



International Center of Photography

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media release



Mickalene Thomas, *Portrait of Qusuqzah*, 2008
© Mickalene Thomas, Courtesy Lehmann Maupin, NY



Thorsten Brinkmann, *Hopi Green Holding Kni*, 2006
© Thorsten Brinkmann, Courtesy Evan Mirapaul

Dress Codes: The Third ICP Triennial of Photography and Video

On view from
October 2, 2009
through
January 17, 2010

Media Preview
October 1, 2009
11:30 am–1:00 pm

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The International Center of Photography is proud to present *Dress Codes: The Third ICP Triennial of Photography and Video*, a global survey of today's most exciting and innovative photography and video art. As ICP's signature exhibition—and the only one of its kind in America—this year's Triennial promises to be the most dynamic yet, featuring over 100 recent works by 34 artists from 18 countries. The newly released roster of artists includes such rising stars as Mickalene Thomas, Yto Barrada, Kimsooja, and Thorsten Brinkmann, as well as established artists such as Cindy Sherman, Stan Douglas, and Lorna Simpson. *Dress Codes* opens to the public on October 2, 2009, at the International Center of Photography (1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street), and remains on view through January 17, 2010.

As with previous ICP Triennials, this year's exhibition has a thematic focus: fashion. The artists in *Dress Codes* understand fashion as a form of social communication, and use costume, clothing, and disguise to create a rich visual language filled with specific references to history, culture, gender, and geography. They cast a curious eye on the issues evoked by fashion and the past year's exhibitions: How do we construct the selves that we show to the rest of the world? How is cultural identity or individuality expressed in an era of global culture? How can clothing, beauty, and style be employed to define community, fabricate fantasies, or signal power? And, in the midst of widespread economic crisis, how do we now regard the aesthetic of excess and high style that pervaded the past decade?

The 2009 Triennial marks the culmination of ICP's Year of Fashion—a series of groundbreaking exhibitions that explored fashion photography in its widest social and cultural contexts. Following a series of extraordinarily well-received exhibitions of historical and contemporary fashion photography—such as *Avedon Fashion 1944–2000*, *Edward Steichen: In High Fashion*, *The Condé Nast Years 1923–1937*, and *Weird Beauty: Fashion Photography Now*—*Dress Codes* shifts the spotlight to image-makers who critically examine fashion's relationship to art and other social phenomena.

Against this background, the works that have been selected for *Dress Codes* engage notions of fashion, costume, and personal style in innovative and unexpected ways. The curatorial team responsible for this selection is comprised of Vince Aletti, Kristen Lubben, Christopher Phillips, Carol Squiers, and curatorial assistant Judy Ditner. They will contribute to the exhibition's wide range of educational materials and programs, including tours, lectures, outreach programs, and an online photo gallery, as well as a fully-illustrated exhibition catalogue published by ICP/Steidl. Bringing together photography and video works in a lively mix, it will underscore the new attention being directed to the relation of still and moving images by many artists today.

This exhibition was organized by the International Center of Photography with lead support from the ICP Exhibitions Committee. Additional support was provided by Marjorie and Jeffrey A. Rosen; Artur Walther; The Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts; Mary Ann and Frank Arisman; Peter Guggenheimer; Andrew and Marina Lewin; Étant donnés, the French-American Fund for Contemporary Art, a Program of FACE; the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam; Roberta and Steven Denning; Omar H. Al-Farisi; Agnes Gund; Sandy and Ellen Luger; and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.



The ICP Triennial

The ICP Triennial was established in 2003 with *Strangers*, an exploration of personal estrangement and the social consequences of globalization and diaspora, followed in 2006 by *Ecotopia*, featuring works by leading artists around the theme of environmental change. It is the only recurring exhibition in the United States to focus on international contemporary photography and video, providing an unparalleled opportunity for U.S. audiences to encounter new works by recognized figures and to discover exceptional artists who have not yet received wide attention in this country.

Dress Codes Highlights

Valérie Belin's color portraits of striking but eerily vacant-looking fashion models examine the artifice of the beauty industry. Her unsettling images blur the line between living model and manufactured mannequin.

Clothing becomes a metaphor for concealment in **Yto Barrada's** sequence of photographs of an elderly female smuggler who demonstrates how to transport contraband goods into Morocco.

In the online "virtual world" *Second Life*, **Cao Fei's** avatar China Tracy stars in an elaborately costumed high-fashion shoot. Using in-gallery computer stations, museum visitors will be able to explore Cao Fei's RMB City, an ambitious urban environment built in cyberspace.

Through an array of female characters who race frantically through outfit changes, animation artist **Nathalie Djurberg's** *New Movements in Fashion* looks at the unpredictable ways in which attire shapes individual identity.

In the large-format color tableau *Hastings Park, 16 July 1955*, **Stan Douglas** conjures up a crowd of Canadian race-track patrons whose detailed period clothing conveys subtle indications of their working-class status.

Taking an ironic look at the luxury auto industry, **Jacqueline Hassink's** video *BMW Car Girls* follows the interplay of female greeters and male visitors at the exclusive Paris Auto Show.

Kimsooja's four-channel video installation *Mumbai: A Laundry Field* is a meditation on the ubiquity of brilliantly hued textiles in the Indian cityscape, and their place in the life of the city.

Culling imagery from fashion, ethnographic, and pornographic magazines, **Wangechi Mutu** creates elaborate photo-collages that scramble representations of race and gender to question current conventions of beauty.

In her recent multifigure portraits, **Cindy Sherman** presents aspiring fashionistas whose elaborate attempts at individual style run comically awry.

Lorna Simpson's newest work, *Please remind me of who I am*, comprises one hundred black-and-white photobooth images and inkwash drawings, individually framed and arranged in a loose cluster on the wall. The photos depict

anonymous African-American subjects from midcentury America who created portraits of themselves using the private mirror of the photobooth.

In his *Unbranded* series, **Hank Willis Thomas** searches through decades of print advertisements for clues to the changing public image of African-American life. By removing the typography and other product information from these images, he enables an unexpected vision of race, class, and history to emerge from these commercial photographs.

Mickalene Thomas's vivid color photographs of African-American women in household settings explore black identity from the 1970s to the present, using exuberant patterns of clothing, wall coverings, and upholstery to suggest a provocative blend of femininity and power.

The stunning life-size portraits in **Pinar Yolaçan's** series *Maria* depict women from Itaparica, an island off the Brazilian coast. These women, ranging in age from twenty-seven to ninety, are shown wearing bizarre but visually stunning garments that the artist, a trained fashion designer, created by ingeniously combining fabrics with gleaming slices of raw meat obtained from local markets.

Participating Artists

Yto Barrada	b. Paris, France, 1971. Lives in Tangier, Morocco
Valérie Belin	b. Paris, France, 1964. Lives in Paris
Thorsten Brinkmann	b. Stuttgart, Germany, 1969. Lives in Berlin
Cao Fei	b. Guangzhou, China, 1978. Lives in Beijing
Olga Chernysheva	b. Moscow, Russia, 1962. Lives in Moscow
Nathalie Djurberg	b. Lysekil, Sweden, 1978. Lives in Berlin
Stan Douglas	b. Vancouver, Canada, 1960. Lives in Vancouver
Kota Ezawa	b. Cologne, Germany, 1969. Lives in San Francisco
Jacqueline Hassink	b. Enschede, The Netherlands, 1966. Lives in New York
Hu Yang	b. Shanghai, China, 1959. Lives in Shanghai
Miyako Ishiuchi	b. Gunma Prefecture, Japan, 1947. Lives in Yokohama, Japan
Kimsooja	b. Taegu, Korea, 1957. Lives in New York
Silvia Kolbowski	b. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1953. Lives in New York
Jeremy Kost	b. Corpus Christi, Texas, 1977. Lives in New York
Barbara Kruger	b. Newark, New Jersey, 1945. Lives in New York and LA
Richard Learoyd	b. Lancashire, England, 1966. Lives in London
Kalup Linzy	b. Stuckey, Florida, 1977. Lives in Brooklyn
Tanya Marcuse	b. New York, 1964. Lives in Barrytown, New York
Anne Morgenstern	b. Leipzig, Germany, 1976. Lives in Zurich
Wangechi Mutu	b. Nairobi, Kenya, 1972. Lives in New York
Grace Ndiritu	b. the United Kingdom, 1976. Lives in London
Alice O'Malley	b. Buffalo, New York, 1962. Lives in New York
David Rosetzky	b. Melbourne, Australia, 1970. Lives in Melbourne
Martha Rosler	b. Brooklyn, 1953. Lives in Brooklyn
Julika Rudelius	b. Cologne, Germany, 1968. Lives in Amsterdam
Cindy Sherman	b. Glen Ridge, New Jersey, 1951. Lives in New York
Laurie Simmons	b. Long Island, New York, 1949. Lives in New York
Lorna Simpson	b. Brooklyn, New York, 1960. Lives in Brooklyn
Hank Willis Thomas	b. Plainfield, New Jersey, 1976. Lives in New York
Mickalene Thomas	b. Camden, New Jersey, 1971. Lives in Brooklyn
Milagros de la Torre	b. Lima, Peru, 1965. Lives in New York and Mexico City
Janaina Tschäpe	b. Munich, Germany, 1973. Lives in New York and Rio de Janeiro
Pinar Yolaçan	b. Ankara, Turkey, 1981. Lives in Brooklyn
Zhou Tao	b. Changsha, China, 1976. Lives in Guangzhou

Exhibition Curators

The exhibition is organized by ICP curators Kristen Lubben, Christopher Phillips, and Carol Squiers, and ICP adjunct curator Vince Aletti.

Kristen Lubben, Associate Curator at ICP, has been a member of the curatorial staff since 1998. In that time, she has organized such exhibitions as *Gerda Taro*; *Francesc Torres: Dark Is the Room Where We Sleep*; *Amelia Earhart: Image and Icon*; *El Salvador: Work of Thirty Photographers*; *Time of Change: Bruce Davidson, Civil Rights Photographs, 1961-65*; and the 2008 exhibition *Susan Meiselas: In History*.

Christopher Phillips, ICP Curator, is a widely published critic and photography historian who worked as senior editor at *Art in America* for 10 years before coming to ICP in 2000. He has curated and co-organized numerous exhibitions including *Atta Kim: On-Air*; *Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China*; *The Rise of the Picture Press*; *The Metropolis and the Art of the Twenties*; and *Heavy Light: Recent Photography and Video from Japan*. His books include *Photography in the Modern Era*, *The New Vision* (with Maria Morris Hambourg), and *Steichen at War*.

Carol Squiers has been a curator at ICP since 2000, and is an adjunct professor in The ICP-Bard MFA Program in Advanced Photographic Studies. She has organized six exhibitions for ICP, and was co-curator of the First and Second ICP Triennials. Since 1978, Squiers has written for a wide variety of publications, including *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Vanity Fair*, *Aperture*, *Art in America*, and *The Village Voice*. She was the curator of photography at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center from 1980–1984 and the Senior Editor of *American Photo* from 1990–2000. Squiers co-organized the ICP Year of Fashion and its major exhibitions, along with guest curator Vince Aletti, including *Weird Beauty: Fashion Photography Now*.

Vince Aletti is an adjunct curator at ICP and the winner of the institution's Infinity Award in writing for 2005. He reviews photography exhibitions for *The New Yorker's* "Goings on About Town" section, writes a regular column about photo books for *Photograph*, and contributes to *Aperture*, *Art + Auction*, *Interview*, and *Photoworks*. Aletti has curated highly praised exhibitions around the world, including shows in New York, London, and Switzerland. He has also recently contributed essays and interviews to books about photographers Mark Cohen, Michael Thompson, David Hilliard, Ingar Krauss, Jackie Nickerson, and Kohei Yoshiyuki.

Catalogue



A fully-illustrated catalogue, produced by ICP in partnership with Steidl Publishing, accompanies the exhibition. It includes sections dedicated to individual Triennial artists, contributions by ICP curators, and passages from historical and contemporary thinkers who investigate the interplay between art and fashion.

Dress Codes: The Third ICP Triennial of Photography and Video (ICP/Steidl 2009)

11x8.25 inches

Soft cover/french fold; US\$ 28.00

Exhibition Design

The installation of *Dress Codes*—created by designer Abbott Miller of Pentagram—provides a dynamic setting for a wide range of artistic approaches. Miller has designed and curated numerous groundbreaking installations and publications, creating powerful and provocative settings for the presentation of art and ideas. He has collaborated with some of the most important international artists and curators, and is the recipient of the Chrysler Award for Design, the ICP Infinity Award for design, and the Augustus St. Gaudens Award from his alma mater Cooper Union.

Public Programs

A wide range of educational materials and programs will be presented in conjunction with the exhibition. These will include public programs including docent tours, a lecture series, and outreach programs elucidating the exhibition's themes for K-12, college, and adult audiences.

A curator-moderated panel featuring a group of the exhibition's participants, as well as a series of evening curatorial discussions with selected artists will take place during the course of the exhibition.