu, he'd tell you that it is necessary to know what *style* to wear and who has the ball if you want to join and play. **Fashion.**

--**Armando Rascon** Copyright 11 May, 1993.