

Paris: Capital of Fashion
Symposium
Friday, October 18th, 2019

[Video.] [Captions on screen.]

Speaker: Welcome to the fashion symposium organized by the Museum at FIT. We had to show this video and we wanted to test it out. The president of FIT will speak 12:30 after the morning session but I wanted to thank the Couture Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and all of our staff who worked so hard on this. Particularly in relation to this event I want to thank Tanya Melendez.

Speaker: If I could start with the first slide.

I will speak just for 20 minutes. Then we will have 10 minutes of questions. Interrupt me because I can't jump up with those cards.

I worked in fashion for 20 years. The way it was organized and came about, fashion is produced and displayed in cities around the world, from Shanghai to New York. But Paris is considered the most glamorous and competitive of the world's fashion capitals.

We take a different approach than other exhibitions on Paris fashion. There have been many but most of these imply that it's the capital. This is the first exhibition that explores the cultural construction of Paris as the international capital of fashion. We can trace a line to the spectacle it is today but we complicate that line. We look at the 17th century and yes there are signs in Paris, but in the documentation of the period people are saying it's still France that leads the world. It's not until the late 17th century with these references to Paris as the capital of fashion.

Louis Colbert said that fashion will be for France what the gold mines of Peru are for Spain. These are central to the economy of France. The court was a form of soft power. The idea was that prestige would accrue. Before fashion magazines you had these famous dolls that traveled around the world. This exhibit is in two parts.

First we look at Paris in the context of a global fashion capital. Then the other room looks at a deep dive into the glamour of Paris fashion. And how Paris was ran as a fashion city and utilized the history of French fashion and reinforcing the status.

We have a sense that the heritage of French fashion is something that the industry promotes constantly for this unbroken heritage. The connection I found between Louis the 14th and contemporary fashion was in the middle of the second empire where there was an interest in growing an imperial caste and a royal presence.

Back to the first gallery. This is how the French were viewed. By taking over the initiative of fashion, it was like a stocking horse. Next to this is a couture dress from a century later. This is the next

stage in French fashion power. The idea that every woman around the world will want to go to Paris to get clothes yet there was resistance to this. American journalists said how could these daughters wear these clothing from the wicked city of Paris!

You see connections to men, Æs wear and the 18th century Paris was the capital of both men, Æs and women, Æs fashion. 18th century mens wear was inspiration for women, Æs high fashion.

But there was a shift away from the predominance. By the early 19th century they had to admit that the tailors in Great Britain were wearing these comfortable suits. So you get the idea that Paris equals the Parisian, equals fashion. And fashion equals couture. So the city becomes feminized in the imagination. You think of Paris as the place to shop and the city is a place of pleasure, and art.

The rise of the couture takes a new step forward for French fashion. The English established a couture house and they went from small scale to big business and high art. Here you see his beret maintaining he was an artist. People bought into this. Couture meant sewing at first.

Louis the 14th gave guild status to women, Æs courtiers. But they were small scale. So the grand courtier there were many women doing the sewing. As other countries competed with industrial fashion, you would see an emphasis on old couture or high sewing. These are three old couture dresses and then the one closest to me is from the Bon Marche department store. Industrial fashion.

. . . Chanel was very talented as a designer but she didn't singlehandedly abolish the corset.

In America, designers who often admired French designers were jealous that they were not recognized in the same way. After that, a good legal copy of the couture dress. This is by Has and Carter, two American designers. In the 1930s they promoted the American designer movement. Has complained that these may as well be robots since their names were never mentioned.

In the 60s another complained that stores wanted to keep the designers in the back room and not put their names on the labels. But in Paris, the designer was celebrated and promoted. Here we have two wonderful looks on display. This is from the Marie Antoinette film and then the cape on the right. This indicates two different ways that the history of French glory were promoted in America and France.

Through Gilbert's work I was struck with the idea that this culture was made to work in Hollywood and fashion design. It was promoted from Paris.

But during World War II the United States and London were able to break away from French fashion. Images in magazines were restricted. Americans on the whole supported French fashion, but it wasn't the case once the Nazis had occupied Paris.

Once Dior came up in '47 you got a revival of this French fashion. Here we see a beautiful Celedonio colored dress as a licensed copy of a Dior dress. Here you see closest to me a real couture dress. On the far side is a mass produced copy in collaboration with Joseph Calper. [sp?] They made money through making licensed copies or special additions for the American market. Not all designers though made the transition.

I put this show together in part because two designers conduct were so different. Jacques was collaborating with the Nazis, but others did not. The war seriously and in many cases fatally impacted many in the French fashion community.

Accessories were and are still a very important part of fashion. We have a wide variety of them from the 19th century to the present. We have a book on the millinery trade. Some of these designers put their names in their hats. Others in the fashion trades were artists and aristocrats of the fashion world. Half the women in Paris lived FOR fashion. The other half lived off fashion.

The idea that Paris was desirable comes across in the American text.

Her father assures her that her and her friends spent 6 weeks in one continuous round of shopping. Everything from head to toe, dresses for all occasions. She footed the streets, and he footed the bill. They had the faces, figures and the francs.

Here in the background we have two Chanel couture suits.

This is very interesting. We used to show these to students in classrooms but there's too much wear and tear in doing that. So we show these in exhibits. Each PowerPoint shows the difference between the original couture suit, 450 dollars and the copy was sold for about 40 dollars. But these were shown in the windows together. Ladies would come and buy their Chaneles, acquiring status even though these were copies.

In the front room we look at making money from copying patterns. Halston and Steven Burroughs against St. Laurent, thinking that the Americans won the battle in large part because of the African American fashion models. The French men tended to monopolize the couture, others moving into readywear and knitwear.

The different types of people who participated in the fashion industry. There was enormously disproportionate influence on style but there was restricted role in the fashion industry.

Patrick Kelly decided to go to Paris to see if he could do better there. The role of Jewish people as immigrants and then as descendants of immigrants. And recently the rise of Asian Americans particularly Chinese Americans shows how immigration provides a new source of people to create fashions. And the more you have diversity in an urban environment the more you have creativity emerging.

And heritage brands. When a designer has died you hire someone else to continue the brand. When Picasso died you didn't say Julian Schnabel would be the next.

But there's a series of designers coming in. In the same way that these designers came to the forefront. When he came forward, there's a minority in charge of the French fashion house, this was shocking. From the beginning, the immigrant community has played an important role in fashion and New York fashion.

It's not just fashion designers but also executives and workers.

We go up to the 21st century. There's a Rick Owens dress. An American designer moving to Paris. From LA to New York then settling in Paris. He describes it as the ultimate challenge for proving yourself as a designer.

Then we look back at Paris fashion history. At different time, different aspects were emphasized. Craft, artistry, recently luxury as tying into heritage. As fashion is split more between fast and luxury fashion, France has the most luxury like Chanel, and then others.

Working with our architect to design the show, we had this evocation of the mythical and real of Versailles. Paris has played an important and unique role in the history of fashion. But also it's been mythologized. Now my time is up. Thank you very much!

[Applause]

If you turn the light on so I can see people, I'm happy to take questions now.

Can we get the lights up?

I hope there are questions.

My heart will be broken if there are no questions!

Student: I'm a former fashion student. What about the Italian influence on French fashion?

Speaker: I'll say a few things. The Italian history of textiles goes back at least as far back as France. Many artists in France were Italian immigrants in the Middle Ages. There's also the creation of influential fashion styles. France becomes a nation state early on. Whereas Italy doesn't become a nation 'til middle of the 19th century.

The powerful court and economy made it possible for Paris Versailles to be the center.

There have been many different capitals of fashion in Italy. The French were worried about the Italians. It's a phenomenon. Many French companies produce clothes in Italy initially. That's another complicated factor.

For a long time, Dior and people making accessories went with French fashion.

Speaker: Thank you for the amazing presentation. I'm excited to see the exhibit. Prior to fashion magazines you said they have models going country to country. How big were the models?

Speaker: Most were mannequins, doll sized. Sometimes lifetime sized. I saw an exhibition in France, extraordinary. The small ones were shipped all over the world. Constantinople to North America. A few survived. They were relatively fragile and intended to be handed down as toys.

We saw others that were small. Is time up? Didn't realize ten minutes was already up. Thank you very much. We'll have more questions later.

Now, I'd like to introduce our next two speakers.

Speaker: Wonderful to be here.

We are going to talk 20 minutes on 6 concepts.

We've edited together on the concept of fashion city. It's nice to revisit the fashion city now 15 years later. A lot has changed. One of us lives in a fashion city and the other one doesn't.

First concept. So, modernity is the first idea for talking about why the idea of fashion cities exist at all.

In her introduction she talked about a longer history of the fashion city. You can go back to the beginnings and say fashion cities existed all along the route from Asia to Europe. But there's a particularly moment important to the idea of Paris around the tricky concept of modernity.

Speaker: I pushed it back earlier. The Industrial Revolution created different kinds of cities. The fashion city is utterly bound up with that. Two or three things make the modern formation we see in Paris and New York in the 19th and 20th centuries. One of it is about pace and scale.

Much of what we talk about is elite fashion and expensive, working with particular social circles. There's a huge and growing middle class. They have desires to emulate. That is an important part of the work.

There's also changes in geography. It's about a shrinking world. And the knowledge of those cities is different. There's also a change in print media and a change in knowledge.

Speaker: All this describes a new way of living. There's the grid of New York and Paris as backdrops for a sense of the fashion city in the present and future.

Speaker: I love this 1958 Vogue picture. It locks together the concepts.

Speaker: Second concept. Power.

Speaker: We've talked about soft power. And I suspect a phrase will come up various times. A thing to emphasize is that fashion is not just about clothing. It's an imperial competition. In other places I've worked, I've been interested in a way that cities themselves are locked into a geopolitical competition. The say of being different from London and better than London.

One of the significant things is how fashion becomes part of the competition. Fashion is a way of showing that you are better than other competing countries. You get an interesting development. With the United States. As a global superpower. How that gets reflected in the fashion industry.

Speaker: You couldn't get a better example. How Paris exerts power through the international exhibition. In London in the 50s. There's the biggest and best in 1900. You have this huge figure of her. This is on the power of the wonderful Dreamworld book. Here she is dominating the world. Looking like a King Kong of fashion looking as tall as the Eiffel Tower.

Speaker: And this gets projected on women and women's fashions. In the book, it goes along with the exhibition, an interesting discussion on the Chinese modernism and the promotion of Beijing and Shanghai as fashion capitals. You have an extension of this discussion.

Speaker: This is how we operate politically and economically and most importantly in a symbolic way.

Next.

There we go.

The third idea we taught was important for defining what a fashion city is. That's the system. The fashion city being an assemblage of activities related to production and consumption of fashion. We see it here.

A true fashion city needs skill, atelier, manufacturing, education, a fashion school, sense of shopping, shopping street, fashion shop. Coming together in one space or system. That's often been used where competing fashion cities say "we are the preeminent fashion city." It's shifting.

Speaker: I think it's interesting in the ways that has defined the "fashion formation." Those big examples. Paris in the early 19th or 20th century and then New York you get these ingredients working together. All these relationships between the manufacturers and designers, it's a particular kind of city formation.

In the big fashion capitals there is a narrowing down, hollowing out of that kind of formation. London is the best example. There's been a tiny revival of the fashion manufacturing but London doesn't make clothes at all. That industrialization is changing the nature of what a fashion capital is.

Speaker: In historical fashion cities you see it all around us, like here in New York, a fashion district. These parts of the fashion system that exploded through revitalization and different forms of manufacturer. In the terms of the 19th and 20th century this is rooted in location.

I am living in Scotland at the moment, Glasgow was an important fashion city. Its slogan: People Make Glasgow. And I think people make a fashion city. A fashion city is about the phenomenon of the performative event.

It's about elites, this term of derision at the moment, but the elites take the lead in things like fashion show, or events like this. The race course. This is from the book, the exhibition here. We have three race course shops roughly all taken at the same time.

London, one in Shanghai, the Shanghai races and one outside Paris where race courses are used as like an outdoor runway where women, courtesans were paid to show the next line. These strongly project a fierce feeling to the city they are related to. Like the Paris one, or I love the British one, the ascot one.

They look drunk. The men are not wearing their morning suits well, like a Boris Johnson look.

Then Shanghai is taking a break. They are in flux and we talk about them in different places in the book but there are new elements of taste and class coming together. It's about cultural class and people, and a sense of fashionability.

Speaker: Something I would say about the ascot, if you want to study fashion atrocity, go to the Royal Ascot. It's truly horrible. The school I worked at they train the Ascot. Not just due to their fashion sensibility.

But I will also say that sense of performance extends down to other kinds of places. One characteristic of a great fashion capital is about the street and performance of fashion on the street, how people look and how that interaction of the crowd, the performance of identity is a big part of a fashion capital.

Speaker: The penultimate theme and the way things will run through the rest of the day are about how the great fashion capitals have a presence beyond. There is a range of ways in which that works. Valerie already talked about the significance of copies and the ways in which the presence of Paris in these homeopathic quantities makes a difference. The quote from the Broadway show, Sweet Charity someone was wearing a copy of a copy of a copy of a dress.

The other image here is by James Baylor [sp?] He photographed the model in London in 1966 at the height of the swinging 60s. But it appears in Lifestyle Magazine with the black middle classes in South Africa. Those sensibilities are in the ways that fashion capitals are projected and used beyond.

Speaker: Is that our time? 2 minutes! Finally it's the future. We co-wrote a book on fashion cities 10 years ago. You could say that the fashion city is dead in a period of globalization after the financial crisis and the politics in which we now live and the obsession network. What do these images say to us?

Speaker: A few things I think. Again, when Valerie was talking she was talking about how the big four, if you go back and look at the middle of the 20th century there's discussion around Tokyo and Milan, these are different fashion capitals. But now we have these "big four" in place. That exists with the hollowing out of the fashion capital. These primarily exist as symbolic references. At the same time we have seen a sudden change in the geography in the relationship of cities and fashion.

This is the mall in Qatar. It's a giant luxury tax free way to nowhere, a bold set of designer goods. This is Sejal Kumar, a big fashion blogger there. So there are these tastemakers in the middle of nowhere maybe, they are lucid in fashion and their age projection works in these online spaces and not on the street. She's using this sense of Paris. We are in interesting times.

The image of the Qatar Mall. We also have these half empty malls in Shanghai relevant to the imagination of Paris but disturbing. A fashion city can exist.

All the things that founded the idea of the fashion city are coming under challenge with these.

Time is up for us and for the fashion city. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker: Now for questions.

Speaker: You talked about London and what's happening in New York. Could you rebuild the geography of a fashion city on a smaller scale and what that would look like?

Speaker: We are still rebuilding the idea of a fashion city on a smaller scale.

One thing that interests me is the way that "second tier" or other cities develop fashion cultures and how they work. Not just fashion weeks, but there's a model that involves designers and new forms of local manufacturing.

There are also issues around history. Often there's a passive sense of something like this, or the London fashion, and what they are doing. But

they are at the center of this relationship of fashion. What we do in terms of making a fashion city is working this way. There are ways in which these new formations of fashion might develop.

And special media blogs or someone who is an influencer, setting direction in an incredibly powerful way need not be based physically in a real fashion city. So then you can think about different spaces outside the main floor might be created.

That didn't answer the question. Sorry. But I think there is also a progressive argument that talks about local fashion, and ways that might work. Like based in London there's a small re-increase in factories. The sensibility is about the work and conditions under which clothes are made.

Audience Member: . . . They keep coming back as this friend or foe . . .
[Speaking too softly to hear.]

Speaker: I think, one, that tells you the strength of the the system. There is an economic force, a sense, a longer history around people making themselves by going on journeys, traveling, this nasty post-colonial history of a fashion sense that's still there. The 19th century sits there.

The optimistic story is about the ways in which those cities and the way they are gentrified or capitalized in a way, that fashion fades away, maybe we should look to the face of where that energy takes place. Like West African cities. We keep seeing on these platforms the rise of west Africa for 20 years but I think it's likely to be in Shanghai or Beijing.

Speaker: Other questions? Yes?

Speaker: In New York following the 2008 recession there has been a rearrangement of the fashion business. We were having a decline of retail. In America we had the highest floor space in retail. That strung back. But the businesses that have survived are adopting this platform and figuring out the internet. And new companies on the internet.

I know in the United States it's the same thing happening in cities like Paris. Young people are starting out on the internet and combining or working for other organizations that sell there. Is it the same in all fashion cities?

Speaker: I think it's related to gentrification and the cost of this digital platforming. It offers another way to operate outside city spaces. You see that replicated in London. I'm not sure the case in Glasgow but it's becoming increasingly difficult. I'm not sure.

Speaker: I think you are right. But I think too, sorry, lots of it is about property prices and rentals. There's also about the way there's a capitalization of urban spaces. Like London in the 60s for not that wealthy of a middle class coming out and leaving a legacy. But now

people can't do anything with their money in these places. It pushes people into suburbs and other spaces, and it pushes people online.

Speaker: And time is definitely up! Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker: Thanks guys, that was great. Our next conversation on fashion history in France will be research associate at Versailles and our second guest. Please join me in welcoming them to the stage.

Speaker: Thank you very much, lovely to be here. Today to be a fashion capital you need to have a fashion history.

Does this work?

Today we want to chat about the way France has theorized its own fashion history. Historically and in the contemporary landscape.

Is this working?

I'm working on 17th and 18th century history and studies on Versailles.

How I started as an art historian and historian studying fashion. It started in 2010. About these two projects I'll briefly present to you.

To me it's a sign of how paradoxical fashion studies are evolving in France at the moment. I was involved in a project, European International Project in London while at Versailles.

I'm a French historian working on French fashion history. I started with this project 3 years long at the museum. Then, a different project. I worked in Denmark.

To me it is strange that I had to work abroad instead of staying in France.

Briefly we'll see how it started. The most problematic issue is that all works and studies are published in French. Few are translated into English. Being global is quite complicated if you just speak French and you don't translate to English. I think it's the main issue concerning us French historians. The landscape of the literature on fashion history is then difficult to present to the global audience.

All the references, very few are translated.

That very diverse publication. And different sources, explained the diversity of media used to speak about fashion.

Also the diversity of different disciplines amongst scholars.

My question was, with the invitation to present here, do we have a history of fashion or fashion studies in France. We don't agree.

It is also something quite problematic in France. We have different schools and it's hard to put them together.

But fashion history started in France. With people you may know by name. Like Leloir, Quicherat. The first to open the fashion history. It evolved. But one thing to be noticed is that in 1962 at UNESCO there was the first professional network of fashions. Created by a French historian. Now it's the largest.

Different approaches about these different parts of research. Covering a large range of disciplines. Here are examples. I took images of books with 17th and 18th century fashion history.

There's also preindustrial fashion studies. Here's the last image here. Also another question. About the history of time and place. I think there are numerous times today demonstrating it's about where you are, and who you are. When you talk about fashion.

Speaker: It's interesting what's said about fashion history not being developed field in France. The feeling among scholars with those ten years ago that there wasn't a place for those in the academy. Astounding for us today. That France the cradle of fashion, with immense archives and documents, didn't feel like they were recognized by universities.

The past few years there's been questions to recognize the wealth of resources coming out of France.

What was mentioned was perhaps having different views about the landscape today. Fashion history has always existed in France. In fact French historians and theorists were among the founding fathers of diverse currents of fashion history. I want to give a brief overview of the history of fashion in France.

There was a taciturn man studying medieval architecture who was a part of this material turn in fashion history in the 1850s. He was elected as chair and he gave his lecture on French history of the Middle Ages. Astounding. What was incredible was that he privileged the object. He was not only interested in looking at images and texts but also looking at clothes and collection.

We tend to think of people who look at text and images. But he was adamant about it being the object and the object itself.

Material culture is a huge part of cultural history. I want to stress that this is the foundation of cultural history.

His work is recognized as important. There's the sons that kill the father or daughters who kill the mother. The theory of collectors is that he was not interested in the object enough.

One of the great founders of the French fashion collection and one of the early collectors who thought about museums and exhibits, who was a principal founder of the collection today-- because he didn't wear the garments or put them on himself, he was too theoretical. Then we have

the sociological turn. Where the text and images take forefront and precedence.

The cultural historians of the 80s and 2000s. I also want to point out this question of translation. What is fashion history in France. How do you translate fashion. France has this problem of too many words to describe its own history!

It's part of the reason why fashion studies in France has this discussion. How do you even translate fashion studies in France. What is it?

Various currents are finding their place. Fashion as a discipline is trying to find its place in France. It's a very interesting time in France at the moment.

Speaker: You're right, it's changing but good.

Speaker: She mentioned a lot of her research is done abroad. I'm an American scholar and work elsewhere in Europe. It takes a while for the French to change. I think universities today are really understanding that fashion is a discipline.

We all know this. Thanks to Valerie who's really helped this field develop. France is really going through that at the moment.

Speaker: One of the problems is that in France we have historical schools that are clearly defined. Where to put fashion? This is why we saw all these book covers. Artistry, social and cultural history, exhibition catalogs. They all have a label and box. It complicates the conversation.

One thing that we may not agree on when we first talk about this here. I believe it started quite early. In studying history or fashion or dress. To me there is a gap.

She does not see the gap, I think. This is what makes it interesting. It's the same topic but we don't have the same feeling. How to approach. It's just a feeling of how you feel of the topic. Now it is starting again. With a young generation. And scholars. It's multidisciplinary.

Speaker: Why was there a gap?

Speaker: After the early years, there was a want to create a school. And work on the clothing culture and culture of appearances. It didn't work that well.

I think the problem of the language. We are in a global world. English is predominant. It's an issue we have.

Speaker: Interesting. There was a volume about cultural history published in the early 2000s. A lot of contributors were asked to contribute essays in their fields. Not a single one dedicated to fashion. There were essays on everything else. The closest to fashion

was an article about the body. One of the names fashion studies goes under in France. Those working on appearance tend to pull it to the body, hair, tanning. Outward appearances. Almost too afraid to talk about fashion. Might be deemed too frivolous. In that sense.

Speaker: I think so.

Speaker: Any time for questions?

Speaker: I see where both of you are coming from clearly. Someone was telling me about how their practice was embedded in French academia for so long. What is the role played by fashion schools? Chris and David talked about that. What's the role of fashion schools to promote fashion studies or not in Paris?

Speaker: I think they are a part of the landscape. France is a top down system. Power comes from the big names. Even the history department might be higher up than the art history department. So the feeling is that unless you have people doing fashion at the top name schools and in the big departments then it's not being done. But I think that's definitely changing thanks to fashion schools but for the past 20 years that was the feeling.

Speaker: In my opinion we have these big names in fashion schools, like this one and they are famous, people coming from all over the world to study fashion in Paris. But the number of schools increased. I think it's revealing how things are changing but they are not doing the same thing as specializing. Or bringing them into the discourse of fashion studies in France for example.

Audience Member: You mentioned there were these conflicting methods. There was a shift. What is the most beneficial way to approach the topic? Psychology or a different study that would be most appreciated by the public?

Speaker: Sophie and I were asked to create a network for researchers in France, people who worked in the fashion industry in France. We had to come up with a French word! So we came up with "Fashion Culture" and this would embrace the diversity. To close off fashion as a discipline shuts out its wealth.

There's not an idea of fashion studies. A school centralizing the work from these scholars and researchers. They come from all these different backgrounds. They are not grouped in one department.

So there's an overarching canon to which they adhere. Sophie and I felt that if we were to embrace what was going on in France in all its beautiful diversity then the idea of "fashion cultures" would be good.

Speaker: The idea of multi- or transdisciplinary is a good one.

Speaker: This is more of a comment than a question. I'm a medievalist. 20 years ago when I started doing this, there were just a few of us but we were envious of the France. You had Boucher and these other people, but I'm surprised no one has mentioned Daniel Ruche --

Speaker: He was on the slide.

Speaker: Because for American scholars it was a new approach that was illuminating. I wanted to throw that in there.

But also Americans have the same terminology problems and it's difficult to navigate those.

Speaker: If I may, you are right . . . He's a major actor in the French landscape. But his books were translated in English. It's a big thing to cover him.

You were right, but I want to mention something. The problem of addressing the history of fashion working on early periods is the lack of natural culture. It's a phrase that lots of young scholars have-- it's to start working on a topic, working from manuscripts in different countries is difficult and they are hard to access. Taking apart of your question -- around the terminology you are right.

You have it right in English. This is something. I would like to make a change or at least have other words to complete the title of this international committee. We have to add fashion and textile.

Speaker: In your journey to do this, have you contacted like the top 12 design schools in Paris? Or FIT? What's your assessment of those schools?

Speaker: Of course. Yes, we have wonderful colleagues doing wonderful work. It's exciting to see the young students interested in studying fashion in France today. It's marvelous.

Sophie has done it longer than I have. But in Paris for our seminars there were just a few people, but now the seminars are packed. It's thanks to these institutions that people are doing this wonderful work.

One concern though is what jobs will these students have? I am afraid of students getting their PhDs in fashion in France and the job market is not good. I think schools should be careful about the students they take on, and the job prospects in the fashion industry in France. Prove me wrong though, France!

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker: Our next speaker. They will talk about fashioning the Parisienne. Please help me in welcoming her.

Speaker: There you go. Good morning. I will talk about fashioning the Parisienne. If you are not interested in social media, I just want to warn you. My approach, we have these historians and sociographers.

Before I update the society of the Parisienne I want to look at the study in particular for the book.

A few years ago, quite a long time ago, I wrote fashioning the City. I wanted to look at the "Paris Myth." This was about looking at the Parisienne woman. This was like up to 1999. Before the advent of social media. I thought maybe I would come back to this theme but it's changed since.

I completely left the site of Paris. Digital media, bloggers, it's the work I have been working on since. I wrote these two things together and am revisiting these themes. I wanted to look at them in the light of digital and social media.

The questions that informed my reading of these platforms were to what extent do social and digital media offer different interpretations of Paris and Parisian women. The discourse on the ideal of femininity, a Parisienne, white, young, thin and so on.

This leads to the second question in the back of my mind on social media is who is included and who is excluded then from these discourses on the beautiful Parisienne?

This speaks to something I am really interested in and to an extent I protest as a work in progress. It's about looking at the role of social media in producing these ideas of the Parisienne women. I'm interested in the role of hashtags and algorithms. Basically these elements are in the way of fashion discourse. This is a picture of how I went about it.

Something I looked at in the book is the idea of Paris as a fashion sign. This signifies meaning and fashion and fashionability. Like as a label, something attached to it, or as a way symbolizes fashion.

Griffe Spatiale is about the idea of Paris informing fashion. Looking at social media I was interested in the new integrations of the word "Paris" as a sign of fashion. On social media this sign itself is very important. The hashtag.

So I looked for Paris hashtags on Instagram. These are the feeds and examples I came across.

This is again about an algorithm. You see all these hastags. In social spaces and sociology there are ideas around hashtags. There is a cultural literature.

It's an idea of denaturalizing technology or to show it's unusual. But it's in a way cultural. We need to look at the cultural and social makeup of technology. Here, for example, is a work of David Beer's work who has been important on allegory and he has some things to say about hashtags.

He believes that hashtags are a way to order and archive data and distribution. He reminds us that it's more than that. It classifies, fixes, and constructs the world. So how do fashion hashtags classify society?

I'm fusing that word of fashion hashtags for a more expressive term but it refers of all this, "hash tags dot dot dot and you see it's connected to fashion related posts. Like hashtags outfit of the day, etc. Or hashtags Paris or something is one of them.

Returning to the Instagram pages that I just showed you, I'm asking the question how do fashion hashtags classify society?

These are screen-grabbed but you see these young women, conventionally crazy . . .

In terms of gender, the Parisienne is female. #Parisienne is women. This ID is used and associated with femininity. So there's this normative discourse of gendering in the realm of femininity and women. Going up to this France or Parisian women online I did a Google search.

Doing that in a new project window to erase your search history. So not every search on the google page is shown. I used with "French influencer" and "French instagrammer." I I came across these articles. Chicest French girls, and so on.

These French women were raised in Paris. You don't hear about certain other places!

This is what Google algorithm gave me. We need to look at the query.

It allowed a closer look at three figures. You are very highly visible on social discourse at the moment.

There's Damas. And Sabina Socol. That's the amount of followers just last week. All three white, young, fit.

What I think is interesting as well related to what the lady asked, the book has capitalized on online fame by capitalizing on certain platforms.

Damas launched Rouje in 2016. Mais is creative director for Musier. It capitalized on the related tropes. You can see the coffee. [Laughter]

There's Rouje. This romantic term. The myth.

The kinds of visuals we see in the book.

It reminds us that all the discourse are about myths. The French industry has a huge interest in feeding. There are books.

This also by Damas.

This is a perfect example of commercialization. With the woman. Two weeks ago she opened a first brick and mortar store in Paris.

Next two. A traditional French brasserie. "The most Parisian place ever?" She'll soon open a store, I hear, in New York.

Here staying with Jeanne Damas. She started a campaign. Again the tropes. You see "The True Parisian." Of course she shows you her coffee.

Again a myth that sells offline, online, e-shops. And social media. It's difficult to differentiate between e-commerce and social media. Instagram is being an increasingly commodified place. Especially Instagram. Something that brings attention is there's these little things.

You see a picture. You tap on the screen. That's what happens. I'm always kind of amazed. A magical moment where the screen is a commodified space. Paris becomes a commodified space. I think of the work of the Marxist scholar who invites us to query the term "social" in social media. What do we mean by social? What kind of sociality do we have in mind? When it comes to Instagram it's about commodify, monetize, commercialize.

Remembering this role of social media in having an interest in presenting.

Returning to e-shop, e-commerce, here are screenshots. Rouje. All young, white, thin, able-bodied models. Let's look at sizes available.

At the time you could have sizes 34-40. Rouje you could go 34 up to 42 sometimes. French 40 is US 8.

Research says that average sizes in US are 16-20. UK is 16. France, 40% are 44 and above. That's not big.

To wear it you need a particular body. You are producing it on the streets of the cities.

We talked about the idea that women have been sized out of fashion. She uses that expression. We see that of course in brick and mortar stores, digital stores, and online.

As I said earlier, the google algorithm. It's worth reflecting on the algorithms in making experiences.

In my book on Paris there's the idea of fashion discourse and fashion media discourse. Now, fashion social media discourse.

The discourse is dependent on social media I talked about such as hash tags. Looking at that in fashion content. With hash tags, there's growing information on algorithms. Problematizing it and drawing attention to their social dimension.

Algorithms of oppression in this book by Safiya Noble. She explains in 2006 and 2010. With her daughters and nieces they do an online search. "Black girls." The search yielded mostly articles and images sexualizing black women.

First she got shocked by that. If you do Parisian Instagram fashion look at the images shown to me. This is the kind of thing. Young, white, female, able-bodied.

Drawing attention to, if you look forward and understanding the new iteration of fashion. We need to problematize the hash tags in producing dominant discourses.

There are spaces for new digital iterations. Thank you.

[Applause]

Speaker: I know you've also done a lot of earlier work. The Parisienne and then the not chic foreigner. There was a subtext that you could learn to become a Parisienne. It included society workers and others. I wonder is there a sense of international imitation.

Speaker: Yes certainly. The high social stratification where you tend to be praised for being chic. Paris being international. It's OK as long as you are based in Paris. A lot of them might have come to visibility from already having belonged to a Parisienne fashion world. Hanging out with her world and key photographers.

In a way there are a lot of well-known influencers who are not based in Paris. When you do an online search and look for influencers, that's what you come across. You need to know who they are to get access to their content.

Flatter, democratizing space. It's more complex. Who comes to visibility on social media and who stays in the background.

Speaker: If you can come up to the microphone that'll be easier.

Speaker: With all of this, where do you think this is going. How will it affect fashion designers and the future of the whole industry of designers and crafts people.

Speaker: Digital media?

Speaker: How it'll affect the designers themselves. And what the industry will become.

Speaker: I don't know. I'll look at the work we do on digital media. There's the idea designers talk about, there's an internalized idea of social media. Design with social media in mind. Something that'll ultimately be photographed well. Black is difficult on the digital screen. They'll have a design itself. That can be framed on social media.

I'd like to do a research project. If anyone is interested in the future. I have not studied well but I will. Photographers and designers talk about how it's impossible to not design without considering that a main circulation is digital. That has impact on the production.

Speaker: Have you found any backlash against this white, able-bodied, female, online or not. Paris is such a diverse city.

Speaker: A book came out a few weeks ago. "I am not a Parisian" who says they're not all young, criticality on the Parisienne myth. I was surprised by how white, skinny a lot is. If these young women are not able to change things a bit, do you always systematically have to play by those rules if you want to make money. Maybe I'm not too optimistic. But there are things happening. How visible are they.

Speaker: First of all that was very interesting, I enjoyed your talk. My impression was that contrary to the US, French culture is much more appreciative of older women, style, and even their sex appeal. Not just Catherine Deneuve but with French women. But here I see complete domination by people in their 20s. Is this because millennials control social media or is the attitude changing.

Speaker: It's interesting. There's a woman in her 60s and another in her 40s. We have different models. Maybe it is not as bad. I hear all the time, French actresses say, it's easier at a certain age. But in the French Elle it doesn't go beyond a certain age. It's maybe not as bad as US, but it is not great.

Speaker: Thank you so much.

[Applause]

Speaker: Our last speaker will talk about fashion and luxury. Very French topics. Thank you.

[Applause]

Speaker: Hi. Good morning.

French luxury and fashion is my topic. I sent an e-mail last week asking what I should do and she said talk about your research. So this concept of power, you mentioned that. But I am a professor in middle Paris. FIT holds a special place in my heart. Thank you everyone for being here.

Building soft power with style.

The question for us is how we use soft power in fashion. Soft power became a problem for me. So I will give a summary.

Talking about power in fashion you must start with the queen. Fashion is about power. There's a relationship there that's interesting to see how it works. It's interesting to find the link between the different fashion capitals.

It's good news for New York.

The new works uses algorithms. This is an interesting description to have in cultivating images in fashion.

Power and fashion and France. We have the king, the queen. Very influential. Very long history. Soft power itself is interesting. But how do you apply soft power to a field like fashion? We have different types. Three kinds of power.

Culture, foreign policy, these are soft powers.

Paris is a fashion capital.

Why do we need rankings? These can be annoying, so we need to ask this question. I would argue they are everywhere. Now we have even started ranking people.

Perhaps this is useful. But rankings are everywhere so do we embrace them and see what we can do with them? These can help us make choices.

But rankings are subjective. If there are any ,ÄÜBlack Mirror,ÄÜ fans, this was an episode about rankings being everywhere.

Things happened in 2016 in two influential countries.

It's not just power for the sake of power.

First project. If we were to rank fashion capitals why would we do that? First I wrote a book on this topic. We looked at all the factors mentioned. I am a professor and I have students. I put them to work on the project with me.

The importance of a city's fashion week is #1. We started ranking the factors. That was first out of 100.

Second was the number of fashion houses in the city.

Number of designers attracted by the city was next.

The value of a city's fashion brands is important.

The importance of a city in history is of course important.

And mentions of the city's fashion industry. We also had financial students in the room. And the importance of fashion schools at #11.

Also the furniture of fashion museums. New York ranks high.

Number of designers educated in the city is also important for prestige of a place. And the influence of fashion professional associations is very important as well. I won't go through these 14 factors, I just have 20 minutes. That would take all day. I will show you a couple then we will move to the more advanced techniques.

At the time we had to focus on the Big 4. We had to start somewhere. You will see now we have a broader perspective.

The number of fashion houses. New York is well known for this.

Another factor for us was to see how many designers are attracted by the city. We wanted to see how people move. The city is like an entity, like a country. What's their role in the network?

Regular fashion brands. There are lots of other rankings. We have to rely on other approaches. When people say fashion they mean luxury fashion oftentimes.

Then you have Italians. And what about Madrid?

Then there's consumption. I will stop at the 7th factor. If you want to rank the Big Four . . . You have to include China. It's so influential on the market.

Importance of history.

This is the one we will end on. You will see that Paris is quite influential in this perspective. The question is, if you look at the aggregate ranking, what happens? I'm sure you are all dying to know. If you don't wait, it was surprising. New York is actually the ultimate fashion capital depending on weight.

Paris is also there and Milan. The Big Four . . . But what do we do to move beyond this? This is where the hyper-evidence arrives. We are fine with colleagues based in Austria. You have that organized network and concepts. We go to social media and we take all that exists on the internet and elsewhere to create this.

They collect the data and create the weights themselves. You see what the algorithm is doing is not extraordinary. We use data from the FMD. Images, sources.

I have just one minute. So this is what we got using all this data. This is the most recent ranking. New York is still number 1. Then you have Paris, Milan, London. It's about the same as it was 2 years ago but what are the other places? We can rank anyone, anytime so there are hundreds of fashion capitals. This is happening in the world. But we see that the fashion world is becoming more diverse. This is something one discovered.

Something is how can I go high? It can be used by students, professionals, entrepreneurs. And obviously governments. A challenge is things are not transparent, how to make fashion more so.

Thank you very much for your time. Now open for questions.

[Applause]

Speaker: In a couple of sentences, why do you think New York came out on top.

Speaker: It's also what you see in the older ranking. There's the size of the American market. Very important. The fact that you have media.

There's Miami. Also French research. How do you exist outside of English. That is difficult.

That's the power of New York.

Speaker: I had another question for you. He mentioned Yunya Akamura, an expert in Japanese fashion. I wonder if you can talk about the position of Tokyo in the rankings.

Speaker: There's less coverage of Tokyo in the media. Tokyo's number changed. A lot of Japanese designers went to Paris and stayed there. A lot was used for French prestige and government prestige. Same for US. All countries play that game. Some are obviously more powerful. That's a reason.

In the media now, new fashion weeks are being covered.

Look at Vogue, there are new fashion weeks all over the place.

Speaker: In your research, have you looked at how different fashion capitals known for one thing versus another. Leather goods, women's wear, jewelry, etc.

Speaker: Different types of fashion. What about leather goods. Obviously we produce the algorithms to be more fine grain. If we can use that. My guess would be that certain cities are much higher. Cities actually shift. If you do fast fashion for example.

Speaker: How do you factor in the qualitative? Things that aren't quantifiable?

Speaker: I was not always like that. Then I started crunching numbers! Then statistics got easier.

One of your assumptions is the buzz, what people talk about among themselves. This dimension. You don't capture what they say privately in their rooms. But part of what happens is capturing different dimensions. I don't want to say objective. It'd be interesting how people understand that type of rankings. If you're a young designer, what does it mean for them. How does it impact.

Speaker: In your research what's your projection of the trend. Will it continue to be #1. Also who are the surprises. You mentioned Miami. And are there new ones with the economic situations shifting.

Speaker: Predicting the future is tricky. What you see is not fragmentation. But you can see diversity in rankings. There's New York. Sydney was 5 in 2000. That gives you perspective on the gap.

We may move to a world where there's not a monarchy. Where there are more capitals influencing the world.

Sao Paulo is surprising. Moscow as well.

You can see Shanghai and Mumbai.

Speaker: Last question.

Speaker: Thank you. Thank you for mentioning my book, my work. I talk about the French influence and also Japanese clients. Do you think they are still instrumental and powerful and making France a fashion capital. And also in New York, I don't know if you looked at these institutions.

Speaker: The fact that Paris attracts. Not only Japanese. From Spain too, Italy as well.

There are hybrids. Who New York attracts.

Speaker: Thank you so much.

[Applause]

Speaker: Now it's my great pleasure to introduce the President of FIT.

Speaker: Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here. I know you've had a wonderful exchange and symposium. Glad I could get here to say hello to you.

A few words before you break for lunch. Not really about Paris. But about the museum at FIT. You happen to have joined us at a special time. This year we celebrate the museum's 50th anniversary. It really is a crowned jewel.

[Applause]

But it really is a crowned jewel on the FIT campus. As well as in New York's elite museum circuit. It inspires people from around the globe and award winning exhibitions. Paris as Capital of Fashion is just one example. It's dedicated to people in the LGBT community, Vivienne Westwood, yes, some favorites.

Extravagant shoes, the Gothic style in fashion. And last year, the cultural significance of the color pink.

It houses one of the truly glorious selections of textiles and accessories. And provides classes for our students, and for those across the country. With public programs as well.

Let me also say it has a superb curatorial team, who co-curated this show. Students dream about becoming part of the world of fashion. The museum is a giant candy store. It's not alone in celebrating an important university. This year FIT is 75 years old.

It started out as a tiny trade school, just two programs. Today, we offer almost 50 programs. Cosmetics, textile, toy design, illustration, international trade I won't name all 50! Our signature is fashion design. All of them arrive in the college's dynamic environment. Part of that environment of course includes our museum.

I thank all of the participants. We thank the following organizations. The National Endowment for the Arts. The council of the museum at FIT. Our work would not be possible without the support of those organizations. Bon appetit. Enjoy your lunch.

[Applause]

[End of morning symposium.]

Disclaimer: This transcription provides a meaning-for-meaning summary to facilitate communication access. It is the ultimate responsibility of the client to verify the accuracy of the information provided. Thank you.

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Paris: Capital of Fashion
Symposium
Friday, October 18th, 2019

***This transcript provides a meaning-for-meaning summary to facilitate communication access. TypeWell speech-to-text service may not be a fully verbatim record of the proceedings.

Speaker: Welcome to the FIT fashion symposium. It is my pleasure to introduce the former editor of Italian Vogue who'll tell you about the other fashion country, Italy!

[Applause]

Speaker: When it comes to fashion, multiple roads cross. Historically Italian fashion differs dramatically because of cultural traditions and how fashion and perceived. The first couture house opened and in contrast Italian fashion is different. It comes with the territory. Multi-sensory and individualistic. Originally it was unified in 1961 with three capitals.

This nationalism is about establishing a singular vision of fashion. Florence, Rome, Milan, etc. etc. On the positive side there's unique background traditions that shape the distinct character. There was never one capital but three. This is why it took almost a century. As we say, better late than never.

Last but not least Italian fashion linked to its identity is recent, only dating to 1950. Before that time, it was not like that. There were few designers notably a couple in the teens and 20s. But in general, traveling to Paris to recreate original French fashion. The situation changed in the second world war. To aid economic recovery, the US and the Italy worked as allies. In this joint effort there was a turning point master minded by a business man. [On screen.]

Fashion as originally independent from French influence. Nevertheless there are new designs, boutique. His strategy was genius. He organized the shows in one place. His residency in Florence. That's remarkable. You had to run from one to the other. He scheduled the event just a few days to make it more difficult. In 1951 there was invitation to a 2-day fashion event. With peak news and evening gowns.

The following two seasons at the hotel were an even greater success. In 1952 there was this event at the largest place in Florence. Italian fashion was born. It was not a coincidence. Yes Giorgini was Florentine and yes the city had a reputation for accessory and leather goods. It was high time for Italy's rebirth through fashion. What better time, what better place than Florence, epicenter of art especially in the Renaissance.

During the shows he worked with museums and churches, opened galas, and rented halls and it was attended by local aristocrats and written up by press.

A group of designers launched the boutique look for beachwear and streetwear. And the novelty of the Florentine shows. There were the textiles and expertise. Affordable prices were a huge departure from the French couture and appealed to American taste. The New York Times said the Italian flare has applause from foreign buyers. The former editor of American Vogue, to make Italian stores look fashionable is this designer.

He established innovation in the 60s. Using Lycra and polyester. A stretch fabric for suits and pants. In the early years he made tribute to Italy with inspiration in the scarves and skirts. Releasing a stylized order of Italian art.

The mosaics of the poster. The iconic shape of the Baptist of St. John in Florence.

These designs dating to the medieval age.

You can see this blue in one of his famous art.

Also the local fisherman crop pants.

Giorgini continued. There was the launch of the tromp l'oeil dresses. However the reality is more complex.

There was struggle with Roman couture houses. There was nightlife, diplomatic connection and it was the ideal showcase for high fashion. Rome enjoyed the renaissance and there was the studios that offered cheaper rates. Fashion with a shift from Florence was inevitable. In the 50s there were blockbusters.

Hollywood divas in Rome. Fashion magazines. No better backdrop for these couture outfits. Than the eternal city.

The Italian ateliers were a destination. Paris continued to influence. But more comfortable fit.

These inspired gowns are a great example.

This wedding dress when she married in Rome in 1949. But the consolidated fame, with offscreen wardrobe. The Sun Also Rises.

Three Girls in Rome.

The designer known for his interesting fashion, and this movie.

This famous sketch he designed. And the dress next to it.

Turned in London and Paris, he paid homage with the soft evening wear. Opening in Rome after the war. This is the dress in Journey to Italy.

Also Imitation of Life.

And Audrey Hepburn for which she won an Oscar nomination.

Here this refined elegance. Givenchy in Rome.

Regardless of fashion success, friction with Rome and Florence continued.

"If the Italian designers would put together, they'd probably match the French. Instead they don't make peace together."

"It is the vision ... "

The granddaughter redefined. This is an avant-garde collaboration. The dress on your life.

And Alexander Calder collaboration.

In the mid-60s a fashion revolution began.

It was Italy's unique contribution. Freelance designers were hired. Near couture. It became known as ready to wear.

He worked for many labels. Before going solo in 1974. The allure of the 20s and 30s fashion, mixed with African exoticism, informed his aesthetic.

In 1971 he led the group. Here he presents a united project designed for five fashion houses. Each focusing on a specific item -- jackets, suits, shirts.

He gained a huge success. The choice of Milan was from a far more complex reason. Production with design.

Milan was not only close to textile industry. It offered its infrastructures, services, functional exhibition space. You could also find the first PR and advertising agency. And the numerous fashion magazines. Since the beginning of 20th century, were published here.

In the 70s fashion was a topic in news magazines. Political commentators wrote on fashion. A famous journalist in Milan, reshaped the profession. Home based in Milan were Armani, Versace, and others who initially collaborated before striking out on their own. Giorgio Milani.

French journalist claimed that a new set is born.

"Give me one piece of clothing that Armani made that truly influenced the world."

Time Magazine said this jacket, followed by 8 pages.

Two more unforgettable friends. And the injection of sexiness in his version of Italy.

Also fashion talents. Dolce Gabana and Prada.

Journalist commented on changing time. Editor of Conde Naste. And the dedication to young fashion. 80s fashion in Milan.

The editor of the magazine by Joe Ponti-- the same color. In 1989 the artistic director for 7 years. "My approach is pragmatic. Rooted in design. Highly logical. And very correct."

In the 90s there was ready to wear. The brand war started. The majority of French luxury brands were produced in Italy.

Last but not least thanks to the 2015 world's fair Milan had a Renaissance.

A Milan based nonprofit organization for the fashion industry started four years ago with a program focused on sustainability.

Last month was Milan fashion week. They celebrated their third edition. Here is the last feature of the day of my speech. These people were awarded the recognition award.

To be continued. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Audience member: You mentioned Gucci --

Speaker: That was at the beginning talking about Florence. I only had 20 minutes. We all know that Gucci now its Italian based in Rome. They opened a wonderful museum and a reserve space in Florence, Gucci garden.

Audience member: Valentino!

Speaker: I mentioned him at the beginning as well!

[LAUGHTER]

I'm sorry. I had to speak about the city of fashion. If I am to speak about the city of fashion, Valentino came to Italy from Paris in 1962. In that time, Florence was still important as a capital of fashion but also was Rome as the couture capital. We had the rising of Milan. If I were talking about designers, I would approach the topic in a different way. But I had to talk about the coming out of three different capitals of fashion. That was my approach.

I love Valentino! I could talk about Valentino! But it's important to contextualize. If I were talking about Rome, at the time was a capital of couture in the 60s, that was a specific time. Valentino was in Paris in that time. Not in Rome. That's it.

[LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

Yes?

Audience member: Could you speak about the role of fashion heritage . . .

Speaker: In which way? At the beginning we had a huge advantage since the time of fashion. That started as a phenomenon in the beginning of the 20th century. The Renaissance was the big heritage. Georgini in the 50s, the Renaissance or the idea of the Renaissance and how we can put together our path modern was due to these designers that tried to be the original and not copy French fashion.

Maria Balenga in Rome did a wonderful collection on painters from the Renaissance. For example, just to go so the lady is happy I mentioned Valentino, it makes beautiful tribute to the Renaissance Madonnas from Botticelli and so on. If we can talk about the heritage of our glorious past, yes. But hand craft and textile design as well, yes.

Audience member: What about menswear? You mentioned the Armani quote. But Italian menswear had this major impact. How does that fit with the cities?

Speaker: Naples is still very important in terms of men's fashion. I will say it was important since the end of the 19th century, beginning of the 20th century. Then as a venue there's Florence. Then there's the fair that comes twice a year, men's and kids fashion, it was established in the 80s. Pitti is a great venue for mens fashion and they come from all over the world to show in Florence. And then there's Milan. You have Armani and these other great designers like Dolce Gabbana. Yes.

Audience member: One more. I'm a shoe designer. I must say --

Speaker: I'm sorry I didn't talk about that.

[LAUGHTER]

Audience member: You didn't mention my line!

[LAUGHTER]

But I find it interesting that Italy still, if you come from Florence you are florentine. The factories have their separate issues and craft. But we are still the kings of shoe-making.

Speaker: Apart from our red shoes, Manolo Blahnik and Gucci, these are made in Italy. Different factories are all scattered around the region and in Florence like Tuscany. We would like to know all the manufacturers.

Speaker: Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker: The next conversation is between Nick Rees-Roberts and Miren Arzalluz from Palais Galliera. They will talk about courting couture patrimony and Paris fashion. Please help me welcome them.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker: Hi. We are back to Paris now. I'm professor of media in Paris. I run the masters degree. I work in film media and on a project on contemporary designer culture. You are?

Speaker: Hello. I'm Miren Arzalluz and a fashion historian and writer. And I'm the director of a non-French Palais Galliera in the fashion city of Paris. Here we are.

Speaker: In our conversation we will talk about courting Paris context through both cultural institutional museum founding and curating. As well as branding and the context in which critic directors position themselves as curators.

Just to start thinking about the heritage brand and the important of heritage to fashion branding this is a shot from the Dior show earlier this year. It's important to remember the keynote heritage brand is about being modern and making it contemporary to a modern audience. Where do I point this? A brand like Dior is invested in storytelling. This in September, the backstory was about her sister and her tradition in floral design. They go into deep storytelling as the strategy.

Obviously we will mention Chanel as a main character in the French context with a rich history of design and patrimony. Recent examples. Along with the story couture houses you have innovation in the Paris context. Rick Owens. Designers that are established in Paris fashion who are celebrated season after season for innovating. But then there are more recent houses like the one here on the bottom, he factors in the whole idea of patrimony into the future of his house. So he's an interesting example of a selective label that's a part of his whole strategy.

These are more recent examples of Paris fashion. It's not just patrimony but innovation. Post Balenciaga for example. Then a recent emerging fashion designer and then older fashion.

There. Gamut is a collective. That's the fringe of Paris fashion that's outside the investment in patrimony. But we think about patrimony in the conventional sense like through museum culture.

Speaker: Being a fashion historian I think about innovation. I thought about the continuation of fashion heritage and that fashion can be considered pattern. And that this could be presented in museums to provoke. In the history of fashion museums these forces can innovate and perfect rather than just identify. Innovation in a way, museums present fashion. That came to my mind in the first place.

But being aware of the state of fashion heritage in Paris and France at the moment, you can't deny that fashion is run on the growing archives of the heritage department. They are major players about fashion heritage in France. I'm giving you factual information, but today I discovered that the number of museums in the city, fashion museums, and exhibitions open in the city are growing. Then I remembered it was September 2016 that my predecessor was asked to elaborate a report on fashion heritage

in France. It was to highlight the fashion heritage but point out it's weaknesses and vulnerabilities. That's not today's topic though.

Its interesting to see the figures in this report that's based on a survey. 32 museums are studied and only three are in Paris. 37 fashion brands with the archives on the heritage department. 37 were all based in Paris. It's evident there's a growing awareness in fashion houses on the importance of heritage and managing their branding and communication strategies.

Speaker: Even having a museum.

Speaker: Yes. Between 1970-2016 20 heritage departments were created in fashion houses in Paris. Most of those were between 2000-2016. Talking about number of exhibition, up to 2016 there were more than 200 of these organized in France and more than 60 were organized by fashion brands. That's huge. That's the last data collected in 2016 and it's only growing each year.

Speaker: Should we show examples?

Speaker: This is in fact, I mean we are close with in Paris at least, we work closely with houses and their archives. Sometimes this is for exhibitions or there's a collaboration that goes longer for a scientific collaboration or something more than just an exhibition. But this was organized by Galiana.

This was an exhibition made with one single collection. White Drama. The last collection of Comme des Garçons made into an exhibition.

I was not planning-- should we talk about history?

Sorry. I wanted to talk to you about-- I was talking about the contribution with fashion heritage and Galiana was important in the last century. I wanted to show the evolution in and the role it's played.

Next year we are opening the museum.

We are now thinking of the history and the history of its collection and exhibitions.

We are thinking of Marice Leloir. And the founding. It's interesting to see the role of fashion heritage but 100 years ago no one cared. Even in museums. Then fashion studies came up.

An artist, a painter. He started as a painter. And also with costume designers who had profound knowledge of fashion history.

They created and initiated an important activity of organizing exhibitions and disseminating fashion history through the work.

There we are. That's an image of one of the first exhibition in 1909 in Paris. And it was in 1920 that they finally donated the collection to the city of Paris. Next year will be 100 years ago.

A museum dedicated to fashion and fashion history came much later.

It's interesting to see with presentation of fashion. This is more images. This is an exhibition in the 50s. In the Museum of Modern Art in Paris.

I don't want to do too long on the history of exhibitions.

Speaker: One thing. When you work in the museum or in branding, what's going on in negotiation with the institution and the house. Which is interesting.

Speaker: There's the notion of contemporary fashion in museums and when museums collect contemporary fashion. When they started collecting this is why Galliera has one of the more comprehensive collections in the world. Why we can do the exhibition last year.

Talking about innovation and fashion in museums.

Speaker: This example is interesting.

A key example. When the brand was relaunched in the 1990s, a constant negotiation with museum spaces. That's been in the interpretations. Very much of his time.

That one.

He's thinking about the shapes of Balenciaga. How he moves forward, making them relevant. The question I find interesting is it's difficult to recognize the commercial success of the house, is it just the personal impact. Or is the investment in the history of the brand in any way relevant.

It's true there's this history.

Speaker: It's very interesting. People invest on heritage and archive. Since the new director in the 1990s. They did a big retrospective in 2006.

They have done different exhibitions. This is an example we did. A beautiful collaboration. It was really more about scientific research about Balenciaga house.

Balenciaga collected historic dress and textile. This dialogue between Balenciaga's work and how this influenced his work. There's a beautiful exhibition done in closed collaboration with the archive.

Speaker: The archives and the house. There's also the relaunching of the patrimonial brand that completely fails. Yiqing Yin. His collections were well received. Essentially fired from the brand in

2019. There was little archive. There's an attempt to reinscribe the house in the museum. But it wasn't public. It was for some 3 million Euros. This folded after about 2 years.

This is a recent example. We'll see if this worked. This is purely marketing, image led.

Through the use of Instagram you see the relaunch. The cat video at the top. It's interesting to see if the reinvestment actually resurfaces through their digital strategy. I don't know if we have time for the next section. Jump to Chanel?

Here's his work as a curator. Promoting young artists. And Yves Saint Laurent. Essentially everything is for sale. An exhibition for African art to the St. Laurent brand. This move to lifestyle aesthetic. Reflecting the history in the house.

And the last example is Chanel. The worldwide self-promoting exhibition. And obviously a different strategy of thinking through the history.

Speaker: Opening with a retrospective dedicated to Chanel. This is next year. Spring 2020.

We are working closely with the houses. With the heritage department and the archive people.

We have a very good working relationship with them. But they've never ever tried to interfere in our curatorial decisions and the angle or approach.

It's true more and more of these houses create exhibitions on their own terms, saying what they want to say. Precisely because of that we don't need to interfere. They do what they want to do.

Speaker: The next slide has an example, doesn't it from Chanel.

Inscribing a broader communication strategy. Lagerfeld films.

I think we have to stop. We'll leave time for questions, maybe?

[Applause]

Speaker: One question to start. Some of the houses like Chanel and Dior are successful at mining their heritage. Others are a complete flop. Most aren't successfully relaunched. As you look back, what makes the difference. What enables someone to awaken the sleeping beauty, as the cliché has it.

How do you see the difference between shows curated by the heritage houses themselves, and those curated by independent curators.

Speaker: How to make that patrimony modern. It was an aesthetic of anti-Balenciaga. Traditionally feminine. There wasn't a public or marketing strategy. To relaunch the houses. There's differences of

strategies. Communication led. Without the marketing strategies it seems there's a space for mining a traditional archive history.

Or just relying on the beauty of the collections. Each of the collections were particularly well received. The key is not just the actual designs.

The other question--

Speaker: Houses have different objectives from museums. Maybe more of a glorifying the founders of the houses.

At the same time I think it's getting more and more similar. Seems we are completing each other. This pressure of more and more, also in museums. Museums should be capable of creating their own language.

Speaker: There's increasing disconnect between the cultural value of the archive. There's everything in it. Prada dresses. This commercial culture. That divide.

It's interesting, just the brand has no interest in exploiting for cultural capital. Interesting because there is value there, even in the cultural context.

I saw the sign saying "2 minutes remaining."

Speaker: Thank you for your talk. There's this specific way of collecting fashion. The way he thought about fashion. How does the museum collect, stay up to date, collect in a way to think about Paris, France, Paris' role.

Speaker: Contemporary design?

Speaker: Contemporary fashion?

There was the first contemporary fashion exhibition. It's been systematically laid out. And it was a priority to continue. It's been particularly intense for 6 years to today.

To celebrate an annual gala. Far from the Met gala. But annual. Allowing us to have funding. For acquiring contemporary fashion. But also to ask the occasion of the gala to ask brands in Paris for donations. Donations which we propose.

We propose it to houses. It's been this new dynamic with the houses. In the last 6 years. Its worked very very well. Contemporary fashion is very strong. We'll have the best collection ever in 100 years.

[Applause]

Speaker: Our next conversation is going to look at haute couture before, during and after World War II. Our speakers are Sophie Kurkdjian and Veronique Pouillard. Join me in welcoming them to the stage.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker: Hello. I'm Sophie Kurkdjian Professor of history. Thank you for your kind invitation.

Today we will talk about war. I'm not sure -- there it is. We needed to show you the men of the situation. We have a quite tragic story. This is Lucien Lelong. The owner of the house of Revlon [sp?] And the President of the . . . From the mid-1930s to the end of World War II. It was created in 1968. In the Paris fashion industry.

We need to think about the Chambre Syndicale. We remember this man as holding the shape of the Paris fashion industry and how he helped the seamstresses and tailors and what he did to increase the role of Paris as a fashion capital. He was a traveler. On the left hand side you see a drawing. It's a replica of the coat by the houses. There was an ongoing conversation with the New York fashion industry, garment industry.

We decided to show you this. This is the Persian fashion industry that grew along with Balenciaga. Paris capital of fashion you see only one was French, Chanel. This makes us think about the idea of Paris fashion. The Paris industry and how it was influenced by those who were non-French.

First, before the war we considered this a golden age for the couture. The number of houses there were 20 in 1914, and then more than 200 in 1939. This proliferation showed the rise of Paris as a fashion capital.

The industry of the Parisian fashion industry changed. Third related to the first slide, at the end of the 30s these houses were helped. In 1937 they thought about the reorganization of the couture. He Lelong had a strong idea and he wanted to give Paris more power and have more influence in the world.

Like you can see here, fashion media played a role in the strengthening of Paris as a fashion center. Vogue was first American. Then as a French magazine in the 20s. This was the beginning of the magazine press in France. In this press we present two photos. This shows how great Paris was in fashion. I think most of you know this photo.

Speaker: Some figures to situate what happened. These are the hard facts. Its' important to show the challenges that Lelong went through. You imagine the Great Depression. Front and center this touched markets all over.

Yet we see in the 1920s the monetary fluctuations according to the problem of transmission and buyers finding it necessary to come to France to buy originals, they got inspiration from all over. So the fashion we are discussing today is versus the reality of the hard facts around couture. The hard figures are the products. Like perfumes. We already see a shift here.

A question is what couture will look like during war time. What's going to happen is the occupation of Paris by Germany. From 1940 to 1945.

Fashion became an economic battlefield. The main question [Students working.] around what American designers would do with Paris fashion. They were scared of competition from America. The Germans wanted French couture to disappear and put the fashion capital in Iraq. Their idea was to integrate with the French houses and then transfer the whole fashion industry to Germany.

Speaker: On one hand as the New York fashion industry, Paris was under dramatic occupation. We had a dilemma. What do we want to do? Do we diverge?

Speaker: So the tricks to Germany they tried to waste time. He felt that French couture could not be transferred anywhere.

Speaker: Historians don't agree on what we should do. Should we think it was fine to keep the workers at work? Or should one have taken a different time. What's best for the workers? There are different lines of analysis. What are the social and political elements. Meanwhile the world keeps going with this.

In 1939 this magazine published an article on American fashion designers. There are wonderful photographs and it shows that there is a wonderful group of designers in America. Modernists of costume and fashion. New Yorkers wonder in 1939 what we lack? It's not the talents, not the ability to design but the branding. The branding image and how it's possible.

The occupation is a time to see other cities rise up. That creates an interesting situation worldwide. The other thing that the couture economy is doing well. In World War II the economy wasn't doing too bad.

Speaker: . . . Could the couture houses have a exemption? Could they be exempted from producing for the Germans? They needed to think about that and they accepted that.

Couture was in bad condition during World War II. But he had to think about the house to find material. Why did I want to -- okay --- I need to focus. Too many messages. He needs to choose which couture houses to save. This one could be saved because they had a long history and lots of workers. So he decided what couture meant and if it was considered as a haute couture then they should be saved and have a future. So it was decided by decree in 1945. This decided to reserve the word haute couture for the houses that actually make couture. This contributed to Paris and making them the highest Paris fashion. Paris can't claim high fashion if it doesn't meet the criteria of this decree.

Speaker: And there was a big deal around what should happen. During the mass occupation would he step down or be thanked? It forces the question of how should the profusion draw the aftermath of this very complicated decision of staying. He already alluded to crossing the border. He went to talk by himself. This was to organize fashion shows commercially. But that was one step too far and it was condemned.

Lelong retired quietly. Then the next step was after that, after having continued under the occupation regime could couture come back? We all know the answer! It's up there. What it took was to find the ID of the company refreshments. A newcomer. We have a few minutes?

You all know this. So I won't talk too much about it. But as a historian what I find interesting is this document from the French Minister of the Economy and it shows a new business model. This is finding royalties, licensing, exporting couture globally with support names like Chanel. Back to you, 54.

Speaker: Thanks. As you can see, yes, the actual period characterized by new couture or a new way of advertising you see on the left these different designers along with Chanel that came back in 1944. She was celebrated in America but not so much in France. She was considered too close to the Germans.

Time's up.

Speaker: New fashion system after WWII. New press, new format of press, new way to talk to the readers. Arrival in Paris during WWII.

[Applause]

Speaker: I have a question. Don't know if you know this. You said Chanel was regarded too close to the Germans. But Fas [sp?] was very close. Was it sexist?

Speaker: I think it is quite ambiguous. It's likely the central figure took leadership and responsibility and to a certain extent absorbed that shock.

Speaker: Chanel, too modern, too feminine, or not enough feminine in the 1920s. The modern woman who didn't do the same thing as other women.

In 20 years she's been different than that.

Speaker: Thank you.

[Applause]

Speaker: Now a conversation between Nancy Green and Elizabeth Way about immigration in Paris and New York. I'm sure you know Ready-to-Wear and Ready-to-Work: A Century of Industry and Immigrants in Paris and New York comparing fashion worlds of New York and Paris. Liz worked on global fashion capitals.

Join me in welcoming Nancy and Liz to the stage.

[Applause]

Nancy Green: We'll discuss in two parts. Conversation will be at the end. I'll shift the discussion. From looking at some of the words and

giving them meanings. Particularly the words "fashion" and "making of." Thinking of other types of fashion. Ordinary fashion. The type of fashion we all wear. Away from couture and haute couture.

Also thinking about fashion and the way it's made. The system of fashion and the system of readymade goods. Another system in and of itself.

I'd like to emphasize the manufacturing of ordinary fashion. The reason I am interested is I come from migration history. I'm interested in immigrants. Fashion is largely an immigrant industry. The case in Paris and New York. Similar but different for thinking of these issues. The importance of immigrants in the fashion and garment industry.

The making of fashion. We talk a lot about art. One of the conundrums and interest has to do with what one thinks about, how one designs it, how it's manufactured. In the first moment there's the thinking of, designing of style.

This is particularly true for ready-mades. The manufacturing of it. The manufacturing of it is largely an immigrant industry. Immigrants leave where they come from. Why are they attracted to these hubs of where there are garment industries. Paris and New York are both places of large waves of immigrants. To the garment industry. At the turn of the 20th century there were large numbers of European Jews. Then Armenians, Turks, Chinese today. Similarly in New York, the Jews, Italians, blacks from American south moving north to New York. And Chinese and Chinese Americans in the industry today.

It's always been an immigrant industry. The reason has to do with push and pull. Always talking about migration history.

Also networks. When one group starts working they start recruiting their own kin networks. The classic story is well known in the story of the sweatshops. Conditions under which people make garments aren't great. The history and where workers fought back. Garment industries in New York and Paris. Largely there's example of difficult work conditions. Immigrants are attracted to a place where they can more or less get work and make money, and be entrepreneurs and hire subsequently.

At the turn of the 20th century it's not so different from the Paris workshop in the 1980s. Like tenement workshops, you can visit the Tenement Museum.

You can see men and women. It's often seen as a women's trade but both men and women worked. I want to ask a couple questions about the relationship immigrants. Ordinary immigrants. Liz will talk more about super immigrants or designers and those who made names for themselves in a different way. How are immigrants affected by fashion, how do they make fashion.

There are two aspects of linking fashion and the fashion industry in its readymade form.

One question historians contend with is about assimilation. How long does it take. Do immigrants assimilate. Or do they simply adapt to new circumstances.

There are different ways sociologists measure assimilation. None of which are perfect. It goes along what languages people speak. What religions. Neighborhoods, jobs, etc. And what clothes they wear. How are immigrants affected by fashion when they cross a border.

There's a lot of talk about headscarves in France. This is a big discussion in Parliament. Headscarves came with immigrants a century ago. Eastern European women came dressed with headscarves. Just as today immigrants from Syria in this case come with headscarves. The signification and meaning can be different at different times. Style, what people are used to, religion. But these are modes of dress people bring with them.

To what extent will the dress modes be affected. While they're in a new place.

Historically while some maintain traditional dress, most immigrants especially women change their mode of dress. A classic image is in Hester Street. A religious Jewish woman arriving in New York. Her husband was already Americanized. Eventually they divorce, she remains conservative. We see her awaken to another style. Many immigrants go through this.

There are ways immigrants assimilate through clothing. A contemporary one in Paris. There are many garment wholesale shops. This is a Chinese wholesale shop. It shows that it's owned by Chinese. They make hats. We see, if you look closely to the right of the picture. First of all what kind of hats? A beret type hat. The French type of hat. Made by immigrants in the city. But also you see on the right the French flag.

There are forms of amalgamation and showing how one invests in new forms of clothing as workers. Again a general history of assimilation of immigrants through their clothing, what they wear and make.

Another question is what do immigrants bring with them that they bring to the place they come. To what extent can fashion be imported. Even regular immigrants in the garment industry. Ideas don't need migrants to migrate. Ideas can come not because of large groups but through film and other ways.

But migrants can import ideas and bring different fashions they can use and manufacture. And bring to the place in which they settle. There are well known examples of this.

Valerie referenced British tailors and raincoats. In the 19th century there were many in Paris. The British brought rainwear to Paris. That's good, it rains in Paris too. There are a lot of styles brought with the techniques and immigrants. Also Eastern Europe turn of century Jews and Austrians working in Paris. In each case these were styles and techniques people brought with them.

It corresponded to a demand they developed. One of my favorite examples are the immigrant Jewish cap makers. You see the Russian flat cap. It was a time where sports and sportswear were being practiced.

The Russian Jewish immigrant cap makers became specialized in this.

It brought a new style. And helped them get jobs. Through networks, become a large employer in Paris at turn of the 20th century. There are examples of how immigrants bring things that will also become popular.

I thought of this broach living on this jacket. Made of pieces of rubber.

In the mid 1980s I bought it from African immigrants in the subway in Paris. A lot of people sold these broaches, a lot of African immigrants making their money. Spreading temporary fashion under the streets of Paris.

Another way to think of it, bringing Asian styles to the west. The Chinese peasant style.

Also today. This is just a week ago. The Rue Monge. A commercial street in Paris. Within the space of 2 blocks, there are several shops. One has only Chinese garments. The other have Chinese and other Asian and East Asian garments. Some South Asian. Examples of bringing in and manufacturing goods that they sell. That become fashion items in Paris itself.

Let me finish. After thinking about how immigrants get changed through fashion and how they can change fashion itself.

Something very contemporary is these yellow vests. I'm sure you heard of that. It was originally yellow jackets but that doesn't work! They are part of a protest moment in Paris. They are safety items everyone has. Their meaning changed through these protests.

People write on them. They put their own slogans on the vest. There's a May 1 parade every year in Paris.

This one says "If we don't live now, tomorrow is going to be too late." This has nothing to do with immigrants. However the next slide at the May 1 parade.

You see immigrant women and men demonstrating. In favor of the homeless and housing for the homeless.

There's a movement which for a long time was active in getting housing for people who are homeless.

This is two weeks after Notre Dame burned. "Notre Dame has no roof. Nor do we." Powerful statement.

Those who are arguing are themselves immigrants and part of this movement. I remain an immigration historian. There was a wonderful collage banner. It's in testimony to importance of the immigrants in France. "Tissu" is fabric. "France is woven of immigrants." One clear thing with the garment industry is that it's clear it's an immigrant industry. They make up France today.

[Applause]

Speaker: Hi everyone. Good afternoon. As Nancy just discussed immigrants are major contributors to building Paris as a fashion city. So I will talk about immigrants and coming to Paris and the idea of blackness and how this fades into fashion in Paris.

Valerie talked about Paris as a mythic city. African Americans since the 19th century have their own mythology of Paris viewing it as a refuge where people can flee come violence and slavery in the United States.

WEB Dubois came to Paris to show at this exhibition and brought photography of African American. Life. He wanted to use this to highlight the dignity of African American communities. This is picked up by black GIs stationed in Paris and stay after the war's end. They create this jazz culture that becomes definitive of Paris.

Josephine Baker. She arrives and performs a number of African American social dances like the Charleston and another dance where she wore the famous banana skirt. The popularity of her art showed that . . . Despite the role she was originally cast she forged a successful career. She spent most of her life in France. This is her last performance before she fled the city due to the nazis. This is far removed from the first images of her.

Into the 20th century she was one of the most famous Americans in Paris. She became a mythic draw for black creatives. Kelly made this tribute to Paris and Baker. His expense manifested in his fashion designs. He idealized Baker and she meant Paris to him.

This dress is in the current exhibition. You see his childhood and the multi colored platinums, and then this is a motif of his design. These where everything buttons used to repair his family's clothing. She was a big inspiration to him, and his career began in 1989 when he moved to Paris. This was the stage of his success. He spoke to Parisian society. He and Baker both took images and stereotypes of black Americans and turned them on their head. These artists were presenting themselves in a very black way.

This fundraiser turned into a competition that the Americans were deemed to have won. This was in part due to the black models. They were in community fashion shows and these showed a different kind of modelling aside from the French or New York industry style. The models were encouraged to show their personalities and entertain the audiences. This black way of modeling was injected into the American fashion system in the late 1960s and brought it to the mainstream American fashion.

So these creatives came and it was ironic that they had to go to France to prove themselves. Designers and models gained legitimacy as outsiders. That increased their prestige.

Other locations coming to Paris. Born the Bali and grew up in Paris and Dakar, he designed ensembles that reflected his post-colonial perspectives. His garments were recycled to reflect French aesthetics. This also had an underground energy that was exciting. This post underground fashion in Paris owes itself to these movements.

The street represents works from outside the mainstream but then embraced by the mainstream. Paris sidewalks are borrowed and then is made into something that is representative of the diasporic experience.

This artist, Rousteing was an outsider and an artist. He faced discrimination. This statement: Rousteing is amused by the criticism he faces . . . The designer is happy to remained journalists of his cultural achievements. His work highlight his love for his hometown Paris and his unique style.

He has modeled his own looks along with his celebrity friends. He circumvented the fashion media to insert his own narratives. Rousteing understands celebrity culture and that is vital to his success. But now artists are coming back to Paris and lending their prestige to Paris fashion.

Even people like Rihanna are launching a Fenti brand.

[APPLAUSE]

I talked a little about the myths around Paris as a escape. So I want to ask you about other immigrant groups.

Speaker: I don't think we have enough answers. I question migration, the destination question. Why do people go where they go? Why would someone going to Paris instead of New York in the 19th century? Paris has it's own mythology but it's not always fashion. I think it attracts tourists for fashion and other foreigners but those who migrate for work, something we know about are networks in migration and that people move somewhere because they know people there or they already have people working in these immigrant industries. Like garment and restaurant business.

People go because they knew there were jobs. Then they could be hired so that the information costs entering the labor market are lower. The idea of Paris and this worked for high end designers and regular immigrants, Paris is a city of openness. I think that attracted immigrants. For a good period of the 19th and 20th centuries Paris was known as a place for exiled refugees to go to.

There were deportations during World War II, but Paris has played a big role in the idea of Paris. I don't know if immigrants from eastern Europe, Turkey, China, or Africa if they think about the museums and the Eiffel Tower, but there's evidence that some of the first places they go to when they arrive are these landmarks. So these are attractions and

they have that attraction for immigrant workers. But immigrants come for a variety of reasons and the garment industry is a way to integrate into the city and provides a livelihood despite the hard conditions in that industry.

So yes there's an image about it but it's also a place to work. If you can't purchase these exquisite items just shown -- to what extent does mobility have an impact on creativity? It's something I wonder about the ordinary garment industry.

Talking about designers and Baker and those who brought a style to Paris, or created there, or went in order to create, what's the mix? The art part, that industry, whether it's couture or the ready made work, where does fashion come from? This question. And talking about immigrants to what extent is their expense of migrating helping them contribute to their creativity and bringing their passions with them? It's a question I could ask you again about the people you have studied. To what extent do they use Paris as a place to be creative, or was Paris helping them create a new creativity? Or did they already have that creativity?

Speaker: People come for the resources. People come to Paris and they up their game. It's a challenging space where a designer can prove themselves. But really creative designers bring parts of themselves. Like Kelly. Or Balenciaga. He had other influences in his work. Maybe as an immigrant and being different it gives you a cache you want to take advantage of. It comes out in the work. Maybe not for everyone, but if you reflect on your personality and identity in your work, that comes out. But with examples like Virgil Abloh [sp?] or Coyote [sp?] that blackness exists everywhere. You can be black American, or black Parisian, you don't stop being black. That's always a part of your design. Being in the environment gives you a sophistication in your aesthetics but I don't think the outsider status - it just makes you more creative. And you can mix it in to make something really interesting and new and innovative.

Speaker: That innovation is what's so exciting and new places.

Speaker: Questions from the audience? We are happy to take some.

Audience member: You could say it's a question of race and fashion design, how critical are you of that move? Or are they just a smoke screen. Like Virgil and Rihanna have their own Fendi label . . . How critical are you of that?

Speaker: Virgil had an aesthetic working with Kanye and his music and culture. But Rihanna I think most were surprised that it was just run of the mill sports wear. Other designers bring it to the fore. Hiring a black designer it isn't for these big luxury brands, I mean Vuitton are more interested in fame than blackness. It's still noteworthy, that there are not many black designers doing high end. It's noteworthy that they are up there.

Audience member: A question on the effect of the current immigrant crisis on fashion or design, what do you foresee? And the effect of the

climate stress, is the manufacturing or design industry taking this into account? Like to save the world I'm happy to wear tissue paper? What's the solution?

Speaker: I don't have a solution personally. But in terms of immigration first and the environment second, the immigration restrictions I think will impact the economy as a whole in the developed countries. We have indicators, and I have said this for years given the demographics plateauing or even declining in populations. Without immigrants the economies slow down. This affects the garment industry. Unlike the building industry, the garment industry is delocalized and offshores. So these things being manufactured elsewhere can still happen. I don't know what's going to happen, but immigration restriction is bad news for the garment industry.

Climate change is an interesting thing and how the garment manufacturers will respond to that. But it has to do with labor policies and off shore production and where the garments are made. Time is up, but I will say that when the terrible fire in Bangladesh was a repeat to me of the Triangle Fire at the turn of the 20th century. It's shocking. But we know these conditions in the shops are terrible and these workers are locked in because the employer are worried about theft. So when you have these deaths it's greater.

A lot of issues on the manufacturing of garments at home and abroad. The question of environmental issues a big question that needs to be dealt with in the near future.

Speaker: Thank you.

[Applause]

Speaker: Our last conversation of the day, Sophie Theallet the fashion designer. Talking about fashion in Paris, New York, and her current fashion in Canada.

[Applause]

Speaker: I want to start with where you were born and grew up.

Speaker: Thank you for having me here. I'm happy to be part of the exhibition. And have a dress with this brilliant designer.

Speaker: We're happy to show.

Speaker: I am who I am. After all these brilliant minds speaking about fashion, I'm just going to speak on my own experience working in fashion in Paris and New York. I come from a little town in the south of France.

My father was a doctor. I discovered fashion when I was in the waiting room of my father. I was reading the French magazine.

After, I went to London to practice my English. Wa-la. I discovered the fashion scene because of my cousin who was into punk. I discovered Vivienne Westwood, the punk scene, and freedom.

Speaker: How'd you get from there to the next.

Speaker: The coolest school in this moment. I made an interview. I showed my drawings. They accepted me. Here we are.

I was working all the time while my friends are going out. I need to work and learn.

Marie takes the best students to enter. And I became a dresser.

[Video:

Speaker: Important, you need a perfect body. The way the material goes down. I don't know the name in English. He cuts the material again. In leather.

It changes. It's different from the other material.

It's like a sculpture. It's really important.

Now he makes other things on the body.

Voiceover: As applying to the prototypes, that's why the clothes fit so well. His reputation is based on that. Unless haute couture is kept going, then ready to wear starves of ideas. Commercial efficiency will destroy fashion.

Speaker: It's important to show the line. That's typical. It makes the body more thin, more perfect with the special perfect line.

The women are really fantastic, and beautiful, because all the work in the back. You see that. The body is perfect. This line.

This line to make a special Parisian woman.

Speaker: A very emotional moment. I was blessed to work with somebody like him. He taught me what it is to make beautiful well-done cloths and the well-done fashion.

There's the mastery. How to use perfection. You can work one year on a jacket. And if the fruit are not ripe, you don't keep them. You don't pick them. If you do a jacket, you need to be perfect. Sometimes it was not perfect.

It's years and years of it. We don't see it these days unfortunately. To work with someone like Mr. Alia, you learn so much. Learning couture. Something that doesn't exist anymore, unfortunately. I miss the time fashion was something you learn.

It's not about being a celebrity. Fashion designers, today it's too much celebrity everywhere. Too much of everything. Then, it wasn't about the product. It was about well-done clothes. For a woman. For us.

Speaker: How much did he know of the Paris system? Or his own unique individual? He was of the height of couture expertise but he was outside. He didn't show at Paris Week.

Speaker: For him, how do you make 6 collections in a year. Every year. Something new like that? It's impossible. For him, he was free. Of what he wants to do. And the way. He didn't have a group behind his back.

Huge difference. You can do whatever you want, you are responsible for everything you do. And the way you are.

Working with him was like working in a family, king of it.

Speaker: He was a special designer. You yourself. Talk about coming here as a designer and how you started your own business here.

Speaker: Like everything that happened in my life? It's kind of magic.

I moved to New York because I fell in love with a Canadian. I met him in Paris. One day he says, you know you can change your life if you follow me.

[Laughter]

So I changed my life. I followed him.

Michelle Obama for me was a big thing. Before Barack Obama became the first president I was doing my first collection. Didn't know he'd be the president but in my heart. I was looking at what was going on in fashion. I looked at the street of New York.

It was all diverse. I went to see the fashion shows in New York. There'd be two or one models of color in the show. It doesn't reflect the world we're in. We need to make something different. I decide to do my show.

It's going to be the show of all colors of skin. From the darkest to lightest. Some people say don't do that show in America, you'll lose clients. Which I accepted.

Michelle Obama is one of my rising stars. This is a moment I'm proud of.

Speaker: I've seen some of your shows. One you had African drummers on the roof. It was extraordinary because it was so different visually and emotionally.

You've also been at forefront of emphasizing different body types on the runway. It's unusual, what made you move in that direction. Even though people said you'll lose clients, that it won't appeal to Americans.

Speaker: You look at the streets. Fashion is supposed to be a reflection of the world you live in.

We are supposed to make the life of the woman more easy.

When I took a model, someone said you won't put that woman in the show, she'll look fat. I said wow. I said you know what, I will do it. And I did.

That's a thing I really stand for. Same thing for the woman. We all get older. As you can see, there's a huge difference between me then and now.

But we are not finished. As we get old, we are wiser. The experience in fashion that we have is something very important.

We are beautiful women in every age. We need to embrace it.

[Applause]

Speaker: Tell me how you set up your business. How you successfully ran an independent business in New York.

Speaker: It's very very difficult. Good connections. People who really knew. People who help you. Fantastic partner. Connections, dresses, super well known. I got the background. I tried to continue to do the best I can.

I'm not Mr. Alia, I never will be. I'm a fashion designer. I try to respect what I learn from him.

Gaultier was a fantastic experience. It was my dream to work with Jean Paul Gaultier. Mr. Alia asked me do you want to work with me. What was I thinking? "No I want to work with Jean Paul Gaultier."

Then I became an assistant with Gaultier.

Speaker: How fabulous.

What are the ways the New York fashion world and Paris fashion world differ?

Speaker: New York, it's more like pragmatics. You need to be dressed, at same time you need to go to work. I learned a lot about the ways Americans consume fashion.

I am a world citizen. I believe in one world. You can experience everywhere.

That's what I think. New York is more, the woman goes to work. The French too. [Laughing]

But there's pragmatism in American fashion. Which you can find with Alia when he made stretch dresses. You need to breathe and at the same time beautiful and in control.

Speaker: And your latest project. You recently moved to the north. You set up a business. Tell us about the change.

Speaker: That is another change in me life. Today I look at the fashion world. I speak about my own experience.

The way fashion is today, it doesn't resonate with me. It's time we need to change. Fashion is about changing.

And I think the name of my company, this 502, I don't want the designer to be the star. I want the woman that will wear couture 502 to be the star. It's limited edition. Everything is super well done and it's direct to the customer. I don't sell to the store. Limited edition and it's about respecting the people that work behind the clothes. The workers.

I know that everything is great, everything is beautiful and well done, and the people are paying the right price. Also it's a limited edition. Did I say that?

Speaker: You did.

Speaker: And it's sustainable.

Speaker: How many workers do you have and it's all based in Canada?

Speaker: It's not based there. It's a small company. Myself and my husband we work in my house in Canada now. And we work with a factory in India. It's well done, very well done.

Speaker: Now we have time for a few questions. Turn the lights up. Sophie will take questions from the audience. If you can, come to a microphone, or just wave your hands. I know there are questions here.

Someone in the back? There you go.

Audience member: [Speaking too softly to hear.] . . . In your own business there are commercial concerns and cost that you must be concerned about. So the lines, you say I will spend a year but how do you know when it's right in your own business?

Speaker: As I said I know when it's right when the dress fits well. I am not that kind of designer that does trends. I don't believe so much in trends, but in life and people and making women beautiful and in trying to do the best I can. That's my goal.

I think if you want people to buy the dress, they will wear the dress because it fits well and they feel good in it. It's not about you are

wearing the label or the dress. I don't need more than that in what I'm doing.

Speaker: Another question?

Audience member: My turn? Hi. Thanks so much. On the screen behind you I noticed lots of movie stars. Is their patronage more important to your business as you grew or was it constant throughout?

Speaker: When you are a fashion designer and you begin the celebrities began to wear my dresses. So it's a contention and people come to see you and these celebrities call and you dress them. Sometimes they come to my studio or I make a dress for them, it's a constant.

Audience member: How do you make the dresses fit? What are the models you work with?

Speaker: I make a long fitting. I use the best way the dress falls. That gives me a big . . . At the beginning when I arrived here I was really crazy. I see the effect everywhere. Thank god, now I want to be more easy on the way I do the clothes. I accept some millimeters. It's not a big deal. But I really want the woman to have a beautiful well done and well cut cloth because that gives you power. That power as a woman, we need it.

Audience member: Could you for yourself honor the French style? Could you give us the definition of French woman style? And being a French designer, did that help you in America or Canada? Did it give you authority?

Speaker: No. I think that's a process that gives me something. To be different, or English, or America, French, to be from a different country, I think there are facts that you learn in the house of couture in Paris. You don't find people like Mr . . . Everywhere. Like I said it was someone really special who knows how to cut cloth well. He was an architect of couture. I learned tailoring. And you see someone like him working, and you learn something. You watch in silence. And you see the beauty of what it is, really. So I'm best to see that. I don't know if I answered the question but I don't think being French, yes it's me and it's a part of my identity, but I'm part American and Canadian and I will go everywhere.

Speaker: He already had a clientele in Tunisia. It was like he appeared like a flower in the sidewalk. But he was a Tunisian who came to Paris and he's the best of couture in Paris in the 80s. This is something like we are lucky to have that diversity in the country and to give something different. If we stay just like all people from one country and we don't mix, that's the end of it. We learn nothing. We need the opening of the world. We need to have people from every country to come and share with us what they know.

At the end, it's when you respect other people and you learn. That's beauty. You should learn all the time. It's important to learn something everyday. In fashion too.

Speaker: Join me in thanking the wonderful Sophie Theallet.
[APPLAUSE]

All the speakers know there is a cocktail party for them afterwards. If you don't know where to go, ask them. Thank you so much for coming, guys.

[END]

***This transcript provides a meaning-for-meaning summary to facilitate communication access. TypeWell speech-to-text service may not be a fully verbatim record of the proceedings.