

the directives inscribed in the item description—to increase “dramatic volume”—but fails to indicate for what situation or emergency this would be appropriate. Almost certainly, this function serves as little more than a scenographic and purely formal effect, yet, if we reflect on the name of the garment, as a “life vests,” we cannot help but contextualize the jacket with respect to its primary function, the rescue at sea. In the case of the Balenciaga inflatable garment, the implicit narrative is perhaps that of a high-class marine tragedy, which follows the sinking of a luxury yacht and not of an inflatable overcrowded boat, adrift for days or weeks. Elsewhere in the luxury space, Craig Green’s 2018 collection for Moncler Genius (inspired by samurai fighters) recovers the values of protection and functionality that distinguish many inflatable objects, to build soft and light armor that is easily foldable. Green’s flexible shells resemble life-boats, lifesaving emergency devices that seem, potentially, to be an effective solution for temporary survival in dark, freezing waters.

Air-mediated animation of works of art and sartorial creations open up for reflection upon a new horizon of materialized cinematicity, on the realization of “cinema with other means” in a dimension of everyday sartorial life. These inflatable clothing apparatuses give body to images that were, until recently, considered strictly two-dimensional. They conjure up fantasies and nightmares thanks to various air animation mechanisms, and invite the wearer to participate as a model, wearer, witness. For better or for worse, this three-dimensionalization redeems the images from being “only” images, and present them as presences operating at the very boundary of reality, albeit expanded and inalienable.

In claiming an existence outside the cage of the frame, beyond the regime of representation, these restless sartorial image-objects raise new questions about subjectivity, freedom and marginality. The unquestionable kinematic nature of dress starts from the movement of fabric thanks to the movement of the body, articulating itself through drapery and folds of garments. Yet, the inflatability of these clothes seems to go beyond the need for a human subject as an activating agent, and thus gestures to a sort of ontological autonomy—garments that, just like Chan’s *Breathers*, claims the subjectification of those who risk losing the right to humanity. Inflatable fashion reinforces this perspective thanks to its air-powered, non-human appearance. Mechanical life tied to capitalist labor manifests itself in/as animation. Clothes advocate the same autonomy and subjectivity of cinematic images and animated machines, and help pinpoint a crucial aspect of anthropocentrism: the idea that the world is at the service of man. The world understood not only as the totality of resources to be exploited, but as a set of artifacts that, once created, remain at the service of man, in a condition of eternal slavery.



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## Outfitting as Assemblage



Isa Genzken, *Untitled* (Schauspieler), 2012. Photo: Delfame Photography. Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne/New York. VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

“‘Getting dressed’ in the modern world is a matter of bricolage, of the coming together of garments and accessories that we have usually not made ourselves, combined to create a finished ‘appearance’. Every individual is a walking collage, an artwork of ‘found items’—or perhaps something closer to a contemporary installation, changing as it interacts with its audiences.”

—Elizabeth Wilson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, “Changing Times/Altered States” in *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003), p. 249

In 1836, the British writer Thomas Carlyle published *Sartor Resartus* ("The Tailor Retailored"), a satirical and highly speculative novel about the fictional German philosopher Diogene Teufelsdröckh and his thesis *Clothes: Their Origin and Influence*. In the book, the philosopher spends days trying to decipher the outfits of passers-by, looking for the hidden meanings found in the folds of a shirt, in the ruffle of a dress, in the height of a hat—but ultimately, fails in forming any concrete thesis or conclusion on the matter. Still, through performative criticism of Teufelsdröckh's (absent) writing, Carlyle can be credited for having accidentally invented the concept of fashion semiotics, the reading of clothes as symbols of meaning, 130 years or so before Roland Barthes' *The Fashion System*—another study often deemed a failed attempt of developing a comprehensive theory of fashion. Both books attest to the fact that the deciphering of fashion's signifiers is a near-impossible task, as they exist in a constant state of flux, rapidly morphing and inverting between personal, material, political, historical, and cultural signification. As objects, clothes are both extremely expressive and hopelessly mute; they are, as Carlyle summarized, "unspeakably meaningful."

This conundrum of clothes and its illegibility crystallizes in sculpture because it removes garments from their traditional habitus of everyday life, presented instead as site-less objects frozen in time. Denied their temporal and social existence, they are reduced to their objecthood and materiality, reflecting back to the viewer our profound yet largely unresolved semantic relationship to clothes. This gesture unites the otherwise so disparate sculptures of artists Isa Genzken and K8 Hardy, whose practices have both drifted towards the dressing of mannequins, largely in the same time period, albeit from highly different perspectives. Genzken's later sculptural work famously involves a wholehearted embrace and incorporation of the "stuff" of the world, but her series *Schauspieler* (*Actors*) (2013–2015), consisting of a series of elaborately styled mannequins grouped either alone or in twos or three, employ this logic of commodity accumulation particularly through clothes and an evocation of dress. Similarly, K8 Hardy's sculptural series *Docudrama* (2016) features an army of mannequins dressed in loud, outrageous, and colorful ensembles. In both cases, these fashioned bodies do not transmit any immediate, obvious meaning or message, although the titles—"actors" and "documents"—allude to some promise of representation, to some kind of coded message. Though it is not the anthropomorphism of the figures that perform a representational function as much as the garments that adorn them as they are assembled and juxtaposed by the artists. Like their popular usage in fashion consumer spaces, mannequins are proxies that assume a constructed neutrality in order to leave space for the clothes to signify on or *on behalf of* bodies. But signify what, exactly? Genzken's and Hardy's armies of wearers confront the question of artistic assemblage with that of dressing, and use it to wrestle free spaces of association in the process.

**"clothes are both extremely expressive and hopelessly mute"**



Isa Genzken, "Schauspieler", 2013. Full colour image and credit, jump to page 49

Clothes, Barthes saw—like man-made objects in general—are tricky semantic vehicles because they persist in existing, "somewhat *against* us"<sup>2</sup> While man-made objects are primarily understood through their function, Barthes insisted that they serve, just as importantly, as vehicles of meaning: "the object ... serves some purpose but it also serves to communicate information; we might sum it up by saying that there is always a meaning which *overflows* the object's use."<sup>3</sup> Clothes keep us warm, dry, covered from nudity—but this always coexists with a *persistent signifying*. This semantic process is initiated, Barthes argued, the very moment an object is encountered and consumed by society, as it enters the exchange between people as a communication device. Naturally, costume and dress were embraced early on by semioticians as semantic vehicles in their own right, with the possibility of indicating salient information about wearers such as age, gender, social status, class, region, nationality, religion, etc.<sup>4</sup> Even Barthes' own description of object semanticization inadvertently evokes the notion of dress:

"all objects which belong to a society have a meaning. To find objects without meaning, we must imagine objects which are altogether improvised; now to tell the truth, no such things can be found; a famous page of Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind* tells us that *bricolage*, the invention of the object by a *bricoleur*, by an amateur, is itself the seeking-out and the imposition of a meaning upon the object; in order to find absolutely improvised objects, we should have to proceed to completely asocial states; we can imagine that a tramp, for example, improvising footwear out of newspaper, produces a perfectly "free" object; but even this is not so—very quickly, this newspaper will become precisely the *sign* of the bum."<sup>5</sup>

Yves-Alain Bois evokes this passage in an essay on Isa Genzken, commenting on her frivolous and seemingly unstoppable absorption of consumerist materials into her works of assemblage. Bois, however, approaches the abundance of found "semantic objects" (all objects being already semantic) in Genzken's work as bordering towards a *collapse* of meaning, evoking "the semantic *horror vacui* of objects (their incapacity to expunge meaning) [within] the practice of bricolage."<sup>6</sup> As a postmodern "bag-lady of the 21st century," Genzken's sculptures "courts (and comments upon) a situation of *overabundance*. If she is a bag lady, she is one that has the means to purchase the goods (often made of plastic) that, aggressively stripping them of their use, she will vandalize and

**"se défilier"**

2 Roland Barthes, "Semantics of the Object" in *The Semiotic Challenge*. Richard Howard trans. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1988), p. 180

3 *Ibid.*, p. 182

4 Petr Bogatyrev, "Costume as Sign" in *Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik, eds. Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributions*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1984), p. 13

5 Barthes, 1988, p. 183

6 Yves-Alain Bois, "The Bum and the Architect" in Lisa Lee ed. *October Files: /Isa Genzken* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005) p. 164

smear in her assemblages. She is a voracious consumer, but one who is at war with the merchandise: all she buys—even the most expensive design objects—she immediately declares as trash.”<sup>7</sup> Echoing Bois, Hal Foster reads her work as symbolizing a kind of “madness under advanced capitalism” characterized by its “commodity junkspace;”<sup>8</sup> a junkspace that rapidly encroaches on the autonomous space of sculpture and its mythicized minimalist objecthood. Finally, art critic Walter Robinson refers to Genzken’s fashioned *Schauspieler* sculptures variably as “schizo-consumerist” and “psychically abandoned”—“a lyrical reaction to the world as an irrational, destructive system.”<sup>9</sup>

In this Baudrillardian treatment, Genzken’s dressed figures are unpacked as little more than quasi-subjects emerging from the meaningless void of skitzo-capitalism where all signs except that of accumulation are lost. The signification of clothes “imploding” onto itself evokes Baudrillard’s earlier argument of a post-structuralist semiotics, in which signs take up a purely self-referential function to ultimately transcend any meaning. In *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976), his scathing critique of post-war consumerism in France, Baudrillard outlined the dead-end of fashion semiotics specifically: “[i]n fashion, he writes, “as in the code, signifieds come unthreaded [se défilier], and the parades of the signifier [les défilés du significant] no longer lead anywhere... All cultures, all sign systems, are exchanged and combined in fashion, they contaminate each other, bind ephemeral equilibria, where the machinery breaks down, where there is nowhere any meaning [sens]. Fashion is the pure speculative stage in the order of signs.”<sup>10</sup>

But do Genzken’s *actors* really signify nothing but the collapse of meaning in the age of consumption? Is this what is represented by Genzken when she arranges two male figures around a harp, both dressed in unbuttoned knock-off Burberry shirts (revealing their muscular chests), clown pants, a make-shift semi-detachable skirt of a vinyl tablecloth, and a hat? Or by a female figure standing stoically naked by herself, body-painted in white and her hair done up, wearing nothing but skiing gloves and two birds on her shoulders? Through their carefully assembled ensembles, these figures seem too particular to represent chaos or junk, but rather, come across as distinct quasi-subjects, as *characters*. They are *outfitted*, as Philipp Ekardt offers in a counter-response to Bois and Foster, pointing to the active and crucial practice of dressing, which long has been dismissed or ignored in art history as its own form of production (artistic or otherwise). In Genzken’s series, Ekardt finds through clothing construction workers, strange children, and glimpses of subcultural nightlife, as well as more intertextual references to art history or other bodies of work within her oeuvre.<sup>11</sup> Rather than re-asserting the “pure” space of sculpture, in which the void of schizo-consumerism may be symbolically and appropriately staged through the technique of assemblage, Ekardt sees rich formal references to personal, artistic, and economic biography, and ultimately to the proposal of *outfit-*

“queer Brooklyn  
circa 2002”



Isa Genzken, *Untitled*, 2015.  
Full colour image and credit,  
jump to page 48

7 Ibid, p. 166

8 Hal Foster, “Fantastic Destruction” in Lee ed., 2005, p. 198

9 Walter Robinson, “On Isa Genzken at MoMA and the Schizoconsumerist Aesthetic” on Artspace.com, January 2014, artspace.com

10 Philipp Ekardt, “Isa Genzken’s Dressed Up Assemblage” on Frieze.com. Via frieze.com

11 Ibid

ting as a form of production, *as work*. Outfitting, as a kind of strange, often illegitimated cousin of assemblage, is not only meaningful—it is *intentional*, *strategic*, and able to emit clear semiotic messages through the coded space of style.<sup>12</sup>

## Style, Identity: Clothes as Image

“This blanket expression that you shouldn’t judge a person by their clothes is ridiculous to me. Every article of clothing is so loaded with signifiers, I don’t know how you can help but make up stories about people and their desires based on what they wear.”— K8 Hardy<sup>13</sup>

Clothes as a legitimate semiotic device surround the work and language around K8 Hardy to a much greater extent than that of Genzken. Her work, spanning video, sculpture, publishing, and performance, has been referred to as analyzing “the social play and political function of dress,”<sup>14</sup> investigating the interaction between clothes, dressing, and identity performance. The artist’s own biography—a Texas lesbian, and a former stylist, with a hunch for thrifting and passion for dress-up—spill over into much of the writing of her work, which engages not only the social uses of clothes but its implication in the larger socio-economic context of fashion as an industry and mode of communication. Indeed, Hardy’s work embraces clothes as a marker of autobiography and identity but does so subversively: her 82-minute video *Outfitmentary* (2001–2012/2016), for example, sketches a portrait of the artist by bringing together 10 years of her outfits, recorded on casual intervals on a webcam in her bedroom. Ensembles range from casual (jeans and a pink sweatshirt, white velcro sneakers) to ornamented (fluorescent dress, suit-trench coat, fedora, pink skirt and silk polka-dot blouse, a hat with mourning veil), and in the process, as critic Sara Marcus observes, intermittently lock assemblages of pieces to form precise indicators of identity such as: “western dame;” “punk gamine;” “butch dandy;” “preppy vacationer;” “Weimar rebel;” and “queer Brooklyn circa 2002.”<sup>15</sup> In this process, the assemblage of garments produces not configurations of capitalist trash but images of style, signifying things so specific as “butch,” “rebel,” or “Brooklyn queer.”

However, Marcus notes how in *Outfitmentary*, “[g]radually [Hardy’s] looks become less categorizable as if assembling coherent teams of garments had become too easy, and the trick now would be to produce looks that had no precedent at all.” Clothes as an indicator of stable identities is notoriously as a discourse, not only in art



K8 Hardy, *Docudrama*, 2016.  
Courtesy the artist and Reena Spaulings, Los Angeles

12 See my own text on style: Jeppe Ugelvig, “The Bastard Art of Styling,” *Viscose* Issue 1, 2021.

13 Guy Trebay, “Playing Dress Up for Keeps,” in *The New York Times*, September 30, 2009. nytimes.com

14 Ibid

15 Sara Marcus, “DURATIONAL FASHION: Sara Marcus on K8 Hardy’s ‘Outfitmentary’” in *Texte Zur Kunst* Issue No. 102 / June 2016. Accessed via textezurkunst.de

but in fashion criticism too, as well as the older institutions of costume history. Pushing against easy readings of styled bodies as determined identities, Hardy thrusts her work towards incoherence, disrupting any stable relationship between signifier and signified. She does so exactly like Genzken—through *outfitting*, the act of dressing. This semiotic transgression extended into her contribution to the 2012 Whitney Biennial *Untitled Runway*, where Hardy sent models down the runway in shrunken t-shirts, cut-up princess dresses, trodden-out sneakers, and a variety of found objects-as-accessories, ensembles that would come to directly transfer onto her *Docudrama* series of mannequin sculptures in 2016. In the latter, the live performance is fixed as permanent three-dimensional sculpture, and this fixity only highlights further the lack of any easily recognizable characters in her sculptures—only fractured meanings remain, produced from the juxtaposition of garments into outfits.

Outfitting—as a sub-gerne of assemblage—conjure a kind of semiotic whirlwind in that it operates in a process of constant self-obstruction and transformation between signifier and signified, of materials, garments, bodies, and their juxtaposition. They do not produce cohesive images as much as they produce *flows* or *economies* of meaning, to borrow the language of David Joselit. In his short 2014 essay “Against Representation,” Joselit calls for a re-evaluation of our fundamental *iconographic* approach to images, wherein the relationship between signifier and signified is collectively identified and permanently fixed;

“We make a false equation—an *exchange*—between a finite quantum of matter and unique images... in fact, artworks generate an unending sequence of meanings by formatting configurations of image flows: They establish a dynamic situation rather than locking a signifier to a signified.”<sup>17</sup>

In a process of semiotic *flow*, where either all signifiers in a shared space cannot be grasped simultaneously or their signified is partially or fully missing, a work of art—just like a good outfit—escapes any one, stable representation *as* image, but constantly produces and transmits *fractured* images in a process of constant renewal. This re-configured concept of *image flow* serves as an alternative to Baudrillard’s argument of fashion’s over-signification collapsing onto itself. Within fashion studies, too, Baudrillard’s theory of total “unthreaded signification” has been critiqued for its blanket assessment, an analysis of clothes, which, like that of Barthes, was derived mainly from the fashion industry’s literal image-production, as found in magazines and advertising. Baudrillard and his followers confuse the fragmentation of sartorial code with its disappearance, and forget that variety and incongruity of styles are not inherently meaningless or ambiguous, but rather coded to be understood primarily or exclusively by those who share or are initiated into giv-



K8 Hardy, *Docudrama*, 2016.  
Courtesy the artist and Reena Spaulings, Los Angeles

16 Marcus, 2016

17 Joselit, 2014, p. 94

en semiotic contexts.<sup>18</sup> If in one end, Genzken re-asserts meaning (however private or niche it may be) in the outfitting of her subjects, Hardy’s deconstructive approach to outfitting disrupts the “modern” iconographic fixity between garments to identity in the other to allow for a more explorative investigation into clothes’ potential to simultaneously signify and distort. Together, their work insists that dressing is neither random nor indexical; neither representational nor abstract. Rather, dressing is a dynamic process that touches the edges of semiotics itself, one that acknowledges the often strategic impermanence of signifying via the body.

### Garment as *objet trouvé*

So in both the cases of Genzken and Hardy, we return to the fundamental question: how do we understand the meaning of clothes? If Genzken’s *actors* express more than mere capitalist junkspace, and if Hardy’s *documents* express more than mere identitarian imagery, what *is it* that is expressed through these found garments when assembled and outfitting by the artists? What both practices hint at is a kind of *inaccessibility* to the signification of clothes, belonging as they do to vast circuits of consumer culture that are themselves ungraspable, in the sense that they could never successfully be signified. The opacity of fashion signification and the inaccessibility of the meaning of garments is of central concern to Hardy; in an interview, she accounts for her love of shopping and thrifting, a practice that brings her cross-country in her search for sculptural raw-materials in second-hand stores, which she explains satisfies a long-standing “narrative mania.” “I’m interested in the weirdest things. I like to find cool daywear, of course, but I’m more interested in bizarre pieces, clothes that *don’t make sense*,”<sup>19</sup> she writes (my italics): in the distributional shake-up of being passed on to other hands, the signification of clothing is lost and turned away from the world of information, even from the *assembleur*, who encounters the object standing outside its former signification (its history, its origin, its previous users) and must instead narrate “from it” as a biography-less object. “I love looking at clothes, thinking about who wore them, looking at the textiles, the tag,”<sup>20</sup> Hardy explains, as she actively searches and interprets the semantics of clothes without any particular end-goal or “representation” in mind. Here, the found object of clothing functions as a narrative pro for both the artist and the viewer.

Genzken, too, is a known thrifter and shopper, notorious for amassing huge loads of material from anywhere from dollar to department stores. The garments that appear in her *Schauspieler*-series constitute a mix of the artist’s own clothes and found or purchased items, which, similarly to Hardy, have attracted the artist for reasons unknown. In presentation of her clusters of actors, Genzken stages an environment resembling a theatre or film set where bodies are present in various stages of dress-up, but where the script or narrative remains unknown. An



K8 Hardy, *Docudrama*, 2016.  
Courtesy the artist and Reena Spaulings, Los Angeles

18 Diana Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 199—as cited by Efrat Tseelon, “Jean Baudrillard—Post-modern Fashion as the End of Meaning” in Agnes Rocamora, Anneke Smelik eds., *Thinking Through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), p. 215

19. Trebay, 2009.

20 Ibid

outfit consisting of a beaten-up varsity jacket spray-painted on the back with the letters "NY," paired with red skinny jeans, a floral crown, and an accompanying purple Hookah, certainly feels meaningful, loaded with narrative—yet no cohesive image or story is offered, and the meaning remains fractured, inaccessible, private, lost. Caroline Busta writes of Genzken's actors; "we might instead take this figure as refusing to communicate.... Considering information as a currency and that post-Fordist capitalism demands that everyone communicate as fluidly as possible, maybe this is what a radical body is supposed to look like."<sup>21</sup> As Joselit argues, *not communicating* as a stable, identifiable image can be understood as an act of resistance to the expected communicability of information of bodies under advanced capitalism.

Assemblage, then—including and especially dressing—reflects more than anything the assembleur's own curiosity about, and attraction to, objects and their roles (semantic and functional) in life. In her writing on Genzken, Letizia Ragaglia writes that her sculptures possess "a sort of umbilical cord linking them to reality, a physical relationship that in its essence comes very close to the ready-made, and is removed from the concept of artistic 'invention' in general: her art is not about coming up with new forms but 'listening to' and channeling the complexity of the real world."<sup>22</sup> This process of *listening* or *decoding*, deeply subjective and reliant on a variety of conditions and viewing positions, involves an active and self-conscious process of analysing one's own conscious and subconscious response to clothes. The "narrative mania" attached to clothes encompasses the desire to grasp a piece of clothing's life from production and exchange to use, loss and rediscovery; the lives it was imbricated with; and yes, even its repurposing as sculptural material. Outfitting stages the garment as a kind of *objet petit a*; it is forever unknowable and immensely fascinating.<sup>23</sup>

In a 1964 essay, Barthes wrote that "costume is a kind of writing and has the ambiguity of writing;" "the good costume must be material enough to signify and transparent enough not to turn its signs into parasites."<sup>24</sup> If outfitting is adopted by artists as a form of artistic production, it is the duty of viewers and critics to develop a vocabulary, grammar, and syntax for decoding them.<sup>25</sup> Below and beyond the obvious signification of clothes lies a deeper and vaster field that marks acts of choice, desire, (self-)identification, and the very ritual of dress, and these lenses must be incorporated into a more intimate study of clothing as a sculptural material. However, the eternally ambiguous and *irrational* nature of dress must always be accounted for in a study of clothes: it reminds us that the play with fixed meanings, the rejection of permanent representation, is the ultimate act of freedom.

21 Caroline Busta, "Body Doubles" in Isabelle Graw, Daniel Birnbaum, Nikolas Hirsch, eds. *Art and Subjecthood: The Return of the Human Figure in Semiocapitalism* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011).

22 Letizia Ragaglia, "To the Rhythm of Reality: Isa Genzken's Faithful Record of the World" in Isa Genzken and Letizia Ragaglia eds. *Isa Genzken*. (Milano; Köln: Mousse Publishing, 2010), p. 19

23 See Rosalind Krauss, "Objet (Petit) A" in Helen Molesworth, *Part Object Part Sculpture*. (Columbus, Ohio: University Park, PA; Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University; Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), p. 84-91

24 Roland Barthes, "The Diseases of Costume" in *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p. 42

25 On this topic, see: Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*. (New York: Random House, 1981)

Issy Wood

## ON CLOTHES

Whether you consider yourself fashion-literate or a fashion Luddite, clothes are important. They are the very definition of frivolity but also the most fundamental—really it's the only thing setting us apart from Adam and Eve. This brings me to shame, in which I'm well-versed. Sudden Biblical awareness of nudity, I'm afraid, is no match for modern body dysmorphia. Perhaps the former sets the scene for the latter, but contemporary clothing's ability to flaunt or hide a physique depending on the wearer's mood, sense of self, bloatedness, food intake, body temperate, occasion, and motive means there are a million ways to wear what we wear. I remember being told after my first stint in an eating disorder hospital that it was a good idea to burn all the clothes that once fit my skeletal frame but that now wouldn't agree with my new force-fed body. The idea was clear, a kind of ceremony to set fire to a bygone era of illness, and to make sure these tiny trousers weren't there taunting me, begging me to starve myself back into them. This is sometimes what happens—we allow clothes to dictate our body shape rather than the other way round. Think of Miranda from SATC's "skinny jeans," the holy grail of lost baby weight, of seemingly instant male desire. Miranda's body changes over numerous episodes and life events but the jeans remain a blameless size 6. Because if something doesn't fit, what are you gonna do, blame Opening Ceremony? "It's really less a case of me not fitting your body," the garment seems to say, "than of your body not fitting me." While not true for everybody, you can see how smoothly a shirt goes from cotton blend to torture chamber.

When I realised I could paint on the clothes I can't or won't wear, suddenly those compulsive insomniac purchases and years of physicians watching my weight climb, fall, climb, fall and having to have a wardrobe for every subtle expansion and contraction, it all mattered less. I can spin all the misery into gold. Often when wearing clothes wears you out, the best clothes are ones you don't have to wear at all.