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FABRIC ARCHITECTURE: BODY IN MOTION

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida, 2003

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

Making a dress, creating an object for someone else is a simple act of giving to another person. I did not want to decide between an object to wear and one to hang on the wall, so I gave you both, and movement in between. Take a dress off of a wall. Wear it. Put it back on the wall. Repeat it, or not. There is balance in movement of an object between a person and the wall. It is this quietness of balance amongst the sound of movement that I am seeking in my work.

A dress,
let's call it a dress.

On the wall,
hung on a wire hanger

a dress is,
to be worn,
on the body,
outside,
in the street,
alone.

Wire hanger on the wall,
squiggly reminder of the absent body,
of the dress,
outside,
on the body.

Inside,
on the wall of your room,
on the hanger.

A dress,
Let's call it a dress.

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INTRODUCTION

When a dress is placed on a simple wire hanger, on the wall, a different relationship has been created between a person and an object. A person is faced with her second skin. An object can be examined and needed as an object seemingly separate from a person, from the body. It is said 'seemingly' since my belief is that this separation between an object and a person, this separate existence, is not real.

This relationship and the connection are based on need and purpose. A dress does not stop being a dress only because it is removed from the body, or does it? Does it become something entirely different? Does this simple act of placing an object intended to be worn on the wall determine its identity, and what that object is?

An intriguing thing is that a dress can be removed from the wall and placed on the body at any time, then returned to the wall again. This simple act of 'change of role,' is one of the driving forces in my work. The dress is both and neither at the same time, an object of use, and an object of 'non-use.' Both of these possibilities exist at the same time. One does not exclude the other even if one is temporarily chosen.

When the dress is removed from the hanger on the wall, the hanger remains. The dress is placed on the body, but the hanger always remains in place, in waiting. It is left on the wall as to speak of the absence of clothing, absence of the person and the body. In this absence, both the dress and the wearer are still present. It is not possible to look at an empty hanger on the wall and not think of the clothes, a dress that could be hanging there. It is also not possible to look at the dress hanging on the wall and not think of the person, just as it is not possible to think of a human body and not think of the clothes even if the

clothes are absent. The 'absence of' can speak louder than the actual object being physically present before us.

What is referred to as movement in my work? It is a person setting an object in motion, whether the movement happens between a person and the wall or in a simple act of a person wearing a dress. Without an opportunity of human contact, the possibility of motion is lost.

When and where all three, the person, the object, and the non-object converge and meet at a place of balance, my work is complete. *Non-object* simply means that something does not have a practical, physical use at the moment. For example, a dress hanging on the wall is still a dress to be worn, but it does not serve that purpose at the specific moment.

My work, my dress, is built to fit a human body comfortably. However, it is important to me to 'push' the form of a dress to the limit, where it will still be functional but on a formal, aesthetic level, barely recognizable as a dress. An ideal object, a dress, is the one that can assume its own life once placed on a wall. Still, when it is worn on a body, it can assume a different identity, a different function.

If an object can freely move from a 'non-object' on the wall to an object of use on the body it is in balance. It is complete. It is my goal to construct such objects which cannot be, will not be, neither functional nor nonfunctional, but rather both and neither at the same time, but always needed in the real life of a person.

ARCHITECTURE

Something that the artist Andrea Zittel said in an interview with Allan McCollum had a great impact on my work. These are her words: *“Almost any other animal that you can think of is already biologically equipped for survival in the world. We are so fragile that without architecture and clothing, our bodies could not survive. Maybe we are like hermit crabs that are always looking for their shells. Maybe there is a human instinct to be always searching for an extension of one's body.”*

One of the reasons my work relates to and is influenced by Modern Architecture is that a need-based relationship between a person and his clothing is exactly the same relationship that exists between a person and his living space. Both the clothing and the living space are simply containers for holding a body, a person, and the life lived inside. Both are simply need-based objects. We are naked unless purposely nude. We are homeless unless we intentionally live without a home.

Why does my work relate to architecture more than art? The reason is that an object of art has limited use, and it tends to exist on the other side of every day life, in the world of contemporary art and finally art history. A building, for example, can be a sculpture in a landscape and an object of use at the same time. It can stand alone, however its primary intention is that it is to be occupied by people.

Finally, just like a house is not only a building but also a space, a container, designated and designed to hold, shelter, contain a life within, such is the role of clothing, but on a smaller and thus more personal scale. Clothing is the architecture for the body, an extension and a reflection of one's persona, a way to communicate to the outside

world *who we are*. As a basic elemental human need it houses a body, protects from the elements, reveals, hides, transforms, and speaks. My intention is to explore and exploit the architecture of fabric and the possibility of motion and sculptural stillness of a dress once paired with a human body.



Figure 1: Ways I Dress (Digital Photograph; 2008)

MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Much like Modern Architecture rests on functionalism, rationalism and minimalism of form, so does my work. My form is rooted in geometry, mainly the rectangle and the square. Just as Modern Architecture has been criticized for its 'sterility,' some may see my work as 'impersonal' since it is devoid of any ornament and surface detail is limited. Yet, it is not 'sterile.' It is balanced, quiet, and free from the unnecessary; taken to the simplest form that remains functional.

Since a person and an object-a dress in this case-should be in balance, an object should never overpower a person. It is rather an experience; a relationship of the two coming together that is taking place. Why is this establishment of balance important? Because it is my understanding that a dress is not only something to cover a body with: It is yet another human language. Even if it is not widely perceived as such, it does 'speak' and it is 'heard.' Even if it is not intentional, wearing something, anything, is like producing a sound. If you make a sound, it will be heard provided that there is someone listening.

Communication is not only initiated on someone's face, in a gesture, or a smile: It is in what and how a body is covered as well. It is in fact a language of 'second skin.' Such language, of course, is deeply rooted in tradition, culture, and ethnicity. However, my intention is to offer a more universal way of speaking to one another, one that does not immediately remind of a specific place, time, or an isolated belonging to a certain group or people. Thus a simple geometric form of something to wear, a dress, is like a modern building that does not belong to any specific place, thus it belongs everywhere.



Figure 2: Fold III Dress (Digital Photograph; 2008)

DECONSTRUCTIVISM

One reason for creating new different objects, inventing and reinventing their purpose, is that the old and the previous is not functional or sufficient anymore. Is anything truly new? Closer to the truth would be that all the building blocks are just the same as ever, what exists exists, and what is new are the combinations of preexisting elements. Nothing is ever so new, but placing two unlikely things together just might create a new experience, invite a new relationship.

In architecture, Deconstructivism is a development of Postmodern Architecture that began in the late 1980s. It moves away from clean, geometrical, minimal form and into seemingly chaotic, distorted, and in the case of my work changeable and changing objects of wear, thus allowing a person to choose, as well as adjusting to one's mood and/or immediate need. One of the definitions of Deconstructivism is a stimulating unpredictability and a controlled chaos.

Clothing that has a disjointed, disassembled look, has been a great influence on me. Designers like Tom Scott, with his collection of seemingly 'backward' knitwear, or Comme Des Garçons with their discombobulated goose down-filled dresses have always been intriguing and mind-opening to me. What Deconstructivism did for architecture Comme Des Garçons did for clothing design.

Deconstructivism takes Modern Architecture and deconstructs it. It takes the well established, takes it apart and puts it back together in a controlled chaos kind of way. Deconstructed clothing follows the same pattern. Well-proven functional and visual language is broken into basic forms and reassembled into something brave, new,

unexpected, but always something that is functional.

In my work, the interest is not in constructing a dress devoid of function. My constant intention is to push an object to the edge of function without sacrificing the comfort of a person wearing it. The further it is pushed formally, the more independent its life on the wall will be.

When designers of Comme Des Garçons warp the human form, the intention is to transform the wearer. When an object, a dress built by me is distorted, it is for these reasons; to change the person wearing it, offer a new experience, a new relationship between a person and her second skin as well as with the outside world, and to remove, as far as possible an object of practical use, a dress, a vest, from its function as a piece of clothing, and give it a seemingly separate existence on the wall of someone's room.

Finally, the object is free by its treatment to go back and forth from being an object of use to being an object of non-use at any time, as chosen by a person involved. What an object does for a person, what experience it offers, is equally if not more important than its aesthetic value alone. When a dress is hanging on the wall it can be examined from the outside. When it is being worn, it can be experienced from the inside, as an extension of one's body, one's persona, and one's second skin.



Figure 3: Ways II Dress (Digital Photograph; 2008)



Figure 4: Ways II Dress (Digital Photograph; 2008)

RECONSTRUCTED CLOTHING

Reconstructed Clothing by definition is simply any piece of clothing constructed from an existing piece by literally dismantling an original dress and using the actual pieces to create a new one. It is not to be confused with Deconstructivism.

Reconstructing method would either produce finished, wearable objects, or it would be an exercise resulting in making new patterns for later pieces to be made completely from scratch. Even though the process can be controlled to a certain extent, there is always room for the new and the unexpected.

This approach does not isolate me and my work from other designers, especially my contemporaries, in fact it brings me closer to a large group of people working in this manner. It is yet another sign of our time, our reaction to mass production, and vast quantities of clothing available, both current and vintage, and an answer to this generation's search for identity and a new way to communicate.

It is also recycling on a small scale, meaning that artists and designers, who apply this method of working, use and reuse old clothing to create new and thus recycle. It is especially beneficial when it comes to synthetic, non-organic materials that do not decompose naturally. For some recycling is what initiates and drives their work. For others, like me, it is more a matter of accessibility and practicality.



Figure 5: All Day II Dress (Digital Photograph; 2007)



Figure 6: Blue II Dress (Digital Photograph; 2007)

STREET FASHION

What is considered Street Fashion? Shoichi Aoki, the author of “Fruits,” and “Fresh Fruits” books, says this: *“My interest in fashion stems from the way people express themselves through the clothes they wear. It doesn’t matter what kind of clothes individual designers make. What is important are one’s thoughts and the ability to express them, one’s life and its relationship to the environment. When such elements are combined they create a sculpture. This sculpture I call street fashion.”*

Prior to 2002, Shoichi Aoki spent a few years, documenting the street fashion of Tokyo. As a result he published “Fruits” and “Fresh Fruits.” These have been an important influence in my work and my attitude towards design and its role in every day life.

I do not consider what I do fashion. To me it is far more important what an object, a dress, does for a person and their life, if anything, and how a person uses a piece of clothing than what that object is. This goes to further establish the belief that clothes are in fact just an extension of a person, one’s second skin, and yet another way we communicate. As such, their role is closer to sculpture than fashion, as fashion manufactures a new necessity, a trend, every season, instead of letting a person discover her true need and how to best satisfy it in real life.

Today, street fashion is continuously being documented through countless blogs, online magazines, and websites throughout the world. This phenomenon is a sign of a common need of a generation, our global connectedness, and a search for a common language. How else could it be explained that youth of mostly any place on Earth would

act in the same way, at the same time, using their clothing in the most avant-garde way?

MATERIALS

Almost any material can be used to make a dress, however the question of practicality, and the actual ability to wear it in real life immediately comes to mind. Since the purpose of the dress is both functional and non-functional, fabric is an ideal choice.

A dress has to be wearable, thus any unconventional materials are eliminated from the start. Fabric can easily shift an object from one that is architectural, inert and motionless in the absence of a human body, to one of a moving sculpture in the presence of a person. In my own work, any other material would be inadequate.

From the beginning of its making, it is a material made to be in contact with human skin. Whether it's natural, like cotton, or man-made like polyester, its purpose does not change. This very basic, elemental human need is what interests me when working with fabric.

When it comes to choosing specific fabric, color is the first deciding factor. My palette is muted; my colors tend to fall anywhere between black and white, with the occasional splash of primary colors, red, blue, and yellow.

The *make* of fabric is the next deciding factor. It must be wearable and comfortable against the body, but also its origin and the way of production are very important to me. Even though my current collection of fabric goes from all natural, to natural synthetic blends, or almost entirely synthetic fabrics, in the future my plan is to switch to all natural organic and recycled materials.

The way in which the fabric is produced also plays a big role. If the material were

made using improper, inhumane work practices, it would not be used in my work.

However, it is difficult if not impossible to know when buying fabric through a standard supplier whether this is the case or not. One of the solutions is buying fabric from domestic manufacturers, especially the growing number of small producers who apply sustainable work practices as well as produce fully natural organic fabric.



Figure 7: Da Da Jacket, Bubble Skirt, Tank (Digital Photograph; 2008)

PATTERN AND PROCESS

Currently, all the pieces are constructed by me, from pattern making and cutting, to sewing and hand finishing. This simply being the state of my work at this time does not exclude the possibility of someone else working with me through the production process in the future.

Being self-taught in the areas of sewing and pattern making my process is unorthodox yet simple and functional. First a mock piece-a dress or a blouse-is made, following is the pattern, and from that pattern an actual piece is built. At times a mock dress will end up being the final dress as well, depending on the quality of finish.

Patterns are made using inexpensive, recycled, brown paper that is both strong and durable, unlike the conventional pattern paper that tends to be costly and short lived. My process of sewing is quite simple as well. Major industrial tool employed is my old Singer sewing machine with only a few stitch and feature options. However this does not present a problem since most of my dresses are double-faced, or the edge of the garment is finished with a simple threefold topstitch.

A threefold edge simply means folding the edge of fabric inward three times and applying a simple straight stitch on top, creating a clean looking finish. This technique works well with dresses that are not reversible, however with dresses that can be worn inside-out, double-faced method is applied.

What is considered double-faced? Simply, it means using the top layer of fabric and the bottom one, the lining, and connecting them from the inside of the garment, then finishing part of the edge by hand. This method is not only practical when attempting to

get a clean edge dress, something that is very important to me, but also it offers multiple color possibilities.

An ideal example of this kind of work is the ‘Da Da Winter’ jacket. The jacket is a gray fleece and red velvet one made for Fall or Winter. It is fully reversible and versatile with more than four different ways of wear, open or closed, half sleeves folded to expose the shoulders, *boxy* look in gray or red, or *fitted* look in both colors. For the *fitted* look, it is to be turned upside down and the excess fabric on top around the neck is to be folded downward to create a collar as well as to keep the jacket closed. The jacket has two sets of metal snaps for closure, which are functional when the boxy look is selected. It is a soft, comfortable, light, and yet warm fall jacket or winter season vest, perfectly flexible while worn, and ideally still while on the wall.



Figure 8: Da Da Winter jacket (Digital Photograph; 2008)



Figure 9: Da Da Winter jacket (Digital Photograph; 2008)



Figure 10: Da Da Winter jacket (Digital Photograph; 2008)

RECTANGLE

To further illustrate my work, additional items of wear are introduced as to describe the formal qualities and practical applications of the different kinds of objects created.

What if making an object, a dress, would be more like designing a building, with a life it will contain inside in mind, but still having one of its own just hanging there on the wall? Fabric architecture, in constant balance between the sculpture and a dress, was an intriguing possibility to me for a long time. In a row of answers that followed, first of many dresses and tops were built, starting with ‘Opening Night Dress,’ followed by ‘Rectangle Dress,’ and ‘Dada’ and ‘Pagoda’ blouses.

‘Opening Night Dress’ is constructed out of four rectangular pieces of fabric, two of the same color rectangles make a surface, and another two rectangles of a different color make a lining, light weight gray blue cotton blend for top layer, white silk blend for the lining. Shoulder straps are made out of ribbed lemon yellow synthetic blend.

The dress is simply built out of rectangles, no pattern is being generated, only a set of instructions with measurements and the steps to follow. Thus, it is easy to reproduce, and no fabric is being discarded in the process either, since the rectangle is the raw shape all manufactured fabric comes in. Only details that remove this object from a rectangle are one simple fold on the right side of the dress, and a single deep pocket on the left.



Figure 11: Opening Night Dress (Digital Photograph; 2007)



Figure 12: Opening Night Dress (Digital Photograph; 2007)

‘Rectangle Dress’ is a combination of a rectangle-shaped bottom part of the dress and a trapeze-shaped top part of the dress, with an elastic waist separating the two shapes. Fabric is a transparent, synthetic and cotton knit blend. ‘Rectangle Dress’ is effortless and light with a loose fit ideal for layering. Edges of the dress are left untreated and unfinished, reinforcing the light wear. Color is a neutral beige resembling sand.

Formally, my interest has been in leaving a garment almost square, rectangular in shape, since that is the raw shape fabric comes in, so not much is discarded. Moving further from this original idea, my intention was also to see how far a simple rectangle form would go with folding of fabric instead of cutting it. The resulting piece was an interesting start to further blouses and dresses based on this concept.

The first one, 'Dada,' could be worn back to front or inside out, since there is no real front, back, or the face of the blouse. The second one 'Pagoda,' has a collar on one side of the neckline only, that can be worn either up or down, according to mood, and also back to front as well. The fabrics used are both knit jersey blends, both light and comfortable against the skin. Colors are soft smoke gray of ‘Dada’ and a charcoal black of ‘Pagoda.’

Finally, my goal is to offer versatile, reversible pieces of clothing that can be easily combined with others in order to reduce the number of pieces needed to comprise one’s wardrobe. In turn this would make one’s daily life and especially travel that much easier.



Figure 13: Rectangle Dress (Digital Photograph; 2007)



Figure 14: Dada Top (Digital Photograph; 2007)



Figure 15: Pagoda Top (Digital Photograph; 2007)

TRAVELING BAG

‘Traveling Bag’ is created for travel. It is constructed out of sun-dyed, sun-bleached fabric. It is fairly durable, the design is a simple square with two small square tabs at the bottom of the lid, and it can be worn in two ways at least. It folds to conserve space, and it is ideal for traveling.

Formally, it is built out of sun-bleached fabric. The color black, as an initial color of fabric was removed but the repetitive exposure to sun, resulting in a medium sand brown color fabric. Conceptually, it is the recording of sun exposure, a recording of time on the surface of the fabric. It is a visual and a concrete representation of travel traveled by a person.

‘Traveling Bag’ hanging on a wall of a the gallery can and should be at any time removed, borrowed if you will, from the wall and used as an actual bag for traveling. Thus additional time spent in travel, in a direct contact with a person, exposed to sun, will result in a visible change of the surface of the object.

The bag can then be returned to the gallery wall, or preferably to a wall in someone’s room, only to be removed and taken on a trip again in the future. This act is repeated and decided upon by a wearer to his liking. Or if it is displayed at the gallery, a public space rather than a personal one, a set of instructions is set in place directing anyone on how to ‘borrow,’ wear and return the object to the gallery only so it can be ‘borrowed’ into the ‘real life’ again.

In this case, the ‘Traveling Bag’ is constructed out of a synthetic, non-natural, non-organic, material. It makes the bag more durable, however, unless destroyed, it will not

easily naturally decompose. This presents a problem when it comes to sustainability, as we are witnessing enormous quantities of non-natural material clothing being produced and at almost an equal rate being disposed of. My solutions to this problem are following:

1. Use of organic, eco-friendly materials.
2. Use of recycled materials.
3. Construction of 'need-based' and aesthetically innovative objects in order to extend their life span. My hope is that such objects would be held onto, much like today we preserve an Eames chair.



Figure 16: Traveling Bag (Digital Photograph; 2007)

MUSTARD TIE

‘Mustard Tie’ is a tie to be worn to an office or any other work environment, or best yet to a job interview. There are two kinds of ‘Mustard Tie’ made by me: one out of pale pink silk with diagonal stripes, another made out of white cotton with dots. The ties are handmade, appropriating a classical modern tie pattern, with stripe and dot designs hand printed in yellow mustard.

When not on a hanger, on a wall, ‘Mustard Tie’ should be worn. If and when exposed to sun, the bright yellow of the mustard will gradually fade and almost disappear from the surface of the fabric. The longer exposure to sun, and the more a person would wear the tie, the less color would be retained on the fabric.

Why mustard? Since it is such an American condiment that mostly anyone living in the Western World can relate to, it was an easy choice. Also, my intention was to use food, and print with food on clothing, as a comment on a stain. Mustard was the most convenient edible substance to use for practical reasons as well, being that it is easy to screen print with, does not clog the screen, and the color is quite vibrant.

Finally, all the materials used to create this object, the mustard tie, like silk, cotton, and mustard are completely biodegradable. Unless purposely preserved, these materials will eventually fully decompose.

Another simpler reason is that it is just a funny thought of, for example, going to a job interview wearing the mustard printed tie. Not only was this funny, it raised questions such as why are we so disturbed at the sight of stained clothing? Was this reaction purely human and instinctive, rather than inherit and cultural, and whether

people in other places of the world react to it in the same way?

In sum, 'Mustard Tie' is simply about transformation. Also, that everything is temporary, and that there was this urge in me to make objects that will not be, cannot be sorted into a category, such as art, or non-art, but always objects of use. Simply because it is my belief that once something is categorized as art there is an immediate separation from other objects, but mostly from the possibility to use such an object in real life.

Experimenting like this brings my work closer to the one of Allan Kaprow. Even though he does not produce an object and releases it into the world, his work always rests in real life of people rather than a gallery or a museum life, and it is always short lived, undocumented. Only people involved know it exists. His work has been a great influence in my own work, however my objective is not to negate the art world in an act of anarchy, although maybe to avoid it and simply have an object open and available to as many people as possible.



Figure 17: Stripe Tie (Digital Photograph; 2007)



Figure 18: Dot Tie (Digital Photograph; 2007)



Figure 19: Dot Tie (Digital Photograph; 2007)

OBJECT IN REAL LIFE

When an object, a dress is hanging on the wall, it is available to anyone to take, wear, and return to the hanger on the wall. Here a dress on the wall is not a metaphor of a dress; it is a dress. For the sake of accessibility my work can be displayed in a gallery. Preferably, it will hang on the wall of someone's room, as a part of the actual living space, instead of a simulated one.

An object is made, thus rules are created, a value is assigned, an object is interpreted, and an audience has been served with a meaning. Need is established, while all along the question remains if a relationship between a person and an object does exist in real life? This brings me to an object of use, a dress, and what my definitions of an object, rules in my work, value, meaning, relationship, real life, and need are?

An object in this case is a dress, something to wear, or a bag, a belt, something to use in a close relationship to one's body, in every day life. Rules are simply a set of instructions meant to help establish a relationship between a person and an object. Value is personal and based on an experience in real life. Meaning is personal and based on what an object does for a person. Relationship is either achieved or not. Real life is a life outside of a gallery space. Need is a true need, not a manufactured one; it is discovered. Need either exists or it does not. To clarify, a 'real life' is a life in a reality of a person, not a gallery life, nor a life within the hierarchy of the art history, or the contemporary art world.

Allan McCollum, in a conversation with Andrea Zittel said this: *"People usually speak about art imitating life or life imitating art as if the two were somehow never*

resolvable into a single system.” It has always intrigued me how there is this classification of objects. It is decided if something is or not art. A hierarchy of value and importance is established. Even when broken, it is only done so the next hierarchy can be created. At the end it is still a set order, a closed system. Today’s anarchy is tomorrow’s academia, and so on. The question should not be ‘what it is,’ ‘if it is or not included?’ My question simply is ‘what it does?’ What an object does for a person in real life?

There is a Rolling Stone interview with Keith Haring where he talks about the issue of selling his work, and the question is: “ *Was it hard to accept that the paintings were commodities?*” His answer: “ *Yes, but it’s not that way for everyone. People get something from living with a painting. I love living with paintings.*”

This was a very crucial moment in my work and my life. The question that followed was why not ‘live in’ instead of ‘live with?’ Even though my attitude towards ‘living with’ art has not changed, nor is the concept less meaningful, still it was important to me in my own work to move towards living ‘with’ an object in real life. Thus the idea to have, to construct this object, a dress to live your life in and with opened up, and the act of display on the wall as well as wear on a body came.

This is not an isolated idea by any means. Many other artists, architects, and designers have arrived at this point of thought in their work and life. Andrea Zittel continuously does this in her own work, constructing her systems for living, habitats, uniforms, and aprons. She builds an object to be used by a person in real life, instead of creating something that can be experienced only at an art gallery for a limited amount of time, during an exhibit.

Such an object is not a metaphor, nor it is an experiment. It is real. In my case a dress is not a representation of a dress. It is a dress. A show in a gallery, with dresses hanging on the walls is set up for the sake of introducing my work. A dress assumes its real existence on someone's body, on a wall of somebody's room, in real life of a person involved. My intention is to use a gallery space only as a temporary introductory environment, rather than a real place for my work.

Keith Haring once said he wanted to give art back to people. It is a simple yet profound thought. Instead of bringing people to art, which is essentially what happens at an art gallery, or a museum, art is free to move towards people. Such were Haring's drawings in the subway. They became equally accessible and available to all. Fragile and temporary, they belonged to everyone and no one.

However, the problem arose once Haring's work gained certain notoriety in the art world, and he realized that it was not possible for him to keep drawing on the subway walls any longer, because his work started disappearing. Thus a question of accessibility comes up? How do I make my work accessible to as many people as possible? This brings me to participatory work.

PARTICIPATORY WORK

The term ‘Participatory’ is being borrowed from Allan Kaprow. Even though his work is much different than mine, where he initiates activities, rather than creates objects like me, still he has been an important influence and always a very intriguing person to study.

His work resembles life and rests in every day activities. It is a genuine search for something real to happen, an open experiment, rather than an act meant to attract attention for the sake of attention. In other word, by removing his work from the gallery, or any public space, his intention is not to negate the art world but simply be on the outside of it. As my understanding is, this is not an act of anarchy aimed at the contemporary art scene by Kaprow, but simply an act of finding a real place for his work. These are the reasons why there is such an attraction to his work.

In one of his interviews, Allan Kaprow says following about one of his projects: *“Let’s do something very, very unusual, while seeming to accomplish something rather kindly toward each other that was needed to be done anyway.”* In this case Kaprow talks about an exchanged activity he performed with his friend. They traded their apartment keys and cleaned kitchen floors for each other using their own spit and Q-tips®. To me, it was not so much about the unusual nature of the activity, but more about the real need as Kaprow says to do something that is required in daily life anyway.

Here, the word “need” is a key point, which brings me back to my own work. The clothes are needed. Therefore, it is not what an object is, but rather what it does for a person and how. In Kaprow’s experiment, it was not about the Q-tips® and spit as much

as it was about doing something for someone else, an exchange of an activity in order to give something to another person.



Figure 20: Ways I Dress (Digital Photograph; 2007)

CONCLUSION

Objects constructed by me are supposed to initiate motion, activity if you will, between a person and an object, between a person and their living space, and most importantly amongst the people in every day life. My intent is to use an object as a starting point, a catalyst to create motion, rather than an end product, a sculpture for example, whose only place of existence would be in the gallery. Thus the use of the word 'participatory' simply implies that without human participation and interaction, an object constructed by me would be useless.

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