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***Fashion and Politics*, ed. by Djurdja Bartlett (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019). 240 pp., 120 col. illus. ISBN 9780300238860.**

A hardbound volume in full colour, *Fashion and Politics* looks good and feels weighty. Its title sounds authoritative but with only seven textual chapters and two photo essays (following an introduction), its coverage is less comprehensive than expected. To a sceptic, fashion and politics might seem fundamentally incompatible, rendering the study redundant. A subscriber to the notion that design and ideology are fundamentally intertwined might instead ask where its intersections could possibly begin and end.

One way of drawing parameters around a potentially huge topic could be to explore the narrower territory of fashion rather than dress but authors are not concerned to draw such a boundary; clothing of all kinds is considered. Period and place are similarly unlimited; contributors draw out transhistorical and global themes. Disciplinary approach is the clearest demarcation of the volume's borders. Nine of the ten essayists are critical studies scholars in art schools or art curators; five are at University of the Arts London. Unlike 2016's *The International Politics of Fashion: Being Fab in a Dangerous World*, which approached the topic from an International Relations perspective, none are politics specialists. The patterning does not lessen the book's value but gives it a particular flavour.

The first section, 'Political Fashion / Fashionable Politics', comprises an essay by Bartlett with the provocative title, 'Can Fashion be Defended?' The wide-ranging overview examines where fashion and politics intersect most visibly, from the heroic outfit of Che Guevara to subversive dress tactics of women in communist Europe. Bartlett argues that fashion can be a political force if understood as more than a commodity. Drawing on critical thinkers as well

as fashion commentators, she posits that fashion's shifting character shows its non-totalitarian potential; its non-verbal form means it may be capable of communicating cultural concerns more eloquently than direct narratives even as its contestatory powers are ever subject to compromise.

In the section 'Reform or Revolution', Barbara Vinken traces how modern European intellectuals have marginalised fashion historically and characterised it conceptually as an unwelcome Other within. Jin Li Kim examines China's Cultural Revolution, where clothes representing Western bourgeois values were literally attacked in pursuit of sartorial sobriety. Carol Tulloch carefully explores 'style activism' among Black Panthers and Rock against Racism campaigns, where everyday garments were repurposed as tools of political intent.

'Bodies and Borders' begins with an unlikely case study: Marilyn Monroe's 'naked dress' and its connection to terror. Rhonda Garelick argues that fashion is terrorism's 'dark fun house mirror', reflecting and exaggerating anxieties especially in relation to women's bodies in the media. Monroe's garment is contrasted with Jackie Kennedy's bloodstained suit and the chapter boldly traverses the clothing of terrorists and discourses about fashion and freedom from Burkinis to body scanners. Jane Tynan's exploration of the keffiyah maps its mobile meanings from Middle Eastern peasant headscarf to military chic, showing its complexities and multiplicities; it is never politics or fashion but always a hybrid of the two.

The photo essays - Gabi Scardi on artists who engage with uniform and Erika de Greef on the decolonial potential of khaki trousers in South African museums - are more experimental.

Both are visually stimulating and original but I found their narrative and argument fractured by the form. In the final essays under 'Resistance and Recuperation', Anthony Sullivan evaluates the 'iconoclastic sartorial irreverence' of party political dress on the contemporary European Left. Serkan Delice brilliantly exposes the exploitative relationship of fast fashion

production and Syrian migrant labour, concluding that ‘a piece of cloth is never a piece of cloth only’. Symbolic production of meaning and the material practices of production are woven together in fashion’s social fabric. This fascinating volume makes a fresh contribution to the field; that there is so much more to say is testament to the inherently political nature of the form.

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