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“I Dwell in Possibility”: The Poetics of Space in the Works of 1980s Japanese Avant-Garde Fashion Designers

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ABSTRACT

What is art? What is history? What is knowledge? What is scholarship? Following the discussion between art and craft, I reflect on the use of textile with scholarship from Julia Bryan-Wilson and Winnie Wong. Inspired by Susan Foster’s article “Choreography Empathy,” and Georgina Kleege’s *More Than Meets the Eye*, I associate space with choreography and kinesthetic movement – particularly the concept of “ma 間” for the 1960s-1980s Japanese fashion designers.

摘要

摘要：艺术是什么？历史是什么？知识是什么？学术是什么？继艺术与工艺之间的讨论之后，我反思了朱莉娅·布莱恩-威尔逊和温妮·黄的学术研究中纺织品运用。受苏珊·福斯特的文章《编舞共情》和乔治娜·克利格的《不止于所见》的启发，我将空间与编舞和运动学运动联系起来，特别在1960年代至1980年代日本时装设计师的“间”概念之中。

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紡織品; 時尚; 藝術; 工藝; 編舞

I dwell in Possibility –

A fairer House than Prose –

More numerous of Windows –

Superior – for Doors –.

— Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)¹

Like the façade of an architecture, cloth becomes a second skin covering the human body. Like the construction of an architecture, fashion experiments with the reconstruction of space and material. The rich analogue between architecture and fashion design is continued in postwar Japan, when experimental designers jettison the western tradition of tightly sculpted tailoring of the fabric. Unlike western clothes, the Japanese kimono is an assemblage of rectangular pieces of fabrics. Kimono is thus “flat” when unworn, but gains volume when put on a human body. With the tradition of Japanese kimono in their minds,² Japanese designers seek

inspiration from the metamorphosis of space between two-dimension and three-dimension. Often represented by the big Three — Issey Miyake (1938-), Rei Kawakubo (1942-), and Yohji Yamamoto (1943-), the 1980s Japanese fashion designers, in particular, become synonymous with avant-garde, innovation, and newness on the international stage. The era of the 1980s also marks a moment when the boundary among fashion, design, and art dissolved. Instead of appealing to consumers through pure advertising, Japanese fashion designers self-consciously seek out other vehicles – books, photographs, magazines, exhibitions, and documentary films – to disseminate images of their work and to convey intellectual concepts.³

In this writing, I consider designers' work as a form of intermedial art, and the representation of space as its major visual form. I attempt to use the practice of formal analysis in the History of Art to look at experimental work by Issey Miyake, Rei Kawakubo, and Yohji Yamamoto. T. J. Clark's (1943-) *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* (2006) starts with how he the art historian looks, very closely, at two Poussin's paintings, showing us how to look and what to look for. His art journal in the chapter further unfolds a relentless process of looking, writing, and rewriting, in order to use words to render a touch of "blue" by Poussin.⁴ Echoing with Clark's durational experience of looking, Japanese designers show a similar interest in process and duration in their work. Inspired by T. J. Clark's formal analysis of brushwork and hue, I will closely look and examine the poetics of space in works of Japanese fashion designers. As the etymological root of the word "poet" suggests "a maker," I will refer to the word "poetics" in the way the Greek work *poiein* suggesting ways of "making."⁵ I will thus examine how the 1980s Japanese designers explore various ways of "making" the space between two-dimension and three-dimension, as well as between the body and the garment – a rich space they refer to as "ma" in Japanese.

Often featuring the unfinished look of rags, holes and exposed seams, fashion design to these Japanese designers, I argue, develops its finished form through the dynamic construction of ma and the movement produced by the wearer's body. In Japanese, the literal meaning of *ma* 間 indicates "an interval," both spatially and temporally. When ma refers to a spatial interval, it connotes a space between the two mediums. To approach *ma* across genres, media, and fields, I also attempt to look at dance costumes designed by Rei Kawakubo and photographs of her collaborated choreography work with the American dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919–2009).

The 1980s Japanese fashion designers follow the successful debut of first generation Japanese designers – Kenzo Takada (1939-2020) and Hanae Mori (1926-2022) – on the international stage. Rather than evoke the Japanese in fashion as the exotic and foreign, this second generation of Japanese designers invests their creativity in revolutionizing the western concept of fashion, and in deconstructing the western notion of the beautiful.⁶ Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo shock the Paris high fashion with their notably asymmetrical design.⁷ Their legendary Spring/Summer 1983 collections boldly propose a new decorative language of frays, holes, ropes, and exposed seams – in their garment design, a shattered bagger-like look. Avoiding the use of bright colors, these designs feature minimalist cut and heavy use of a monochromatic palette – from strong hues of black to the crispy shades of pure white. These seemingly unfinished works suffus earlier japonisme with unconventional forms and show a new deconstructionist approach to innovate garment design. In the words of Kawakubo, "to do things that [had] never been done before."⁸

The ragged aesthetic is termed as *la mode destroy* (destruction fashion) or simply *le destroy* by the French. *Le destroy* can be seen as a design practice of philosophical deconstruction, indirectly informed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's (1770–1831) notion of *destruktion* and Jacques Derrida's (1930–2004) notion of deconstruction in the late 1960s. Influenced by Japanese fashion designers, later European designers like Martin Margiela (1957-), Ann Demeulemeester (1959-), and Dries Van Noten (1958-) also imbue high fashion with this disruptive energy.⁹ Interestingly, when Japanese fashion designers redefine contemporary sensibilities with austere and “imperfect” work in Paris, Derrida was considering Japan in his 1983 “Letter to a Japanese Friend” with Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–1993). Derrida reflected on his particular use of the term “deconstruction” to help with its translation into Japanese.¹⁰

The cultural phenomenon of the 1980s Japanese fashion design suggests the underlying transnational dialogue of philosophy and aesthetics, and Japan's burgeoning economic growth in the postwar era. Japanese designers followed the mood of debunking established modes of design in the aftermath of Derridean deconstruction and continued the aggressive counterculture that first appeared on the streets of London in the 1970s.¹¹ The heavy use of black in Yamamoto and Kawakubo echoes with the “punks' shredded black garb,” which suggests “a publication of outrage and antipathy to society.” Both *le destroy* and the 1970s “punk look” gloss a new “destructive” aesthetic of “unfinished, inside out and ravaged.”¹²

With regard to the avant-garde gesture of *le destroy's* shockingly new aesthetic, I attempt to examine the experimental construction of *ma* between two-dimension and three-dimension in these garment designs. To further reflect on how *le destroy* designs the space, I will closely look at Rei Kawakubo's jersey dress designed for Autumn/Winter 1983–1984 collections (Figures 1 and 2), Yohji Yamamoto's dress designed for Spring/Summer 1983 collections (Figure 3), and Issey Miyake's shirt and dress designed for the 2010 “132 5.” collection (Figures 4 and 5).



Figure 1. Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons, Autumn/Winter 1983-84, photograph by Naoya Hatakeyama, 2009, Lambda print, collection of Kyoto costume institute.

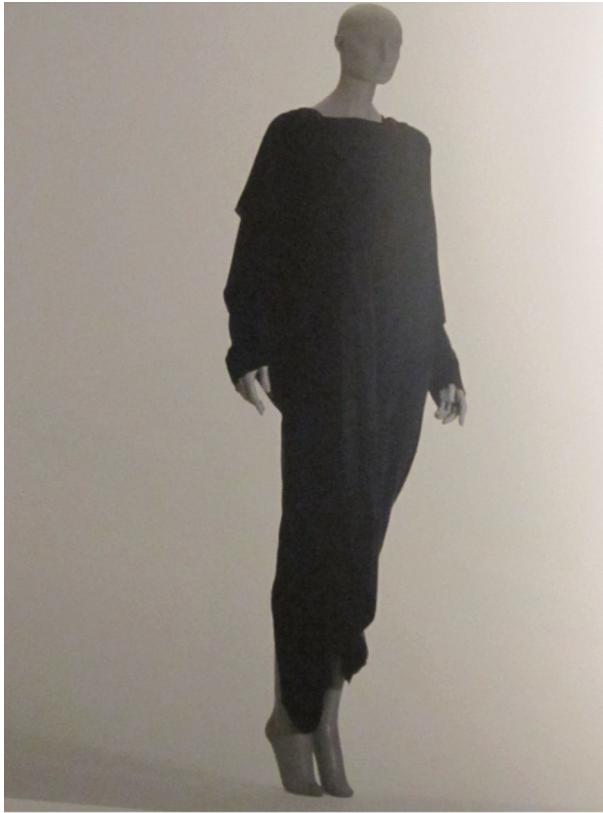


Figure 2. *Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons*, Autumn/Winter 1983-84, Black wool jersey dress, with a tube from front to back and a slit on the tube.

Commissioned by the Kyoto Costume Institute in 2008, the photographer Naoya Hatakeyama's (1958-) 2009 Lambda print (Figure 1) of Rei Kawakubo's (*Comme des Garçons*) jersey dress captures the simple black hue, the stark flatness, and the extraordinary shape of her dress when it is unworn. The sharp contrast between the white background and the clean black edge manifests a geometric beauty of line, shape, and order. A horizontal line on the top leads the attention to the central vertical line and two triangles on both sides. This symmetrical image suggests a loop-like image that resembles a Möbius strip. When the dress is lying flat, the Euclidean space it suggests is almost unexpected in light of the stereotype of *Comme des Garçon* as asymmetrical, out-of-order and unfinished. As the print captures the overlap of one black fabric over another, this unworn dress suggests multiple nuances within the black hue and predicts a dynamic act of folding and layering behind the image. Among geometric shapes, Rei Kawakubo self-consciously explores the richness of *ma* through topological space on a two-dimension planar, and transforms the flat surface into an active process of "making" the flat dress.

When the black wool jersey dress is put on a human body (Figure 2), the Möbius strip" is unfolded as a voluminous black tube that shrouds the wearer from the front bodice to the back. A slip on the tube dress produces an intersecting drape, creating a flowing space among water draperies. As the Möbius loop indicates a spatial illusion of magic, the drape



Figure 3. Yohji Yamamoto, Spring/Summer 1983, Photograph by Hiroshi Sugimoto.

also suggests an illusory effect of the *ma* as the wearer can arrange the drapes in a variety of ways. This worn dress in three-dimension thus becomes an architectural dress that embodies amorphousness. As the wearer puts the drape on or under the shoulder, or along the legs, waist, or the body, the black dress manifests various possibilities to produce kinetic movements around the body.

The British design critic Deyan Sudjic (1952-) discusses Rei Kawakubo's devotion to making "clothes that can be manipulated by the wearer," and also points out that though the wearer may not desire to use different options, "the idea that this is possible affects the way the wearer feels."¹³ Rei Kawakubo's approach redefines the notion of authorship in fashion design, and proposes a "democratic" collaboration between the wearer and the designer. The finished form of the garment does not solely rely on the material, the designer, or the concept, but is from the input of the wearer – how the wearer desires a certain shape, style, and arrangement of space. In this regard, space, or *ma*, in garment design mediates the dynamic process of aesthetic production with conjoined exploration of inter-person relation.

Echoing Rei Kawakubo's fondness for using the color black, Yohji Yamamoto's design dispenses with bright colors and performs a more poetic expression of clean cut, western tailoring, and Japanese aesthetics. Yohji Yamamoto's affection for the monochromatic palettes is reminiscent of the tone of calligraphy and *sumi-e* (monochrome ink-and-wash painting). This minimalist palette also recalls the writing of the Japanese writer Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886–1965) in the early twentieth-century: "We find beauty not in the thing itself, but in the patterns of shadows, the light and the darkness, that one thing against



Figure 4. *Issey Miyake*, "132 5." collection, 2010, polyester top and pressed with metal foil, photograph by Hiroshi Iwasaki/Stash.



Figure 5. *Issey Miyake*, "132 5." collection, 2010, polyester top and pressed with metal foil, folded into octagons, photograph by Hiroshi Iwasaki/Stash.

another creates.”¹⁴ In his book *In Praise of Shadow* (1933), Tanizaki contends that the harmony of the shadow is the essence of Japanese aesthetics:

Why should this propensity to seek beauty in darkness be strong only in Orientals? The West too has known a time when there was no electricity, gas, or petroleum, and yet so far as I know the West has never been disposed to delight in shadows. Japanese ghosts have traditionally had no feet; Western ghosts have feet, but are transparent. As even this trifle suggests, pitch darkness has always occupied our fantasies, while in the West even ghosts are as clear as glass. This is true too of our household implements: we prefer colours compounded of darkness, they prefer the colours of sunlight. And of silver and copperware: we love them for the burnish and patina, which they consider unclean, insanitary, and polish to a glittering brilliance. They paint their ceilings and walls in pale colours to drive out as many of the windows as they can. We fill our gardens with dense paintings, they spread out a flat expanse of grass.

But what produces such differences in taste? In my opinion it is this: we Orientals tend to seek our satisfactions in whatever surroundings we happen to find ourselves, to content ourselves with things as they are; and so darkness causes us no discontent, we resign ourselves to it as inevitable. If light is scarce; we will immerse ourselves in the darkness and there discover its own particular beauty.¹⁵

Tanizaki’s self-orientalizing writing compares how the West and Japan react differently to light and darkness. He exoticizes the way the Japanese worship darkness, which can be regarded as backward in technology and civilization through the lens of the West. The “delight” in shadows provides rich sources for fantasies, everyday life, and garden design. Through the “ubiquitous” darkness, the Japanese discover essential ways to represent the beautiful. Tanizaki’s proud self-exoticization fits into a mainstream discussion of how Japan is capable of competing with the West regarding its civilization, taste, and hygiene condition. As a part of the larger scheme of nation-building in modern Japan, this process of taste-building suggests a national awareness of formulating a Japanese taste as early as the Meiji Restoration (1868).¹⁶ Through the praise of shadows, Tanizaki self-consciously constructs an unusual Japanese aesthetic sensibility as a cultural counterpart to the West.

Unlike Tanizaki’s self-orientalizing praise of shadows, Yohji Yamamoto’s affection for shadow, darkness, and black does not evoke the foreign, exotic Japan. To him, black is no longer a color to evoke elegance, but a color of ambiguity that he aims to explore in its complexity. He frequently uses black as an “intellectual,” “contemporary,” and “luxury” color and has made a line of clothing called “Noir” since 1993.¹⁷ *Le destroy*’s fondness for black is also in concert with the punks’ black on the streets of London – a color of mourning and poverty, an expression of protests and social concerns. Eventually, black not only dominates fashion but is the color of the age at the end of the 1990s.¹⁸ In Yohji Yamamoto’s Spring/Summer 1983 collections, he experiments with the poetics of the shadow not through color but through holes carved on the cotton fabric.

Hiroshi Sugimoto’s (1948-) photograph (Figure 3) of Yamamoto’s design for Spring/Summer 1983 collections captures the virtuoso play of light and shade between the garment and the wearer’s body. The white cotton plain-weave garment is comprised of one jacket and one dress that are riddled with square holes. Asymmetrical garments blend a sense of everyday life into high fashion. The simple design and natural tone highlight a new beauty of modesty and spontaneity,

reducing people's attention to ornamentation. The loose-fitting dress reduces the evocation of an erotic silhouette, and creates maximum freedom and casualness in *ma*. The dress thus embodies an androgynous allure that features on Yamamoto's design for women's attire. The light texture of the cotton dress invites the movements of breeze, getting nature into the haptic perception of the wearer's body. Myriad square holes act like little windows on the garments. When light is shone on the dress, scattered holes cast soft, kaleidoscopic shadows on the wearer's skin-like dappled sunlight. The *ma* mediates Yamamoto's poetic construction of light and shade, and creates another wondrous yet impermanent dress beneath the original one. Therefore, the cotton dress is spatially doubled with a negative counterpart. *Ma* bridges a twin design of the black and the white. In this regard, the wearer is able to put on a "shadow dress," and the plain white dress becomes a cover for the inner one.

Moreover, the impermanent "shadow dress" and the unfinished look seem to evoke the Japanese aesthetic of *wabi-sabi*. *Wabi* indicates a state of being without decoration or visible luxury; *sabi* refers to the old and atmospheric. The principles of *wabi-sabi* manifest the ultimate expression in the tradition of Japanese tea ceremony, which was created by the revered master Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591) in the sixteenth century.¹⁹ The aesthetic of *wabi-sabi* values the "beauty of things modest and simple," treasure the "beauty of the passage of time expressed in material form," and represent a tradition of appreciating the "imperfect, impermanent and incomplete."²⁰ Holes on the dress embody a *wabi-sabi* sense of imperfection and incompleteness. Yamamoto described his design in a similar manner: "If one has only one piece of clothing in life, it becomes patched together, exposed to sun and rain, frayed from the course of daily life. I wanted to create clothing with the same kind of unconscious beauty and natural appeal."²¹ On that account, Yohji Yamamoto's design wavers between classical aesthetic and avant-garde revision, between poetic image and spatial evocation, and between the shabby look and the aesthetic of *wabi-sabi*. His garments for the Spring/Summer 1983 collections imbue a new beauty of subtle sensuality, modesty, and the natural appearance.

Issey Miyake first came up with the concept of "A Piece of Cloth" in 1976 to propose a different relation between two-dimension and three-dimension. The concept of "A Piece of Cloth" means wrapping the moving body in a single length of fabric, exploring the *ma* born between the body and clothing. This concept confronts the high fashion in the West, and reviews the excessive *ma* produced by long, uncut kimono fabrics. Pursuing this concept, Issey Miyake's "132 5." collection transforms a folded piece of cloth into a three-dimensional dress when it is lifted from the center. Miyake describes the mathematics of folding suggested by the "132 5." line as the following: "The number '1' refers to the fact that one piece of cloth can become three-dimension ('3'), and be re-folded into its two-dimensional ('2') state again. The number '5' after the space signifies the temporal dimension that comes into being after the clothing is worn by people."²² Here, Miyake goes beyond the metamorphosis of space between two-dimension and three-dimension, and gives some further thought to the spatial-temporal dimension of a garment after its production. The fifth temporal dimension exists from yet beyond the every day. It embodies a kinetic temporality that is continually constituted by the *ma* in its kinetic form.

The black garment in the "132 5." collection (Figure 4) is comprised of one polyester top and one skirt pressed with metal foil. The top and the skirt can be folded into flat octagons

like the technique of *origami* (Figure 5), which is the traditional Japanese art of folding paper into decorative figures and shapes. Miyake's Reality Lab uses *origami*-design software developed by Jun Mitani (1975-) – a professor of computer science at the University of Tsukuba, and creates patterns that feature thin accordion folds on garments. Hence, the folded octagons of unworn clothes juvenilize the *origami* tradition, and show a state-of-the-art experiment of designing beauty between algorithm and garment design. Scored lines on the dress are printed on the recycled polyester plain weave. Space is mapped out as a combination of human and nonhuman input. The glittering material embodies Miyake's long-time interest in new synthetic fabric, suggesting a sense of futurity. When lifted up and put on the wearer's body, the multidimensional dress becomes a wearable architecture that moves along with the body inhabiting the *ma*.

Moreover, Miyake's innovation lies in his blending of environmental concern, practicality, and sustainability into his design lines. Instead of designing the beautiful and the extravagant, he prioritizes an alternative of saving excessive space, using the recycled material, and selling the affordable. The recycled material used in the "132 5." line embodies the growing environmental concern in the fashion design industry. The folded flatness of the dress meets the need to save space in a Japanese household considerably. In the late 1980s, Miyake experiments with "new synthetic" fabrics made from polyester and has incorporated this advanced textile into the groundbreaking "Pleats Please" line since 1993.²³ The "Pleats Please" line is machine washable, portable, affordable, and wearable for women of all ages and body types.

Miyake's following line "A-POC" further highlights his futuristic vision of materiality, form, and function. "A-POC" is a term coined from his earlier concept "A Piece of Cloth" and is a pun on the word "epoch." Miyake developed this line with the textile designer Dai Fujiwara, who is then the designer and the former creative director of the Miyake Design Studio. The "A-POC" (Figure 6) produces a series of tubular knitwear that are made in specially adapted Raschel knitting machines, and that are made without machine-sewn seams and finished on a roll.²⁴ As the garments are stitched into the tube, they can be cut freely when the roll is unfurled.²⁵ Eventually, the "A-POC" line manages to boldly abandon the process of sewing in apparel production, extending Miyake's futuristic vision to the industry of fashion and textile manufacturing.

The fashion designs by Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto, and Issey Miyake show different forms of making the *ma* between the garment and the wearer – the topographical, the poetic, and the futuristic. Their virtuosity of designing and "re-making" the space glosses the brands with an indelible artistic value. Furthermore, all three designers also challenge the notion of the erotic in fashion design, and propose a new spatial construction of femininity. They all hide the revealing silhouette in tailoring and use garments to wrap the wearer's body – a new eroticism constituted through concealment. I would like to further examine the kinesthetic construction of *ma* in choreography with a conjoined exploration of a spatial manifestation of femininity.

Rei Kawakubo's dance costume for Merce Cunningham's choreography work Scenario (1997)²⁶ is the Spring/Summer 1997 collection "Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body" – the designer's personal favorite, which was first shown at the Musée national des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie in Paris. This groundbreaking collection is often known as the nicknamed "Lumps and Bumps" collection. Here, the *ma* between clothes and the human body is constantly shaped by a dancer's moving body and kinesthetic movements. Not merely as an embodied

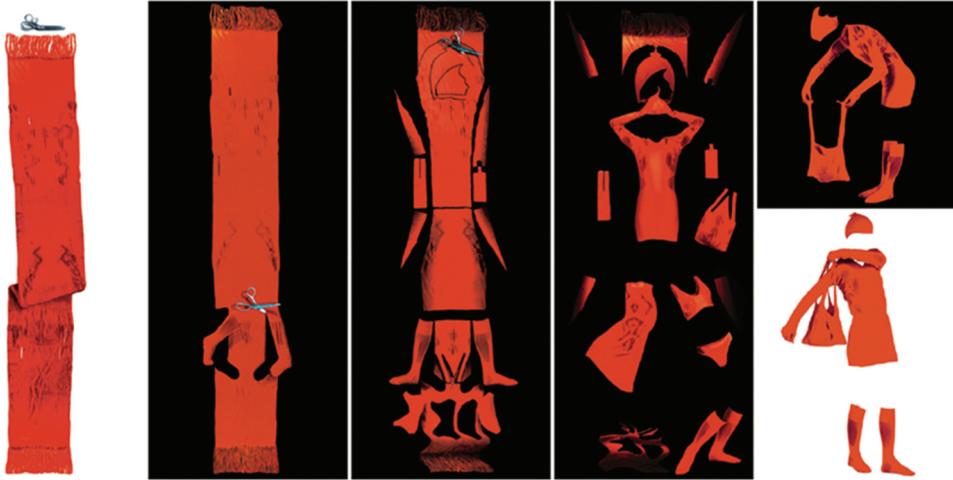


Figure 6. Animation by Pascal Roulin, *Issey Miyake making things* exhibition, A-POC, foundation cartier, Paris 1998-99.



Figure 7. Scene from *Scenario*, Merce Cunningham, dance company, 1997, choreography by Merce Cunningham, costumes designed by Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons, Spring/Summer 1997.

decoration, the dance costume is also incorporated into the tempo, rhythm, and atmosphere of the dance performance. As the brand name *Comme des Garçons* indicates being “like some boys,” Kawakubo’s design proclaims a negative aesthetic of cross-dressing to reformulate the notion of eroticism and femininity.²⁷ Although making a name of oneself is crucial in the fashion industry, Kawakubo almost sacrifices her own name for the concept of *Comme des Garçons*. In this regard, this paper tends to address the designer’s name Rei Kawakubo instead of the brand name, paying homage to Rei Kawakubo’s talent and vision.

In the *le destroy* key, Kawakubo debunks the western coding of erotica – symmetrical beauty and sophisticated tailoring. Padding and lacing are often used to standardize and eroticize the wearer’s body – for instance, shoulder pads for men’s suits and corsets for women’s hourglass figures.²⁸ However, Rei

Kawakubo subversively puts padding in the “wrong” and “unexpected” places in the “Lumps and Bumps” collection—sides, shoulders and upper back (Figure 7). Therefore, Kawakubo exaggerates the female silhouette in a grotesque and extreme manner, producing a different body type that shocks the catwalk. The enlarged, removable down pads, sewn inside the garments, sexualize the *ma*, and reconstruct the spatial code of revealing and concealing around the female body. The wrapped body is not a fetishized object that subjugates to the violent male gaze, but an active agency that challenges gendered stereotype. Here, the garment design boldly gestures toward a statement that fashion is not only worn by the body, but also by the feminist mind.

Through the statement of “Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body,” Rei Kawakubo not only constructs a new code of femininity that has never been seen before, but also experiments with new possibilities for space, body, design and performance in the future. Like Kawakubo, the dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham unprecedentedly uses a computer program to create movements for his *Scenario*. He designs dance notations of different body parts and formulates a new choreography code of the arm, feet, torso and leg. In the dance performance, Kawakubo’s movable pads and bumps become obstacles that challenge dancers’ movements, partnering and improvisation. The wearer’s body now becomes a dancer’s kinetic body that moves, interacts and expresses. When adjusting to Kawakubo’s unconventional costumes, dancers seek to interpret and express algorithmic movement continuously and naturally—at least not in a robotic manner. The kinesthetic *ma* is shaped by the extreme shape of the costume and the dancers’ haptic navigation of the bumps flowing their bodies. In this collaborative work, both Kawakubo and Cunningham experiment with the artificiality of constructing the body and movement in live performance.

Regarding this experimental collaboration and the 1980s Japanese *le destroy*, they all carve out a niche for themselves. In terms of Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto and Issey Miyake, they all dwell in a social space that rejects conventions but embraces new possibilities. Their avant-garde concept composes various ways of designing space and proposes new spatial formations of gender and identity. I honor their artistic ideal of that generation, and attempt to explore the artistic value of the fashion industry that is often examined with consumer culture and commerce industry. This paper focuses more on the art value of the work produced by Japanese designers, instead of a social history of the “Japaneseness” or the national identity in postwar Japan suggested through their work. Last but not least, to me, the intersection of fashion design, costume design, dance and choreography is a thrilling field to review the porous boundary between visual art and performing art, and to reflect on the notion of *ma* through the kinesthetic construction of space in the future.

Notes

1. Helen Vendler, *Dickinson: Selected Poems and Commentaries* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2010), 222.
2. The Japanese kimono has been influenced by traditional Chinese garments since the fifteenth century. The notion of authenticity is more problematic regarding the social construct of the “Japanese” culture.

3. For example, Issey Miyake was one of the first Japanese designers to adopt the exhibition as an expressive medium, beginning with *Issey Miyake: Bodyworks* (1983), followed by *Energies* (1990) in Amsterdam, and more recently *Making Things* (1998) in Paris. For a chronology of Miyake's exhibitions, see Makoto Ishizeki, "Centralizing the Marginal: Japanese Fashion through the History of Fashion Exhibition," *Dresstudy*, vols. 57–58 (2010). For Japanese designers involvement in different media, see Akiko Fukai, "Future Beauty: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion," in *Future Beauties: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion*, ed. Catherine Ince and Rie Nii (London and New York: Merrell, 2010), 21.
4. T. J. Clark, *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 41.
5. Timothy Hampton, "Introduction," *Bob Dylan's Poetics: How the Songs Work* (New York: Zone Books, 2019), 13.
6. See Yuniya Kawamura, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).
7. See Roger Caillois, *La Dissymétrie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973). The French sociologist and literary critic Roger Caillois explicitly describes the phenomenon of asymmetrical design as a characteristic of Japanese aesthetics.
8. Karin G. Oen, "Deconstruction and Refashioning Japonism," in *Kimono Refashioned: Japan's Impact on International Fashion*, ed. Yuki Morishima and Rie Nii (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2018), 23.
9. Oen, 24.
10. Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," in *Derrida and Difference*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (Warwick, UK: Parousia Press, 1985), 71–82.
11. Cher Potter, "Deconstruction: Exposing the Invisible, Unhinging the Establishment," in *Future Beauties: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion*, ed. Catherine Ince and Rie Nii, (London and New York: Merrell, 2010), 96.
12. Potter, 96.
13. Deyan Sudjic, *Rei Kawakubo and Comme des Garçons* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 82.
14. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *In Praise of Shadow* (1933), trans. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Publishing, 1977), 30.
15. Tanizaki, 47–48.
16. For a critical article on the process of taste-building and nation-building in the nineteenth-century Japan, as well as the notion of taste and style in domestic space, architecture, and interior design in modern Japan, see Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2003).
17. Yohji Yamamoto interviewed by Akiko Fukai in WOWOW television programme, Tokyo, 19 November 2002. See also "In Praise of Shadow," in *Future Beauties: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion*, ed. Catherine Ince and Rie Nii (London and New York: Merrell, 2010), 15.
18. *Future Beauties*, 15.
19. Edo (1603–1868) merchant culture also endorsed the aesthetic of *wabi-sabi*, appreciating the opposite of luxury in the form of a shabby refinement. Regarding this, Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693), one of Edo Japan's foremost writers, depicted the fashionable men and women of the early Edo period in his novels and described in acute detail that clouting was often the opposite of gorgeous extravagance.
20. Akiko Fukai, "Future Beauty: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion," in *Future Beauties: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion*, ed. Catherine Ince and Rie Nii (London and New York: Merrell, 2010), 9.
21. Quoted in *Future Beauties*, p. 51.
22. MIYAKE DESIGN STUDIO website. <http://mds.isseymiyake.com/mds/en/collection/#>, accessed December 3, 2019.
23. Fukai, 18.
24. *Future Beauties*, 81.
25. *Future Beauties*, 81.

26. Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Scenario, choreography by Merce Cunningham, music by Takehisa Kosugi (1938–2018), and stage and costume design by Rei Kawakubo, first performed 1997. Like Rei Kawakubo's participation in Scenario, Issey Miyake also collaborated with the American dancer and choreographer William Forsythe (1949-) and did costume design for Ballet Frankfurt's *The Loss of Small Detail* (1987).
27. According to Barbara Vinken's article, Kawakubo, not speaking any European languages, claims that "she just liked the sound fo the words of the French singer Françoise Hardy's song of 1962, 'Tous les garçons et les filles,' which she heard by chance." See Barbara Vinken, "The Empire Designs Back," in *Future Beauties: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion*, ed. Catherine Ince and Rie Nii (London and New York: Merrell, 2010), 34.
28. Vinken, 34.

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