

Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives

Edited by Claudia Ulbrich
Richard Wittman



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Aqua Blue Silk Personal Panel with Quilted Orange Under Panel

1995-98. Silk. 109 × 71 cm (43 1/4 × 28 inches)

© Andrea Zittel, courtesy the artist and Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

Photo by Christopher Burke

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Contents

Preface	7
Introduction	
<i>Claudia Ulbrich / Richard Wittmann</i>	
Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Importance of Dress in the Historical and Cultural Sciences	9
The Self in Performance	
<i>Christine Vogel</i>	
The Caftan and the Sword. Dress and Diplomacy in Ottoman-French Relations Around 1700	25
<i>Gabriele Jancke</i>	
Exchanging, Protecting, Collecting, Signifying: Clothes, Person, and Civilization in George Forster's <i>Voyage Round the World</i> (1777)	45
<i>Angela Heimen</i>	
'I can not dress like the rest.' Gender, Class and Body Techniques in the Diaries of Anne Lister (1791–1840)	71
<i>Edbem Eldem</i>	
An Exercise in Ottoman Sartorial Micro-History: The Many Breeches, Shoes, and Fezzes of Mehmed Cemal Bey, 1855–1864.	93
<i>Elke Hartmann</i>	
Shaping the Armenian Warrior: Clothing and Photographic Self-Portraits of Armenian <i>fedayis</i> in the late 19 th and early 20 th Century	117
Itemization and Visualization	
<i>Joachim Gierlichs</i>	
Europeans in "Turkish" Dress	151
<i>Kornelia Kaschke-Kisaarslan</i>	
'A More Beautiful Spectacle was Never Presented to My Gaze': Discussing Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq's Concept of Person by Analyzing His Description of Ottoman Dress	187

Nina Mönich

‘Mon habit bleu’, ‘mon habit noir’:

The Meaning of Colours in Clothing in

Histoire de la Vie de la Comtesse de Scheverin (1731) 205

Abdullah Güllüoğlu

The First Ottoman Legation to Prussia in 1763–1764

and Its Depiction in a Costume Album from Berlin 223

Esther Juhász

Trousseau Lists of Jewish Brides from Izmir

Between an Official Document and a Personal Narrative..... 261

Uniformity and Individuality

Sophie Häusner

Traditional Costume, Nurse’s Dress, Uniform –

The Clothing of Red Cross Nurses in the First World War

as Presented in the Autobiographical Texts of Adrienne Thomas

and Helene Mierisch (1930/34)..... 299

Petra Buchholz

Persons in Uniform.

The Meaning of Clothing for Japanese Prisoners of War in China 321

Kathrin Engler

Between Uniform und Life-Form –

Uniforms in the Artwork of Andrea Zittel..... 337

List of Authors 351

Preface

The current volume developed out of an international workshop of the German Research Foundation's Research Group 530 on "self-narratives in a transcultural perspective" [DFG-Forschergruppe 530 "Selbstzeugnisse in transkultureller Perspektive"] that was held at the Orient-Institut Istanbul from September 29 until October 2, 2009. The workshop formed part of a long-standing cooperation with the Orient-Institut Istanbul, where research on transcultural self-narratives continues beyond the term of the research group, with the project "Istanbul Memories. Personal narratives of the late Ottoman period" (www.istanbulmemories.org). The stimulating discussions at the Orient-Institut Istanbul centered around the multifaceted interplay between dress and person/personhood in written self-narratives or ego documents. By focusing on "Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives," we hoped to supplement the existing research on self-narratives with the dimension of material culture. In the workshop light was shed on the potential of dress to shape identities, to express forms of affiliation or foreignness, as well as on vestimentary practices. Were clothes simply purchased to be worn, to possess, and to give away as a gift or in barter trade? During the presentations and discussions it became clear that new insights might be gleaned if one widens the focus in self-narratives, beyond material culture to include the consideration of other sources such as trousseau inventories or account books.

The talks of the Istanbul symposium have been revised and supplemented by an introduction and the inclusion of three additional articles. Among the latter is a text on Andrea Zittel, whose artwork presents an original contemporary approach to dress. We are grateful to the artist for generously providing us with some of her pictures for inclusion in this publication. We would like to thank the Orient-Institut Istanbul for its hospitality, which rendered our intense academic exchange very pleasant, as well as for the organization of a very stimulating supporting program. The public lectures by Christoph Neumann (Munich), Esther Juhasz (Jerusalem) and Joachim Gierlichs (Doha/Berlin) provided precious stimuli for our discussions. We are grateful for the support of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII) and its (then) director, Elisabeth Özdalga, for hosting Joachim Gierlichs' talk on their beautiful historic premises. We are indebted to all those who made the symposium and this publication possible, including the museums, libraries and archives that gave us the copyright for the materials reproduced in this volume, and to Nazire Ergün, Sophie Häusner and Pia Starke for the editing and proofreading of the texts. We are most obliged to

the German Research Foundation (DFG) and to the Orient-Institut Istanbul for their financial support of the symposium and their contribution to this publication.

Istanbul, Berlin, January 2015.

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