

"What will we wear in Space ?"

1960s Space Age Fashion and the ATOPOS cvc paper dress collection

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon, 20 July 1969

In 1961, the Russian astronaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to orbit the Earth, and "future life in space" became less distant for mankind. This space exploration and the technology developed for this purpose influenced fashion and "Space Age Fashion" was born in the 1960s. Pioneered by designers such as Pierre Cardin, Paco Rabanne and André Courrèges, amongst others, the trend proposed new imaginative and futuristic clothing, while it investigated practicality and new silhouettes. "Space Age Fashion" could not have been realized though without the new industrial materials being widely available such as plastic or non woven fabrics with metalized surfaces - a reference to the fabrics used in spacesuits.

The low-cost technology for the creation of these new non woven fabrics became the starting point of the "paper dress" fad which inundated the United States between 1966-1968. The fad explored the disposability of clothing and thousands of colorful dresses were made available in the market. Destined to be worn once and then thrown away, these dresses represent the main core of the ATOPOS cvc Paper Dress collection.

The "foil dresses" represented the "Space Age Fashion" trend in paper fashion and there are six rare examples in the ATOPOS cvc collection. These are made of fascinating non woven fabrics, such as the material used to insulate space suits according to a 1966 article in the New York Times. Additionally, the space race of the 1960s, very much publicized in the press, has been also documented on the patterns of some paper dresses, such as the one printed with the headlines for the 1969 mission of the spacecraft Apollo 10 in the ATOPOS collection.

With dresses from the ATOPOS collection as a starting point, this talk will explore in an interactive manner the origins and the characteristics of the 1960s "Space Age Fashion" as well as its legacy today.

The event will conclude with the workshop "Capsule". Inspired by Space Age fashion and guided by Christina Sotiropoulou, ArtEZ alumna, the visitors can design and wear their own creations.

BIOS

Myrsini Pichou fell down the rabbit hole of paper fashion fifteen years ago, when she joined Vassilis Zidianakis and Stamos Fafalios in their quest to discover the magic of paper garments through time. As a member of the organising team of the first "RRRIPP!! Paper Fashion" exhibition curated by Vassilis Zidianakis in Athens in 2007, her main task was to register and document for the show more than 250 paper dresses from the 1960s from the ATOPOS cvc collection. Myrsini also contributed with an essay on the collection to the exhibition's catalogue, which features texts by Alexandra Palmer, Kaat Debo, Akiko Fukai, Christina Leitner and Lydia Kamitsis, amongst others.

Myrsini's own journey in the history of dress started in 2014, when she co-founded the "Dress and the Law" research project that explores the relationship between dress, fashion and legislation from the formation of the Greek state in the 19th century to the present day. Furthermore, Myrsini has published on 20th century fashion, dress collections, academic dress, art and fashion as well as anti-fashion, and, since 2010, she has been sitting on the Board of the Hellenic Costume Society.

A Courtauld Institute of Art graduate, where she obtained an MA under Professor Aileen Ribeiro, Myrsini also holds a BA in Theatre Studies (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens). Today, she lives in Athens and works at the Athens University History Museum.

Christina was made in Athens (GR). She never understood the limits between fashion, costumes and art. She worked for years with Atopos CVC in exhibitions and events. She made costumes for theater plays and dance performances. She participated in Watermill Summer Program (NY) 2014 under the guidance of Bob Wilson. She chose to study fashion design and she graduated from ArtEZ Institute of the Arts (NL) in 2017. Her surname is Sotiropoulou.