

MOCA

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October 21, 2006

MEDIA PREVIEW
Thursday, November 16, 2006
10am–1pm

NEW MOCA EXHIBITION EXPLORES COMMON THREADS OF FASHION AND ARCHITECTURE ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture

First Major Museum Exhibition to Bring to Light Interface of the Two Disciplines

At MOCA Grand Avenue

November 19, 2006–March 5, 2007



Hussein Chalayan, *Afterwords* collection, fall /winter 2000, photo © Chris Moore, courtesy Hussein Chalayan

“Fashion is architecture. It is a matter of proportions.”

—Coco Chanel

Los Angeles—The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, is opening the highly anticipated exhibition *Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture* on **November 19**. All of the galleries in the museum’s **250 South Grand Avenue** home are devoted to the exhibition, which remains on view through **March 5, 2007**. Organized by MOCA and curated by Brooke Hodge, the museum’s Curator of Architecture

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and Design, *Skin + Bones* is the first major museum exhibition devoted to the extensive and telling similarities between contemporary architecture and fashion.

Skin + Bones brings a broad but focused light to bear on the parallels between the “skin”—or exterior surface—and the “bones”—or structural framework—of both clothing and buildings of the past 25 years. Forty-six of today’s most brilliant and creative fashion designers and architects are represented by a wide range of more than 300 objects: from stunning one-of-a-kind haute couture gowns to intricate architectural models and special full-scale installations. This is the first opportunity U.S. viewers have to see many of the works on view.

The entire museum will be taken up with a dynamic installation that has been designed by New York-based architects Calvin Tsao and Zack McKown to reinforce the many connections highlighted in the exhibition. Ralph Pucci International—a leader in the high-end mannequin and furniture design industry in New York and Los Angeles—has provided 60 mannequins for the exhibition. Simply called MANIKIN, this line is part of Pucci’s latest series—clean, simple, modern, faceless, and presented in a stone foundry finish, in keeping with the minimal spirit of today’s designs. Also, Patina-V, based in nearby City of Industry, California, has donated 45 mannequins for use in the exhibition design. Founded in 1987, Patina-V is one of the world’s largest manufacturers of mannequins and forms.

Exhibition Origins

Skin + Bones takes as its point of departure the beginning of the 1980s—a crucial period marked by significant events and advances that contributed to formal and cultural shifts in both fashion and architecture. When Japanese fashion designers Rei Kawakubo (of Comme des Garçons) and Yohji Yamamoto first showed their work during the Paris ready-to-wear collections of April 1981, the resultant shock waves traveled through the fashion world, laying down a challenge to accepted ideas of fashion, femininity, and beauty. The oversized, often asymmetrical black clothing they presented included intentional holes, tatters, and unfinished edges that stood in stark contrast to the elegantly decorative, crisply tailored, and form-fitting looks shown by most designers that year.

Shortly thereafter, in 1982, architect Bernard Tschumi won an international competition to design the massive Parc de la Villette urban-renewal project in Paris. His design—and the collaboration on a garden within the project (unbuilt) that he arranged between architect Peter Eisenman and the enormously influential French philosopher Jacques Derrida—served to introduce ideas of deconstruction to a much larger audience. Tschumi’s vision heralded bold new directions that had an effect on the public perception of building design similar to that of the Japanese designers’ on the possibilities of clothing design. A third important event around this time reverberated within the worlds of both fashion and architecture—a 1982 exhibition curated by

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Susan Sidlauskas at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology called *Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design*, which, for the first time, examined formal aspects of fashion from an architectural point of view.

While a number of recent exhibitions have explored the relationship between art and fashion, less attention has been paid to the natural relationship that exists between architecture and fashion, despite the growing overlap in strategies and techniques shared by the two disciplines. Since the 1980s, a growing number of avant-garde designers have come to approach garments as architectonic constructions, while many in the field of architecture have boldly embraced new forms and materials. These developments are due in part to numerous technological advances that have revolutionized both the design and construction of buildings and made techniques like pleating, seaming, folding, and draping part of the architectural vocabulary. Garments of increasing conceptual sophistication and structural complexity have been seen on the runways and in the streets, as buildings of unparalleled fluidity and innovation have come to grace major urban centers around the world.

MOCA's Rich History of Architecture and Design Exhibitions

Taking full advantage of its location in a city recognized for an architecture rich in innovation and diversity, MOCA has established a long and distinguished history of engagement with that subject through such exhibitions as *Blueprints for Modern Living: The History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* (1989), *At the End of the Century: One Hundred Years of Architecture* (2000), *The Architecture of R.M. Schindler* (2001), *What's Shakin': New Architecture in Los Angeles* (2001), *Frank Gehry: Work in Progress* (2003), and *Jean Prouvé: Three Nomadic Structures* (2005). In addition, MOCA has presented exhibitions featuring some of the most important designers of our time—Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec (industrial design), J Mays (car design), and Roy McMakin (furniture design). *Skin + Bones* expands MOCA's purview to the most intimate of designed objects—clothing—and circles back out to the most public—built structures.

Curator Brooke Hodge on the Origins of the Project

The exhibition and accompanying publication have been more than six years in the making—Curator Brooke Hodge describes the origins thus: “During the course of my research [for an exhibition devoted to the work of the avant-garde Japanese fashion house Comme des Garçons, headed by Rei Kawakubo], I was fascinated not only by visual similarities between clothing and buildings, but also by how the garments could be more aptly described using architectural terminology. I was also impressed by Kawakubo's desire to create a total environment for her work—one that embraced not only the clothes but also the design of retail spaces, graphics, and furniture, much in the same way members of the Wiener Werkstatte or the Bauhaus strove to create a *gesamtkunstwerk* (synthesis of the arts). That fashion and architecture have a great deal in common may be surprising given the obvious differences between the two. Fashion can often be ephemeral and

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superficial, and uses soft, fluid materials; whereas architecture is considered monumental and permanent, and uses strong, rigid materials. Regardless of differences in size, scale, and materials, the point of origin for both fashion design and architecture is the human body: both practices protect and shelter us, while providing a means to express our identities—whether personal, political, religious, or cultural.”

Forty-six Fashion Designers and Architects

Skin + Bones features the work of many of the greatest talents in fashion today, as well the innovative work of a number of promising young designers: Azzedine Alaïa, Hussein Chalayan, Comme des Garçons, Alber Elbaz for Lanvin, Tess Giberson, Yoshiki Hishimuna, Elena Manferdini, Maison Martin Margiela, Alexander McQueen, Miyake Issey, Narciso Rodriguez, Ralph Rucci, Nanni Strada, Yeohlee Teng, Isabel Toledo, Olivier Theyskens, Dries Van Noten, Viktor & Rolf, Junya Watanabe, Vivienne Westwood, Yohji Yamamoto, and J. Meejin Yoon. Yoon provides an interesting bridge in that she is also an architect. Similarly, the architects on view include innovative practitioners—both established and emerging—who have had, or promise to have, an indelible impact on our built environment: Shigeru Ban, Preston Scott Cohen, Neil M. Denari Architects, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Winka Dubbeldam/Archi-Tectonics, Enric Miralles Benedetta Tagliabue/EMBT Arquitectes, Peter Eisenman, Foreign Office Architects, Future Systems, Gehry Partners, Zaha Hadid, Herzog + de Meuron, Toyo Ito, Jakob + MacFarlane, Greg Lynn FORM, Morphosis, Neutelings Riedijk, Jean Nouvel, Office dA, Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Kazuyo Sejima+Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA, Testa & Weiser, Bernard Tschumi, and Wilkinson Eyre.

Layout of the Exhibition

Skin + Bones is divided by theme into 10 main sections, but reaches out to visitors even before they enter the museum galleries. Exhibition designers Tsao & McKown have created a dramatic tensile canopy that begins at the low wall by the sidewalk in front of MOCA, stretches up to attach to the permanent awning covering Arco Court, then swoops down to shelter—and highlight—the museum entrance. Inside, the first gallery presents eight sequential iterations of a dress from Viktor & Rolf’s famous Russian Doll collection, and follows with a gallery devoted to the work of Azzedine Alaïa, showing his radical methods of both dressing and addressing the female body. The next section commingles fashion and architecture, tracking four throughlines: “Identity,” “Shelter,” “Geometry,” and “Creative Process.” Through the presentation of study models, patterns, photographs, and sketchbooks, “Creative Process” highlights the parallels in the working methods of architect Frank Gehry and fashion designer Narciso Rodriguez.

Following is a section devoted to “structural skin,” highlighting buildings and clothing in which the skin—or surface—and structure become one. Included are the Seattle Central Library by Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Prada Aoyama Epicenter in Tokyo by Herzog & de Meuron, and Tod’s Omotesando by Toyo Ito, as well as two innovative new A-POC [a piece of cloth] lines by Miyake Design Studio. JUPITER, a new line of reversible

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jeans created using the A-POC process makes its debut in *Skin + Bones*. Greg Lynn FORM's "blob wall" leads the viewer into an area devoted to "constructing volume." Shown here are garments and building projects that use ingenious methods and construction techniques to create unusual, sculptural volumes. The section devoted to the relationships between construction, reconstruction, and deconstruction highlights these processes through the work of fashion designers Comme des Garçons, Maison Martin Margiela, Ralph Rucci and architects Frank Gehry, Bernard Tschumi, and Peter Eisenman. Gehry's own Santa Monica house, which he has spent years configuring and re-configuring; Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette (see above) and Peter Eisenman's contribution—in collaboration with the philosopher Jacques Derrida—to the latter (see above), are featured.

The smaller, intimate space of the previous section opens into the dazzling, enormous "tectonic strategies" gallery, which addresses seven cross-disciplinary methodologies: "Wrapping," "Folding," "Draping," "Pleating," "Printing," "Suspension," and "Cantilever." This section reveals how fashion designers and architects employ one or more of these now cross-disciplinary methods. Work by the following is featured: Comme des Garçons; Yohji Yamamoto; Miyake Issey; Nanni Strada; Maison Martin Margiela; Yeohlee Teng; Ralph Rucci; Hussein Chalayan; Isabel Toledo; Alber Elbaz for Lanvin; Dries Van Noten; Gehry Partners, LLP; Jakob + MacFarlane; Winka Dubbledam/Archi-Tectonics; Foreign Office Architects; Wilkinson Eyre; Morphosis; Neil M. Denari Architects; Office dA; Shigeru Ban; Miralles Tagliabue/EMBT; Neutelings Riedijk; Herzog + de Meuron; Zaha Hadid; Greg Lynn FORM; and Diller Scofidio + Renfro. The final area of this section demonstrates even more radical strategies in the crossover of processes and materials seen in projects by Testa & Weiser, Elena Manfredini, and Nanni Strada.

The exhibition closes with two projects that illustrate "effect and ephemerality" in fashion and architecture. Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Blur building, created for Expo 2002 in Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland, is shown in an installation that mimics the experience of standing in the cloud-like structure's interior. Viktor & Rolf's seminal 2002-03 "Long Live the Immaterial" collection is through a large-scale video projection highlighting the bluescreen garments that transformed the models on the catwalk into moving special-effects screens.

Exhibition Catalogue

Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture is accompanied by a comprehensive full-color publication with written entries on each of the individual architects and fashion designers in the exhibition, as well as over 500 illustrations. Co-published by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Thames & Hudson, the book is edited by Brooke Hodge, MOCA Curator of Architecture and Design, and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, Director of Publications, and includes contributions by Ms. Hodge, Patricia Mears, and Susan Sidlauskas. The book is available at all four MOCA store locations in hardcover only (\$49.95).

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Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture is organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and curated by Brooke Hodge, MOCA Curator of Architecture and Design.

Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture is made possible by a generous grant from Carol and Jacqueline Appel.

Endowment support is provided by The Ron Burkle Endowment for Architecture and Design Programs and the Sydney Irmas Exhibition Endowment.

This presentation is also generously supported by Infiniti; The MOCA Architecture & Design Council; Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam; Étant donnés: The French-American Fund for Contemporary Art; Dwell; Elise Jaffe + Jeffrey Brown; Westfall Commercial Furniture, Inc.; The Japan Foundation; and the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York.

89.9 KCRW is the Official Media Sponsor of MOCA.

Generous in-kind support is provided by Ralph Pucci International and Patina-V.

Additional in-kind support is provided by MySpace, Yellow Book USA, and Blair Graphics.

LACMA Exhibition

MOCA is encouraging *Skin + Bones* viewers to visit the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to see *Breaking the Mode: Contemporary Fashion from the Permanent Collection*, a special exhibition on view from September 17, 2006, through January 7, 2007, which presents the work of a number of clothing designers also included in MOCA's exhibition. The creation of clothing for protection, profession, or spectacle has undergone dramatic change over the past 25 years. A number of designers have introduced subversive elements into the fashion system, examining and deconstructing its entrenched conventions and changing the rules about what is aesthetically pleasing and fashionable. *Breaking the Mode* features over 100 examples of contemporary dress, drawn exclusively from LACMA's permanent collection, by designers who have rejected fashion's traditional design criteria and solutions. The exhibition features designers Azzedine Alaïa, Hussein Chalayan, Rei Kawakubo, Christian Lacroix, Martin Margiela, Alexander McQueen, Miyake Issey, Vivienne Westwood, and Yohji Yamamoto, among many others.

For LACMA media information, contact Heidi Simonian at 323/857-6515 or <hsimonian@lacma.org>.

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The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA) is your source of creativity and inspiration in Los Angeles through innovative exhibitions and programs by significant and compelling contemporary artists. MOCA is a private not-for-profit institution supported by its members, corporate and foundation support, government grants, and admission revenues.

MOCA Grand Avenue is open 11am to 5pm on Monday and Friday; 11am to 8pm on Thursday; 11am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday; and closed on Tuesday and Wednesday. Wells Fargo provides free admission every Thursday from 5pm to 8pm. General admission is \$8 for adults, \$5 for students with I.D. and seniors (65+), and free for MOCA members, children under 12, and everyone on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm.

For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213/626-6222 or access MOCA online at moca.org.