

Gene Moore, *Tiffany & Company Photographs, 1955–95*.  
Courtesy Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

## PASSER-BY POWERSHARING WITH THE MUSE

LUCY MCKENZIE

In fashion, an audience, real or projected, is always being addressed in some shape or form, and because the industry connects with so many fields of activity, that audience is necessarily multiple. So, to whom is Atelier E.B addressed? To the individuals who buy and wear our clothes, certainly, but also to a wider demographic that encompasses the detached glance in a shop window by those walking down the street. And this in turn involves another factor. In the relationship between designers and their public the intermediary figure of the window dresser plays a significant role, operating on both physical and imaginative thresholds. The exhibition *Passer-by* pays tribute to these important mediators and places the primary tool in their bag of tricks—the mannequin—at the centre of its focus.





Sasha Morgenthaler in the doll-museum Zurich.  
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In the age of webshops and Instagram, this may seem anachronistic. But the creation of an effective shop display requires the same knack for the eye-catching that goes into today’s viral marketing and uses precisely the same combination of familiarity and novelty, provocation and a necessary shallowness. Display mannequins are also intrinsically coupled with the near future, as they have always been a close relative to the android, the avatar and the sex doll in our collective imagination.

For fashion audiences, the haptic gaze is a tool of comprehension. It generates a vicarious relationship that allows us to imagine the satisfying contact between the fabric and our bodies as we move. In doing so, we mentally project ourselves into the scenarios that the garments evoke. Clothing can be a sophisticated tool for empowerment, agency and pleasure, yet many of us feel excluded from this relationship because of the perceived unsuitability of our own bodies (‘I could never pull that off’). For some audiences, fashion is a kind of entertainment; they find reading about and looking at clothes (and the bodies that support them) more rewarding than wearing them. The exhibition takes all these perspectives into account in the dialogue between art, design, commerce and display.

In exploring these interconnected fields, Atelier E.B gives no credence to the discourse of opposites: the pitting of ‘clothing’ against ‘fashion’, or the broader polemics of high and low, authentic and inauthentic, commercial and non-commercial. This is because these terms shift depending on the degree of the audience’s engagement. These oppositions are particularly unhelpful when it comes to the discussion of art and fashion on an equal footing, because they perpetuate precisely the pre-fabricated hierarchy of value that we are determined to subvert. This hierarchy places fine art (legitimate artistic and critical labour) at the top of the pecking order and the applied/commercial arts like fashion further down (pinning tear-sheets of that labour to its mood board). But knowing the way that biases such as gender influence our notions of value, we can deconstruct the mechanisms that enforce this hierarchy. Fashion is intrinsically associated with mass culture, historically characterised as

unstable and uncontrollable and gendered as feminine.<sup>1</sup> How these issues of gender play out in the professional sphere of window display, and in the variety of ways mannequins are used in both fashion and art, is something that relates to our own professional experience in both fields.

*Passer-by* was born out of the inevitability for us as a fashion label of having to engage with display mannequins. In trying and testing different ways to show our clothes we used them as stand-ins for live models in photoshoots, partly to avoid the thorny issues of representation that using real people entails. We chose not to work with professional fashion models or do live presentations, so we looked to mannequins as a solution to a practical problem. But instead of resolving the issue, their use merely replaced one set of problems with another. In a way it should not be complicated; almost anything can be a mannequin—a stick displays a kimono perfectly and a coat looks very well draped over the body of a cello. However, we are looking at the realm of commercial mannequins available today whose poses use a narrow (too narrow for us) vocabulary of exaggerated femininity. Their shelf-lives were shortened by how quickly they got scratched and marked. Bald eggheads and wigs are both naff.

Using tailor’s dummies was not an alternative solution. They are subtler than the fiberglass figures seen on the high street, but they recall the display style of museums, bespoke tailoring and high-end designer retail, and these have connotations of prestige which do not fit our intentions. In our fashion work, we have always unapologetically designed for ourselves, and we wanted figures that could be stand-ins for us, with our average height and build, without being literal representations. Being dissatisfied with each successive model, we yearned for figures that had something more, such as the stillness and distinctive idiosyncrasy of statues, with their imperfect surfaces and contemplative air. We wanted something that would honour the fact that beauty is fundamentally subjective.

The inability of mannequins to meet our needs within fashion display was in direct contrast with how easily they work in the domain of fine art. There, they are considered iconic sources of the



modern uncanny and are popular components of sculptural installations (often looping back into the language of fashion display when those installations influence commercial window design).<sup>2</sup> However, their usage in art is a byproduct and not their primary function. That they seemed more versatile as art objects than as tools for commercial display was a puzzling discovery that we wanted to explore from several angles.

*Passer-by* is simultaneously a group show, the promotion of a fashion collection and a gathering of historical material, combined with the kind of artistic freedom a professional curator could never enjoy. Our authorial voice is unreliable, entwining our own story with those of others. In doing this, we felt it was important to consider the point of view of the mannequins themselves, in the process acknowledging that their role and status shifts depending on context and demonstrating what that shift reveals about their cultural significance.

For the historical element we interviewed and consulted designers, artists, historians, archivists, trimmers (the industry term for window dresser), anthropologists and collectors over the course of eighteen months. The result is not an attempt at a universal or academic overview, and certain well-known stories are absent. Instead we favoured overlooked histories with which we felt a personal and creative connection; positions that could offer us some guidance in our own future relationship with mannequins and display, and which we felt exposed different aspects of the mechanisms that keep the two spheres interacting in certain prescribed ways. *Passer-by* examines a variety of approaches to the artistic treatment of mannequins, among which are the following: sculptures as mannequins (Charles James, Roah Schorr, Charles d'Orville Pilkington Jackson); mannequins as sculptures (Pasquale de Antonis, Eileen Agar); artists who made mannequins (Rudolf Belling, Sasha Morgenthaler); artists who, in a broad sense, were mannequins (Lee Miller). We also consider painters—those who were commercially employed to paint their make-up (Clovis Trouille), those who depicted them on canvas (Meredith Frampton, Allen Jones, Steven Campbell)—and moments when painting, illustration, sculpture and display came together

(Fred Wilson, Benito, Pierre Imans and Siégel in the late 1920s). Of particular interest to us are women; those who flourished within the industry (Adel Rootstein, Cora Scovil, Martha Schön), infiltrated it from unusual backgrounds (Mary Blair, Käthe Kruse) or subverted it (Lynn Herschmann Leeson, The Pineal Eye). In addition, we look at the relationship between statues and mannequins (Vera Mukhina), ethnographic mannequins (Virgil Rainer, Kamehachi Yasumoto) and the spectrum of inventive displays created when mannequins were absent (the Reimann School and in the Soviet Union). We show the masters of the craft (Gene Moore at Tiffany & Co, Natasha Kroll at Simpsons of Piccadilly, Frederick Kiesler for Saks Fifth Avenue and René Herbst's *Parade* magazine), and key moments when the expertise of window display was essential to exhibition design (fashion and department stores at the world's fairs and Great Exhibitions, *Britain Can Make It*, *Fashion: An Anthology*). In relation to these we also consider the role of national identity and how the display of fashion and clothing have been used as propaganda.

Altogether, the show offers a variety of surfaces for us to run our haptic gazes over, from the trompe l'oeil hand-carved wood of an ethnographic figure to the perfect airbrushed fade on a fibreglass cheekbone. The common ground between these diverse objects is the pre-eminence of facade. As a collaboration between an artist and a designer, our first point of engagement with the works on show is in the distinction of their surface finish. They are enigmatic objects, representing the cultural systems that produced them, to which facade is both a barrier and a window. Surface finish sometimes masks construction that is flimsy, or it can misleadingly give the impression of effortlessness to something which is in fact the product of great labour.

The supreme importance of surface is something that has fascinated many writers in relation to consumer culture. Within fiction, consumer culture is often used as a device to reflect on the collective fears that rapid changes create in society. In the nineteenth century this was through novels like Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Émile Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames*; in the twentieth it is represented by *nouveau*

British Pavilion, Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne Paris: shooting display, 1937.  
Courtesy of Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections.





roman works such as Muriel Spark's *The Driver's Seat* and the oeuvre of Alain Robbe-Grillet. It can also be found in the postmodern literature typified by Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*. It came as no great surprise to us that two influential authors, Agatha Christie and L.Frank Baum, have backgrounds in commercial display.

Within cultural theory and the broader study of modernism, fashion (such an important component of consumer culture) has been historically legitimised through the attention of certain intellectual authorities, such as writers Georg Simmel, Adolf Loos, Walther Benjamin and Roland Barthes. These thinkers all consider fashion an unselfconscious form and keep a critical, even sceptical distance. They use it as a tool to discuss other things, so if you are primarily interested in clothing rather than say architecture or semiotics, they are not very rewarding.

For *Passer-by* we looked beyond these familiar modernist references to: the early twentieth-century writer and couturier Elizabeth Hawes, who unpeeled the socio-economic layers of the fashion system through her own participation; contemporary works like Stephanie Lake's exhaustive study of Bonnie Cashin and Betty Kirke's *Madeleine Vionnet*; and the theoretic writings of Elizabeth Wilson and Caroline Evans, who ignore the prevailing grand narratives, and instead give fashion the full examination it deserves, on its own terms.<sup>3</sup> If mannequins are deficient in any way it is, in part, because they have to embody a universal ideal while being versatile enough to demonstrate a wide selection of clothing. The mannequin made for a specific garment or outfit does not suffer this, as it can fuse with the clothing and the spirit of the outfit in a far more subtle and complex way. For *Passer-by* we approached the artists Tauba Auerbach, Anna Blessmann, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Steff Norwood, Elizabeth Radcliffe, Bernie Reid and Markus Selg to make mannequins or supports to display outfits from our previous three collections, *The Inventors of Tradition*, *Ost End Girls* and *IOTII*. These artists are our customers and collaborators so they already had direct contact with our clothes. What's more, they all work in diverse forms and mediums, and have a sophisticated understanding of the cultural importance of dress and the human body

in relation to clothing and design. Our only brief was that their work should showcase our clothing in ways that made it beautiful and interesting, whatever that meant to them. In all these works the concept is expressed through the material choices in support of, and in contrast to, the garments on show. For artists today, with easier access to 3D digital technology, there is the misconception that traditional craft is now superfluous in replicating human forms. There is the assumption that a full body scan of a beautiful woman, which is digitally fine-tuned and then carved from expensive marble, is somehow the same as a Canova sculpture. But it is not. The works made for *Passer-by* show how important stylisation and simplification are in creating beauty. The pieces also express what can be done when an object and its display are conscious of the power dynamic inherent in the relationship, and actively address the distinction between artwork and mere prop.

Mannequins are in their natural habitat in department stores and shops, museums, world's fairs and artists' studios. Standing, literally, across so many borders, they openly invite a conversation about what happens when those borders are transgressed. The female mannequin carries a particular psychological load because in embodying the idealised state of feminine stasis, she is so often used as a stand-in for woman herself. In our research we discovered one particular historic moment that illustrates this clearly, a moment which consists of two events that took place within a few months of each other.

The Pavilion of Elegance at the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life of 1937, under the leadership of the couturier Jeanne Lanvin, was a collaborative project with a distinct vision. Within a unified decor created by Émile Aillaud and Étienne Kohlmann, it showcased Paris's most senior couturiers, many of them women, who presented designs created for the mannequins custom-made by Siégel under the direction of sculptor Robert Couturier. These were over two metres tall, with monumental proportions and a rough 'terracotta' surface.

The German artist Wols had been commissioned by Lanvin to document the display and

Wols, *Untitled (Pavilion of Elegance)* during the construction of the World Fair, Paris, 1937.  
Wols, *Pavilion of Elegance* (Model: Alix). Postcard, 1937.  
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Mannequin of Marcel Duchamp, Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, 1938.  
Mannequin of Salvador Dalí, Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, 1938. Copyright Adagp, Paris, 2020

his celebrated photographs are the principal reason we still know of the pavilion today. His images show a conceptually severe and abstract installation, well beyond the contemporary delineation of elegance as it was marketed to a mass audience at that time. It was a chiaroscuro underworld populated by petrified Pompeiian scarecrows in evening gowns. Their coarse surface and exaggerated poses were in contrast to the mannequins that had been used in the Pavilion of Elegance in the International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts of 1925, which had been documented by Man Ray. These mannequins had luxurious metallic surfaces and were influenced by the delicate fashion illustrations for *Vogue* by Erté and Bonito. But the 1937 presentation took many received ideas and turned them on their heads, for instance the notion that the more sophisticated the garment, the quieter and subtler the pose of the mannequin must be. It also re-evaluated the role surface plays in ascribing luxury, dispelling the belief that when its surface is damaged the mannequin devalues the commodity it is employed to sell.

The Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme in 1938 in Paris, which was being installed as the Pavilion of Elegance was being dismantled nearby, is often cited as a key moment in art history and is famous for its prominently featured mannequins. Surrealism played a valuable role in understanding consumerism, as it highlighted the interdependence and interaction of the dream and real worlds. Because of this exhibition, the relationship between mannequins and fine art is fundamentally linked to the surrealists, in whose hands it embodied two critical subjects: submerged sexuality and mainstream bourgeois culture. At the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, a suite of borrowed shop mannequins was customised in a variety of ways to explore these themes as well as to create a connection with the recently closed International Exposition. The surrealists placed their mannequins in a row along a corridor decorated with street signs. This mirrored not only their natural territory of shopfronts but also evoked the prostitutes attracting custom in Pigalle windows. In addition to this, the mannequins, in their semi-nakedness, acted as confrontational counterpoints to the

fully-dressed female members of the visiting public. It is the surrealists rather than Lanvin and company who set a template for the artist-mannequin relationship of the twentieth century that is at once provocative, sexual and misogynistic. In Man Ray's own words:

In 1938 nineteen nude young women were kidnapped from the windows of the large stores and subjected to the frenzy of the surrealists who immediately deemed it their duty to violate them, each in his own original and inimitable manner but without any consideration of the feelings of the victims who nevertheless submitted with charming goodwill to the homage and outrage that were inflicted on them, with the result that they aroused the excitement of a certain Man Ray who undid and took out his equipment and recorded the orgy, not in the interests of history but merely because he felt like it.<sup>4</sup>

The surrealists engaged libidinally with the perceived 'availability' of mannequins. This feeds into fundamental aspects of the power relationships that underpin so much of the mannequin's assimilation into fine art works and modern art in general. Mannequins, as stand-ins, reinforce women's roles as passive participants (embodied by the figure of the 'muse'); they are thus receptacles for men's ideas, desires and projections. The tantalising accessibility of mannequins derives in part from their surplus of symbolic value, and from their appearing to be always 'on the point' of becoming a real woman, and importantly, a real work of art, *without the inherent benefits of truly being one*.

By referring to the transnationalism, passive aggressive politics and consumerism of the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, Breton and his colleagues used it as an artistic foil.<sup>5</sup> They excluded facets of the Exposition that did not fit the position they cast for themselves as subverters of convention and they deliberately overlooked Lanvin's presentation, which had also fundamentally questioned the mannequin's role in relation to commerce and art, but from within the rubric of the official Exposition.



Lanvin's presentation was conveniently omitted in favour of a cruder view of how mannequins functioned at the Exposition (as stand-ins for the empty-headed 'shop girls' on both sides of the department store's frontage). This was made to maintain a pecking order that places the artist above the commercial mannequin and, by extension, their makers and the ecosystem in which it operates. In this hierarchical system, the appropriated object must be characterised as naive, ignorant of its own agency and unable to talk back. The mannequins of the Pavilion of Elegance would have talked back in volumes, being the product of a sophisticated dialogue between well-established artistic positions. The surrealists, by ignoring their existence, avoided a conversation they did not wish to have.

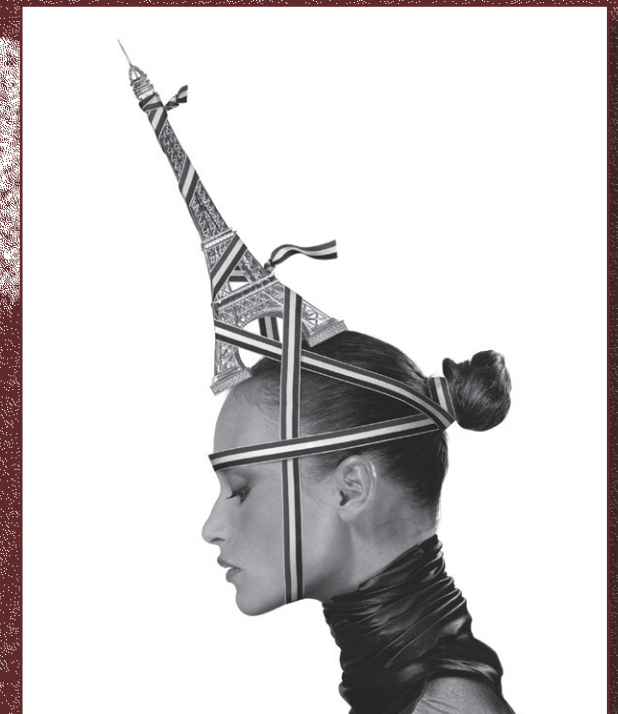
The persistent influence of this repurposing in the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme can be seen in the world of advertising, for instance the image by Jean-Paul Goude for the Galeries Lafayette department store, depicting Laetitia Casta with a model of the Eiffel Tower tied to her head. It can also be seen in the work of successive generations of fine artists who use mannequins, such as Sandy Orgel's *Linen Closet* in the *Womanhouse* project of 1972, or the contemporary installations of Isa Genzken and Cathy Wilkes. The surrealists' chauvinism becomes subverted in women's hands. However, no matter an artist's gender, the assumption that you can bestow prestige on an object through artistic intervention (an assumption that presupposes value was absent in the first place) mimics a power dynamic that places fine art over the applied arts, and by extension male over female subjectivity. This, for us, creates an interesting paradox in regard to the British artist Allen Jones. His work is often (and rightfully) regarded as having problematic sexual politics in his use of gender polarity and the commodification of femininity by the mass media. His sculptures *Hatstand*, *Table* and *Chair* (1969) do not make the usual separation between fine and applied arts by using mannequins as ready-mades. Instead, he emulates the manufacturing techniques and visual language of mannequins with respect of the craft, and therefore uses a gendered meta-language which cannot be so easily dismissed.

For the exhibition, we re-enacted the partnership between Lanvin and Wols at the Pavilion of Elegance by collaborating with the American photographer Eileen Quinlan. This was to try to understand the original collaboration through personal experience and also as a strategy to generate hybrid images. Wols not only documented the final installation, but also the 'behind the scenes' aspects of the presentation, depicting mannequins lying around in disarray and exposing the stagecraft of the world's fair presentation. It is Wols's images of the pavilion, showing mannequins in fragmented disorder, that are celebrated artworks today. Inhabiting Wols's role, Quinlan photographed the installation process of the Paris iteration of *Passer-by* over the course of two nights, and sold her images to the public as Risograph-printed postcards.

In *Passer-by* we also present a collection of photographs taken at the exhibition *Britain Can Make It*, which was held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1946. This exhibition had the civic ambition of signalling a post-war return to normality and hope in the future.<sup>6</sup> There are two sets of photos on display: the 'behind the scenes' views, which resemble an installation of contemporary art, with mannequins lying around in confusion; and the final staging of the exhibition, polished and perfect. By showing both, we present two different mindsets in terms of aesthetic taste.

The theme of the whole versus the fragmented mannequin, as well as the fluctuating position of the statue-mannequin boundary, are examined in the new work *LACUNA (Brussels/Rome)*, which was made specifically for the show by Lucy McKenzie and Markus Proschek. In it, fragments of antique statues have been digitally adapted to 'wear' pieces from Atelier E.B's *Jasperwear* collection. The Venus de Milo is considered a classical beauty largely because she is incomplete; she would be of lesser interest were she still whole. It is in the DNA of modernism to read fragmentation as intellectually and aesthetically pleasing.<sup>7</sup> *LACUNA (Brussels/Rome)* also illustrates a more insidious influence on Western notions of taste and value: the valorisation of whiteness. The polychrome surface of mannequins links them to religious statuary and folk

Allen Jones, *Chair Table Hat Stand*, 1969, Courtesy the artist.  
Galeries Lafayette poster by Jean Paul Goude, 2007. Copyright Jean-Paul Goude.





art. It also evokes long held beliefs about the subordination of ‘primitive’ and non-Western cultures. The accepted idea that Greek and Roman statues were unpainted, a myth that is being slowly debunked, is part of the larger issue of classicism being wilfully mischaracterised for political ends.

The mannequin legacy of the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme is not merely one of defiled girls with bird cages on their heads. There was one customised figure that operated on a more profound level than the others: the one produced by Marcel Duchamp. His mannequin is partially dressed in his own everyday clothes; it is the only outfit in the group that gives the impression that it could have been spontaneously chosen and styled by the mannequin herself, had she been able. The piece is an exercise in monumental understatement, and it paved the way for some of the subtler uses of mannequins by twentieth century artists, uses in which the inherent significance of the mannequin is honoured in a way that feels much more like an equal partnership.

One such use is in the work *Guarded View* from 1993 by the African-American artist Fred Wilson. In the work, four headless, dark-skinned male mannequins are dressed in the guard uniforms of four major New York museums. Like Duchamp in 1938, Wilson does not ask the mannequin to do anything outside of its regular function, that of displaying clothing. It is the context, the museum in which it is viewed, that activates tension.

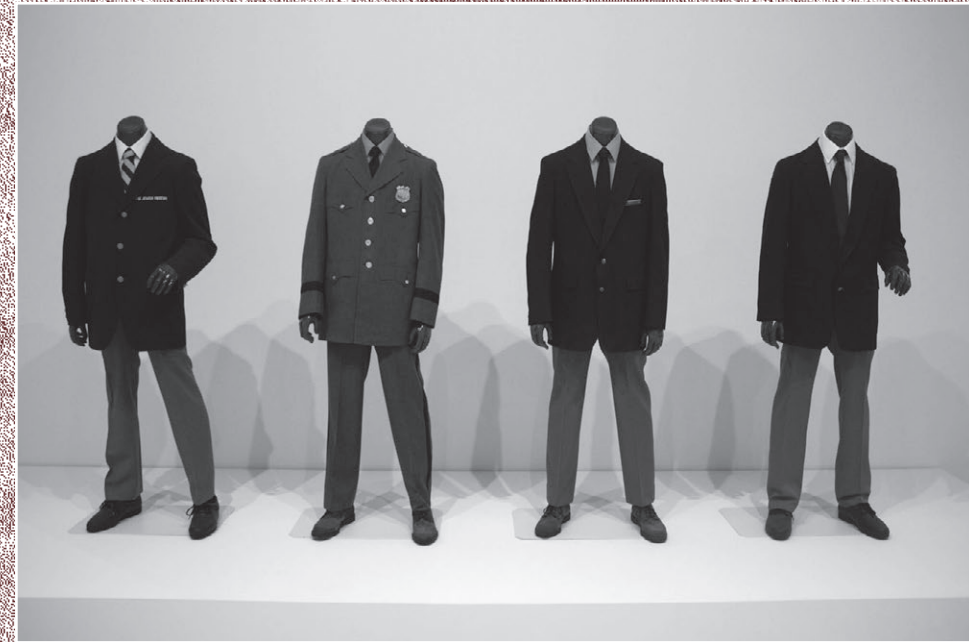
Wilson works with issues around race, museology and display. In *Guarded View* he also addresses these questions through the prism of masculinity. His mannequins are dressed in discrete and anonymous suits. The tailored men’s suit was considered a prime indicator of muscular modernity by figures like Loos and Le Corbusier and was used as a weapon in their repudiation of femininity and the decorative. If the figures of the female mannequin and the female consumer are overdetermined, those of the male mannequin and male consumer are correspondingly lacking in definition. Because mannequins are inherently artificial, and therefore, in modernism’s reasoning, fundamentally female, there has always been an

unease around male shop dummies. They are in a double bind of extremes; on one side being considered ‘too gay’ and not ‘manly’ enough, and on the other appearing like menacing loners.<sup>8</sup> One solution that was employed by window trimmers to get around the issue of the male mannequin’s wooden creepiness was to never show them as single figures, but always in groups, a strategy Wilson has also used with striking effect. But even the job of window-trimming itself had to be actively staged as masculine, if only to enforce the gender roles of susceptible female consumers on one side of the glass and the educated men manipulating their desires to lucrative effect on the other.<sup>9</sup>

What happens when you relinquish mannequins entirely in favour of more inventive methods of display? In the past, the absence of mannequins has been triggered by either a lack of resources (for instance during the depression of the 1930s or in the Soviet Union), or because they are found to be eerily close to taxidermy, residing in the uncanny valley. The latter was the case for Georges Henri Rivière, the vice-director of the Musée de l’Homme in Paris when it opened in 1938, and whose abstract vitrines were a key part of his pioneering museology. His inventive displays were in direct opposition to the familiar spectacle of vitrines well-stuffed with figures exhibiting folk costume in the Tyrol and Bavaria.

In the Soviet Union, at department stores like GUM on Moscow’s Red Square, the unavailability of display mannequins led to the alternative spectacle of fashions being modelled live on a catwalk for the public twice a day. It was these ingenious and resourceful alternatives to the static mannequin figure that we considered the best solution to our mannequin problem in the end. But we did not turn to the familiar territory of catwalk-as-performance. In *Passer-by* we display our *Jasperwear* collection within the windows of a life-size sculpture, built to resemble a shop facade. This is a replica of the recently closed Au Nouveau Chic, a ladies outfitter in Ostend, Belgium, and its windows have been expertly installed by the trimmers Howard Tong, Kathryn Scanlan and Barbara Kelly. They use tools like fishing wire and pinning, and by suspending the garments in anthropomorphic spatial compo-

Fred Wilson, *Guarded View*, Courtesy the artist / Pace Gallery.  
Film still from TV channel CCCP documentary on GUM department store in Moscow, 1954.  
Georges Henri Rivière in front of the “musique” display at the cultural gallery of the Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires.  
Photo copyright MUCEM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / André Pelle. Droits réservés.





sitions their skill brings a vulnerability to the sculpture, a sense of physical tension and vivaciousness, both literal and metaphoric.

This sculpture is in turn a component in a series of contrasting spaces that make-up Atelier E.B’s contribution to *Passer-by*. Located in the interzone between the faux shop (purely representational) and the institution’s gift shop (a fully-functioning retail space) is the showroom, where customers can browse, become mannequins themselves by trying on the collection, and transcend traditional gallery rules of engagement by touching as well as looking.

The final shop is a digital space, that of the Cleo’s smartphone app, devised as a communication tool for Atelier E.B customers. To be precise, the app is not a shop but a shop window—a space for the creative display of our work and not just a tool for selling. The art of window trimming is about catering to short attention spans, making it analogous with the way we engage with social media. The app is independent of Facebook, Instagram and the rest, and recognises the importance of the connection to our community of customers by offering a place for users to show their Atelier E.B outfits, connect with us and each other, and publicise their activities in the real world, where people can meet offline. Our digital shop window tries to be the reflective surface in which the shopper sees him or herself. Like Lynn Hershman Leeson’s ‘Bonnie’ mannequin reaching through the glass window of the department store to the viewer on the pavement in her 1976 project *25 Windows: A Portrait of Bonwit Teller*, in the digital realm we try to dissolve the border between the producer and the consumer, recognising that these borders are continually being renegotiated.

*Passer-by* considers mannequins as part of a wide cooperation between creative fields and understands them as compelling objects in themselves, without the automatic need of artistic imposition (in particular gestural intervention like dismemberment or surface interference) to elevate them to some notionally higher aesthetic plane. We find the individuals and cultures that produced them fascinating in their own right, not least because their histories offer

multiple narratives that avoid the basic binaries of the surrealists. When placed in a physical space together, these objects activate thrilling relationships and contrasts, their multiple gazes falling in unexpected places, and their states of dress or undress signifying so much more than conventional titillation. The span of eras and locations, bodies, gestures and stories would provide ample material for a mannequin’s autobiography.

1 See Andreas Huyssen, *Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism’s Other* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

2 For instance, in the work of Anna Uddenberg, whose presentation using the visual language of mannequins at the Berlin Biennale of 2016 received a lot of attention. The influence of this work was seen in subsequent shop displays in the city in autumn/winter 2016.

3 See Elizabeth Hawes, *Fashion Is Spinach* (New York: Random House, 1938), Stephanie Lake, *Bonnie Cashin: Chic Is Where You Find It* (New York: Rizzoli, 2016), Betty Kirke, *Madeleine Vionnet* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998), Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985) and Caroline Evans, *The Mechanical Smile* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

4 Man Ray, *La Résurrection des Mannequins* (1966), quoted in Alyce Mahon, ‘The Assembly Line Goddess: Modern Art and the Mannequin’, in Jane Munro, *Silent Partners: Artist and Mannequin from Function to Fetish* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

5 Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, ‘The Dialectics of Design and Destruction: *The Degenerate Art* Exhibition (1937) and the *Exhibition internationale du Surréalisme* (1938)’, *October* (Fall 2014), and James D. Herbert, *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition* (London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

6 In this it shared an ethos with the *Théâtre de la Mode*, a touring exhibition instigated by the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne in 1945–46. It showcased French haute couture made in miniature and displayed on wire-frame dolls as a way to draw attention to the industry after its decline during World War II.

7 Think for example of cubism’s dissolution of the picture plane, the Dadaist collages’ dissection of the mass media and Walter Benjamin’s Arcades Project.

8 See the chapter ‘Realisms’ in Sara K. Schneider, *Vital Mummies: Performance Design for the Show-Window Mannequin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

9 See Tag Gronberg, ‘Cars and Jars: L’Esprit Nouveau and a Geometry of the City’ in *Designs on Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Stills from 25 Windows: A Portrait of Bonwit Teller*, 1976. 16 mm film transferred to video (colour, sound).  
Courtesy the artist / Bridget Donahue New York.

