

Luca Marchetti e Simona Segre Reinach, EXHIBIT! La moda esposta: lo spazio della mostra e lo spazio della marca, Bruno Mondadori, 2017

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In a contemporary era ruled by aesthetics and technology, a multidimensional subject like Fashion is willing to loudly communicate its artistic speech, language of creativity and share its ethereal products and historical social culture changes it is culpable of with the general public. Seeking to be recognised as a witness of contemporary art among various disciplines, Fashion is finally invading museum spaces. Despite the never-ending question *Is fashion an art?* – due to its commercial nature, which complicates the matter – today we are seeing a general acceptance of fashion as a museum subject. Luca Marchetti together with Simona Segre Reinach – academics of great relevance in Italian fashion studies – decided to investigate the relationship between Fashion and curation through *EXHIBIT! Showcasing fashion: the space of the exhibition and the space of the brand*. Offering us an inspirational reflection on the topic, the book ranges from the origins of curating, dealing with the issue of exhibiting costumes or fashion, to the analysis of the evolution of the curatorial practice in different social contexts. The publication is a great contribution to Italian fashion studies, trying to fill the void of studies on the subject in a country where fashion plays a leading role. The authors take us around the world, describing how curating fashion is managed in important fashion realities like France, United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, USA, Asia. Through an in-depth study of publications on fashion – artistically, socially, culturally and aesthetically speaking – fashion cultural studies, academic works and international curated events and projects, Marchetti and Segre Reinach give us the chance to fully understand the curatorial aspect, while contemplating the *curating* practice through fusions of fashion, art and the marketplace.

From Diana Vreeland and Cecil Beaton to Judith Clark, Andrew Bolton, Maria Luisa Frisa and Valerie Steele; from the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Metropolitan Museum and Costume Institute (New York) to Momu (Antwerp) and The Kyoto Costume Institute (Kyoto). Referring to a variety of fashion exhibitions organised worldwide, to a variety of academics, curators and sociologists of museums and art-spaces, authors gives us examples that help us understand where fashion curation comes from and where it is going. Giving us a clue on how to treat such a multifaceted subject like fashion. How to showcase the product, to educate people about it without forgetting to evoke its sensory nature, its semiotic speech, the magical and meaningful world fashion is inclined to create.

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A relevant section is dedicated to the Italian situation, illustrating how a country considered one of the originators of fashion is in a huge delay compared to its English, Asian, American and north European sisters. A reflection on the costume, the artisanship, the traditional methods of conservation with regard to what fashion curation really needs is made. Fashion doesn't need a country that doesn't take it seriously, especially if it is one in which it has played a major role in its economy and heritage. So in their analysis of how cities like Florence and Milan have dealt with the matter and how they are changing in order to achieve what cities like New York, Antwerp and London already implemented years ago, the authors give us a chance to think about the Italian need to develop proper fashion curatorial practice and fashion museum spaces to be proud of. An inspiring look is taken at what the University of Bologna is creating together with the academics and the students of the Campus of Rimini – Fashion Studies degree programme – aware of the importance of curating Fashion today. Numerous projects where collaborations with historical archives, fashion operators, fashion brands, design, architecture and social culture are the main actors have taken place thanks to the efforts of professors to bring students – who will be the fashion operators of the future – closer to curatorial practice, helping to raise the profile of curating in the Italian landscape.

After an in-depth analysis of the exhibition space, the book moves on to an analysis of the brand space. Today most brands have their own museum – a so-called business museum – or art foundation – for annual artistic collaborations – and *archistar*-designed brand stores, hotels, restaurants. This last reflection illustrates how curating is serving fashion also outside the museum, meeting the semiotic field of fashion on the streets, in a shop, in a hotel room, in a temporary gallery, basically showing how brands need to communicate in every space and how knowing how to curate is a need that goes beyond the museum.

Thanks to Luca Marchetti and Simona Seigre Reinach we are given an Italian publication that offers us an attentive overview of an important practice that is often overlooked, which the world is finally paying attention to and whose development is ongoing.