

PAPER FASHION

06/03/2009 – 16/08/2009

Although paper has been used in fashion in various cultures at different historical periods, it is still a little-studied phenomenon and an unknown subject to the general public. The concept of the **RRRIPPI! Paper Fashion** exhibition has been conceived, designed and implemented by the ATOPOS Cultural Organization, Athens, and is the outcome of research into the little-known phenomenon of paper fashion, which took the United States by storm during the late 1960s.

In 1966, the paper manufacturers Scott Paper Company introduced the first throwaway paper dress in the United States, in order to promote their products. Almost instantly, paper clothes became a much-hyped phenomenon that would inundate America and Europe for approximately two years (1966-1968). Adorned with conspicuous and colourful prints, paper clothing became an advertising medium for the most diverse of objects. From Pop Art to political campaign slogans – everything was possible. The fragility of paper consequently stimulated the textile industry to seek out alternative materials that looked like paper, but offered more possibilities. By the end of the 1960s, the trend had passed its peak and 'paper fashion' gradually disappeared from the high streets of the West.

ATOPOS Cultural Organization collected almost 400 paper dresses from this period. As a result, *it is now the largest and most important collection of its kind in the world*. ATOPOS has also succeeded in sourcing and acquiring some rare Japanese paper garments dating from the Edo and Meiji periods, alongside some historical examples from China. PAPER FASHION presents an important selection from this collection and goes on to look more deeply into the story of paper as an alternative for textiles.

Yet in China and Japan, there is a long tradition of using paper to manufacture clothing. In Europe, paper only appeared as a substitute for textiles in the first half of the 20th century. In periods of economic crisis or war, paper became the primary solution on the quest to find alternatives for textiles. Although there has been no question of paper fashion as such since 1968, countless important fashion houses and designers have experimented with paper or with materials that look like paper. Paper still speaks to the imagination as an alternative material for clothing, and diverse contemporary designers continue to seek ways of incorporating materials that resemble paper in their collections. **Paper Fashion** brings together the most remarkable of these creations and includes designs by *Hussein Chalayan, A.F. Vandevorst, Christian Dior by John Galliano, Walter Van Beirendonck, Dirk Van Saene, Issey Miyake, amongst many more*.

ATOPOS (a name inspired by the ancient Greek word ἀτοπος, which denotes the strange, the unwonted, the eccentric, the unclassifiable) is an international non-profit cultural organization based in Athens. ATOPOS was founded by Stamos Fafalios and Vasilis Zidianakis in 2003 and its aim is to carry out innovative projects which bring together new technologies with design, fashion and contemporary art while collaborates with cultural organizations, cultural and public benefit foundations, museums, galleries and independent artists. ATOPOS is a think-tank of different visual cultures and operates as a workshop.

It collaborates internationally with new talent in the domains of Science and Art on the conception, investigation and implementation of original projects, which it presents to the public in the form of exhibitions, performances and publications.

In parallel, and through the research process, ATOPOS has assembled a unique collection of original contemporary art, design and fashion creations. Apart from the authentic, disposable 1960 paper dresses, the collection includes historical garments as well as innovative and rare creations by contemporary designers.

The **RRRIPP!! Paper Fashion** was first shown at the *Benaki Museum*, Athens, spring 2007 with the next stop at *Mudam*, Luxembourg, October 2008-February 2009. After MoMu the exhibition will travel to London in *Design Museum*, winter 2009.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Paper Fashion can be seen from Friday, March 6, 2009, through Sunday, August 16, 2009, at the Fashion Museum Province of Antwerp, Nationalestraat 28, 2000 Antwerp.

Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are sold until 5:30 p.m.

INFORMATION & VISUALS

High resolution images for publication are available from the office of communications.

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