MODES PRATIQUES
revue d'histoire du vêtement et de la mode

Modes pratiques

| 2018
Special Issue (English)

Scanning Fashion

an interview of Katerina Jebb by Romy Texier. Paris, November 2017.

Katerina Jebb and Romy Texier

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Scanning Fashion

an interview of Katerina Jebb by Romy Texier

Paris, November 2017





Inside of a dress
Collection Musée Galliera, 2013



Inside of a shoe, 1996

Comme des Garçons,
Isabelle Huppert, 2014





Inside of a dress,
Collection Musée Galliera, 2013



Romy Texier: How would you present yourself?
Katerina Jebb: Sometimes presentable.
Sometimes unpresentable.
It's difficult to define oneself I think better if left to others.
I would present myself truthfully only to myself.

Romy: How come you moved to Paris?
Katerina: I moved to Paris at the age of 26 to pursue experimental photography.
I stayed for a few years and then I travelled a lot all over the world.
I came back to live in Paris in 2000 because I had a puppy and I didn't want him to live in quarantine for 6 months.
The French system allowed animals in who had travelled from other countries and so here I am.

Romy: Fashion photography, documentary photography, artist,
in which category do you see yourself in?
Katerina: All and none.
It's complicated as they say.
I'm not a fashion photographer.
Artist is a big title and sometimes I think that I am perhaps an artist because of my obsessions and refusals.
If I say photographer it's not strictly true because It is quite rare that I hold a camera.
I'm interested in subject matter.
The scanner is a very precise medium for me to document the material world.

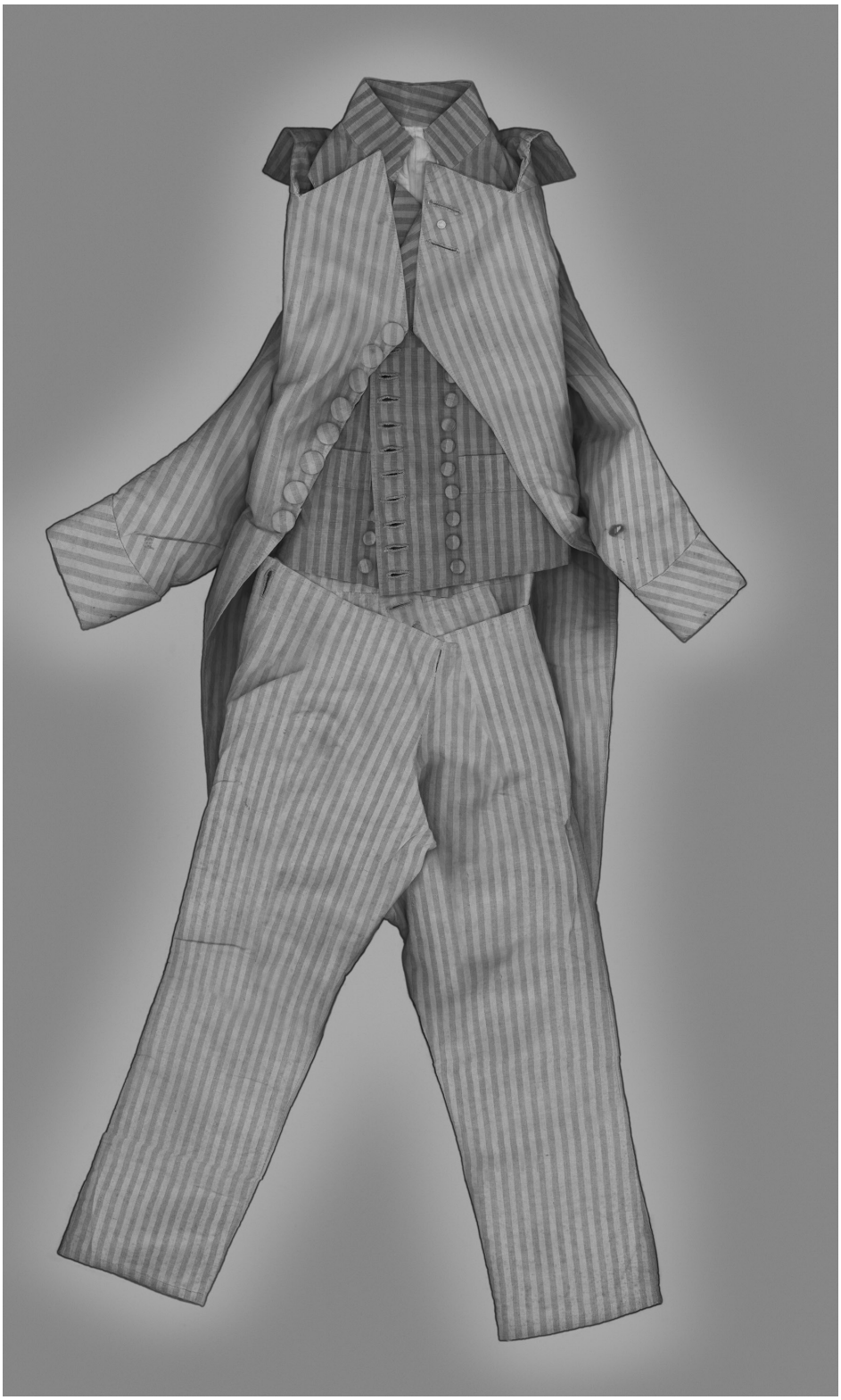
Romy: How do you create your images?
Katerina: I use my intuition and then I use technology.

Romy: Are you inspired by scientific imagery?
Katerina: Yes.
I'm inspired more so by the advancement of science as opposed to the imagery in produces.
That said the invention of scientific imagery has saved millions of lives and so yes it's a world with a vision of hope.

Romy: Why abandon the camera, and all the aspects it incorporates in terms of lighting, location, depth...
Katerina: I don't consiously abandon the camera, I use it when I need to use it.
I prefer seeing my images come to life reproduced by a digital scanner.

Romy: What relationship do you have toward fashion and clothing?
Katerina: I'm not very interested in fashion, I am interested in originality.
Fashion is an immense and powerful machine and I like that it creates jobs and feeds people but I don't like the idea of dictating to the masses how they should dress.
My relationship to clothing as evidence or as aesthetic historical artifacts is evolved and passionate. I look at clothes as a way to find meaning.
For me clothing is anthropological and so it provides me with a sense of value beyond its material existence.

Romy: What is your relationship to archives, museums, and documents ?
Katerina: I've been working with museums and foundations now for 10 years. I started to work with Olivier Saillard at Musée Galliera in 2007 and I have worked on many projects with him.
The Balthus Foundation invited me to make a residence there and I have been documenting the contents of Balthus's studio for many years. This project is ongoing and we will publish a book next year. It's as though I have become an archivist over the years which is fine as it's always an enlightening experience.I'm presently working for The Metropolitan Museum in New York and The Vatican in Rome documenting 170 artifacts and clothing.
This body of work will be the exhibition catalogue "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination" in 2018.

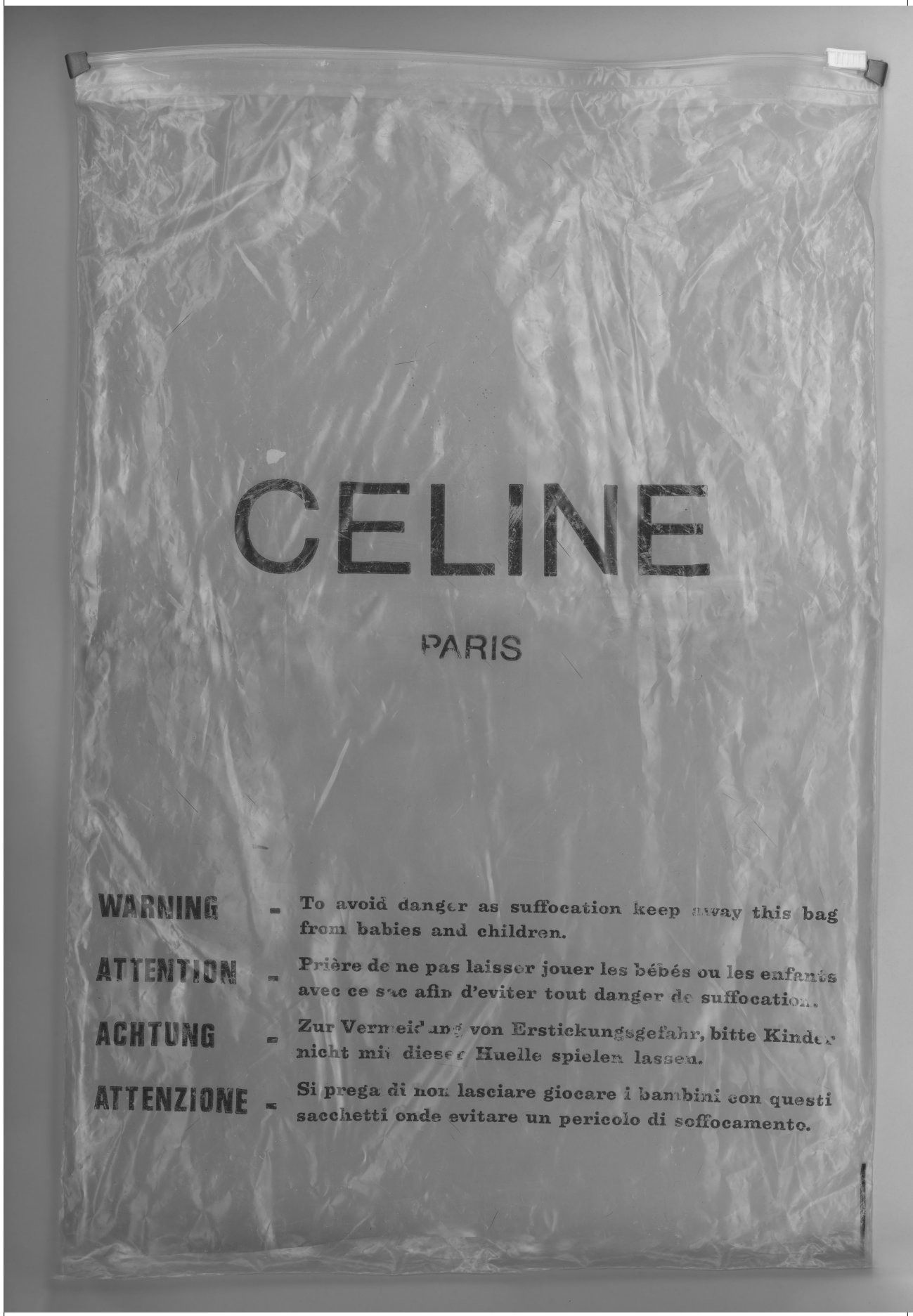


Clothing of le Dauphin, son of Marie-Antoinette
Collection Musée Galliera, 2015



Dior leopard skin coat,
Collection Musée Galliera, 2012

Empty plastic bag found in the suitcase of Olga Picabia
Comité Picabia, 2012


CELINE
PARIS
WARNING - To avoid danger as suffocation keep away this bag from babies and children.
ATTENTION - Prière de ne pas laisser jouer les bébés ou les enfants avec ce sac afin d'eviter tout danger de suffocation.
ACHTUNG - Zur Vermeidung von Erstickungsgefahr, bitte Kinder nicht mit dieser Huelle spielen lassen.
ATTENZIONE - Si prega di non lasciare giocare i bambini con questi sacchetti onde evitare un pericolo di soffocamento.





Corset of Marie-Antoinette
Collection Musée Galliera, 2016

Romy: Do the clothes that you scan tell a story of the people that have worn them?
Katerina: Physically yes, more than that I cannot say, it's the viewer who construes the meaning or story.

Romy:Are you a collector? of what?
Katerina: Yes.
Eclectic phenomena, non-specific subject matter.
Rare books, obscure, graphic design documents, strange dysfunctional objects.

Romy: Your personal work is often scans of objects. What's your relationship to objects?
Katerina: Fascination.
I like abstract appeal and looking at things which escape an exact definition. You have to ask what it is. I like broken objects, abandoned unwanted things.
It's as though they hold sentient powers.
We leave behind objects which help to describe us.
We inhabit a material planet and we are born to consume.
The Object world is inescapable.
I love surfaces and organic objects from the realm of nature but I also love artifice so I suppose my visual sensibility can appear conflictual.

Romy: Are objects a way into your subconscience?
Katerina: Perhaps.
Artistic output is an unfathomable compulsion.
Maybe it's good not to ask too many questions.
Making art is often liberating to the creator in a wordless way.

Romy: I was quite inspired for my essay by your scan of Maurice Rheims's book *La vie étrange des objets*. In what way do you relate to this title in your work of scanned objects?
Katerina: *The Strange Life of Objects* as a title really captures me and resonates with my curiosity towards objects.
My obsession with graphic design and spare harmonious composition delivers me to these titles and so that is why I collect rare books.
They inhabit another realm and slide slowly into obsolete obscurity and I feel that I want to rescue them from this.

Romy: Is the scanning of isolated objects a way of animating them, giving them life?
Katerina: Of course, it may give them 5% more life or 99% more life depending on the consequent diffusion into the visual landscape.
But I give them my attention with intention. It could just be a random exercise.
I love to describe what I do as
meandering in a shapeless void.

Romy: Would you link your work to Marcel Duchamp's ready made?
Katerina: That would be so pretentious of me to imagine my output in the same sentence as Duchamp's.
I could never attain his intellectual brilliance in my upcoming 88 lives.
But it is so essential and vital to have men and women that we can look to for spiritual guidance.
I make my work with a lot of pleasure and amusement and so I hope that perhaps I share humour with him.

Romy: How do you expose your work? Is there an articulation between the glass of the scan and the glass of the framing?
Katerina: Yes greatly so.
Glass is so intriguing and brutal.
It is a vital matter.
Without glass imagery would have a difficult time existing.
It's crucial for me to be able to frame my work and to work closely with my framer.
Correctly framed a work can surpass your original intention. ■



Ladies tights, 1996