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DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO

CAPSULE COLLECTION 2013

Text by DS+R, originally published in *The Look*, 2014

THE LOOK

Architecture is to building as fashion is to clothing: both may be seen as excesses of their functional roots. Whereas in fashion the adjective “architectural” is an asset, a positive term that applies to a design with distinctively strong structure and form, the term “fashionable” in architecture is pejorative, suggesting a fleeting trend with no lasting worth. Architecture’s aspiration to permanence is a product not only of the high investment required to build but also of its commitment to lasting values. Fashion, by contrast, is driven by the manic desire to constantly refresh. The life span of a trend is a season, not a century. Both disciplines converge at the classic, a status reserved for the rare design of irreducible perfection that can withstand the test of time. The architectural photography of Julius Shulman provides important insights into temporal alignments between architecture and fashion as well as the slippages between them. These photos capture classic mid-century modern houses and the lifestyles of their inhabitants: a dashing man prepares martinis while his shapely wife mingles with dinner guests or lounges poolside, soaking up the sun. Although the buildings in these photos have retained a timeless quality, their inhabitants appear anachronistic. The clothing and styling that once epitomized simple elegance instead date the inhabitants and inadvertently reveal the building’s true age.

One of architecture’s modernist icons, Philip Johnson’s *Glass House* of 1949, provides a relevant case study. An influential Museum of Modern Art board member, Johnson used the house as a salon, where he would host New York’s cultural elite. These gatherings were documented in casual photographs over the years, and each decade from the 1950s to the 1990s is discernible from the guests’ clothing styles, set against the classic backdrop of the house. These archival photos form a record of the last half-century of fashion. Occasionally these images reveal unexpected alignments between architecture and fashion across time. The preppy-hipster look of the stylish figure visiting the *Glass House* could easily be mistaken for that of a fashion-forward visitor today were he not such a recognizable cultural icon. A guest at a garden party in the early years of the house dressed in a 1947 Christian Dior bar suit might appear similar to a present-day visitor wearing one of the 2012 New Look revivals designed by Raf Simons for Dior. As trends typically come and go, only to return again, the fast wheel of fashion sometimes falls into alignment with the slow motion of architecture. This peculiar synchrony between “fashion time” and “architecture time” is both unsettling and liberating. *The Look* is a narrative in eighteen scenes about youth, ageing, timelessness, and identity. It is set in an ambiguous time. Dispersed throughout are ten accessories that comprise the 2013 capsule collection. These selections from runway couture and ready-to-wear collections are “assisted” classics. They are so highly mannered with today’s sensibilities that they live in the state of the past-present. *The Glass House* is a key protagonist.

MARTIN MARGIELA, CORK LACE-UP SHOES

This classic leather Oxford is surfaced with a glazed cork skin. Harvested from cork oak trees, bark tissue is boiled in water to break down its cell structure, then dried and shaved into thin sheets pliable enough to shape over a curved surface. The soft wood is glued to a leather lining and finished with a glossy protective sealant.

LOTHO YUWANO SUNGLASSES

A step removed from Jackie O's glamorous oversized sunglasses, the Yuwano model features lenses disengaged from their frames, breaking the pure functional relationship between the two. The circular Zeiss lenses misalign with their gratuitously large acetate frames. This excess superimposes a cartoonish expression on the face that it hides.

ROCK & CANDY LONDON WEDGE SNEAKERS

Both active child and femme, this hybrid shoe grafts the upscale Isabel Marant wedge onto the classic Converse All-Star sneaker. The casual punk of the sport shoe submits to the drama and sexuality of the high heel, subverting its function and the gendered associations of both.

SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE PEARL NECKLACE EARRING

A simple string of freshwater pearls—the ultimate symbol of conservative femininity and upscale elegance—is severed and slung over part of the neck. The piece becomes a broken necklace suspended by the ears and as a single earring stretching from lobe to lobe.

MARTIN MARGIELA SPLATTER REPLICA SNEAKERS

Maintaining the classic shape of 1970s Austrian military trainers, these sneakers are designed from Napa leather with soft suede detailing and a gum outsole. Seemingly spontaneous but calculated in execution, the drops of paint all over the shoes emulate the irreverent machismo of Jackson Pollock. What appear to be chance splatters are designed by an artisanal hand.

SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE FAUX FOX STOLE

A shawl made from the skin of a single animal (its head included), the fur stole was once the accessory of choice of the Hollywood glitterati. Acknowledging that the stigma of animal slaughter is now part of the cultural conscience, this ethical translation of the traditional garment takes the fox stole's form but replaces animal hide with muslin—the cheap, generic cloth used in tailoring to test-fit a garment before a finer material is used.

BLU DISPOSABLE E-CIG

In updating traditional smoking, the e-cigarette forgoes the smoke but preserves the act—selling a simulated, sterilized cool. Its skeuomorphic design retains the slender form of a traditional cigarette, but inside, a battery-operated atomizer vaporizes a liquid solution of nicotine and flavorings that is inhaled and exhaled as steam rather than smoke. A spectral blue glow intensifies upon inhalation, recreating the light of the smoker's pull.

VIVIENNE WESTWOOD ANGLOMANIA FOR MELISSA LADY DRAGON IX PUMP

This simple slingback pump is both present and absent. The "nude" shoes are intended to match the skin of the wearer but are far from invisible. The latex surface has a fetishistic medical sheen, and the bright magenta multilooped bow—an accessory to the accessory—concentrates the shoe's erotic charge into a moment of pure feminine excess.

LEG AVENUE JUMBO FISHNETS

The reveal-and-conceal concept of the fishnet stocking has endured as a symbol of illicit eroticism even as most other once-risque fashion has merged with the mainstream. These thigh-highs take the diamond fishnet pattern to an extreme, stretching the netting so wide open that the legs seem on the verge of falling through.

HEIDI RABBIT WITH VEIL

Maison Michel This headband conjoins the mourning veil of Victorian era Christianity and the bunny ears of contemporary American softcore porn. The veil reflects the binary ideology that plays out in much of modern women's fashion: for the young, a childlike costuming that suggests an infantilized adult sexuality, and for the no longer young, a matronly mummification, sexlessly entombing face, and body as if death has already arrived.

ABOUT DS+R

Founded in 1981, Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) is a design studio whose practice spans the fields of architecture, urban design, installation art, multi-media performance, digital media and print. With a focus on cultural and civic projects, DS+R's work addresses the changing role of institutions and the future of cities. The studio is based in New York and is comprised of over 100 architects, designers, artists and researchers, led by four partners—Elizabeth Diller, Ricardo Scofidio, Charles Renfro, and Benjamin Gilmartin.