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Modelling – Fashion theory and theory of creation

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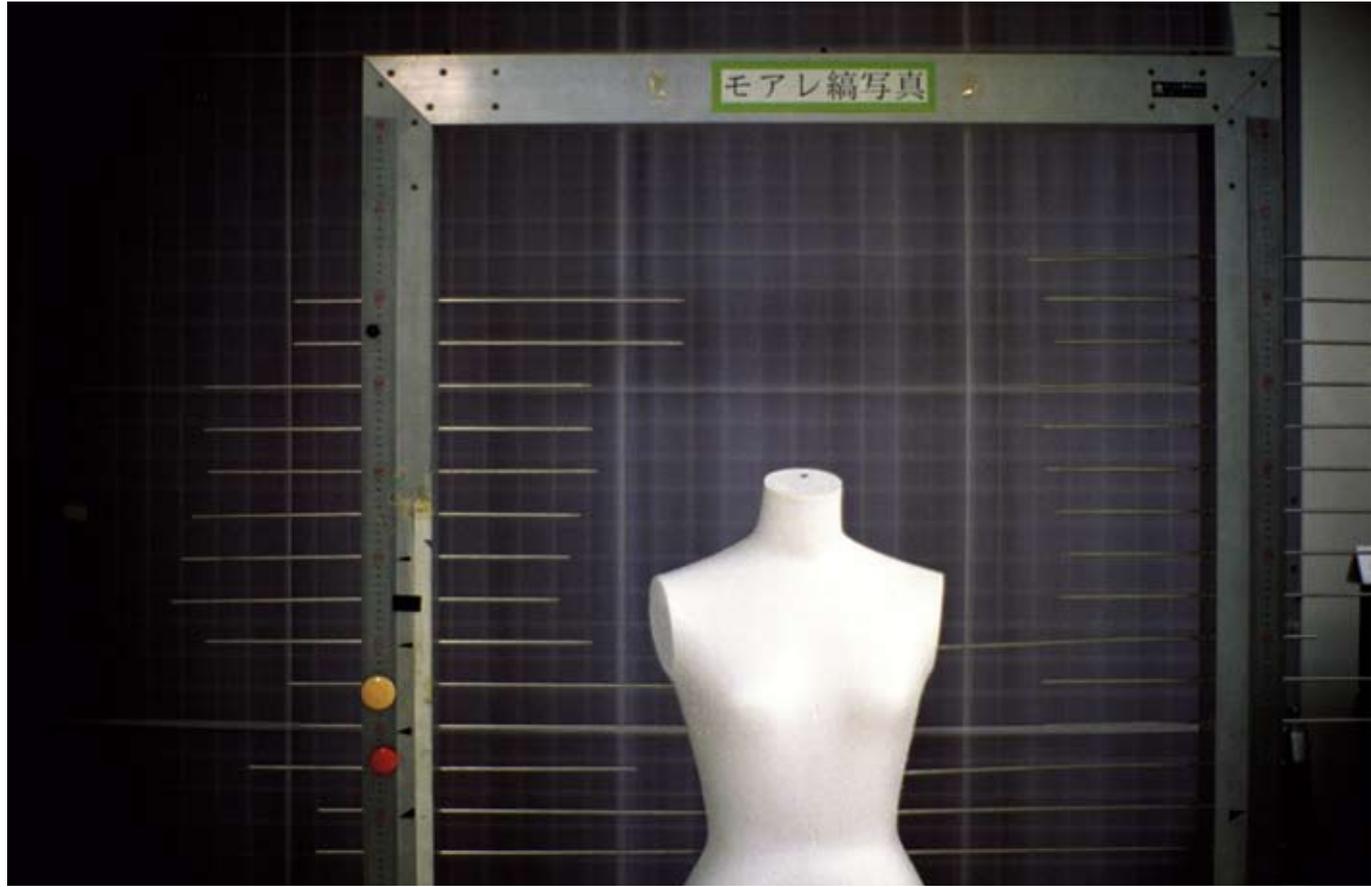
A model [theory] generally illustrates a formalized and simplified perspective – in turn derived from e.g. an overlaying paradigm, ideology or tradition – of a more complex thing, process, being or something in becoming. As a physical, logical or mathematical construct of static and dynamic variables it may perform the function of visualizing and abstracting facts and figures, movements and patterns, as well as being a plan, implying results, propositions and actions to be taken. But moreover, a model is also where a theory [vision] can be tested, simulated, reworked and replicated. Like a laboratory it makes up a reality and realm where certain elements may be foregrounded and others ignored for the reason to study a certain perspective [module] or certain perspectives [modules], each for themselves and together.

In other words models share the possibility to hold some aspects open of that which it aims to illustrate because it leaves out certain variables – deliberately or not – as it at the same time includes other variables. As such a model or theory is just like a sculpture of art in that it aims to constitute a »pleasantly untruthful content« as a mean in the production of truth, as Swedish philosopher Hans Larsson would have it. Or to use Heidegger's vocabulary, one could say that a model like Heidegger's work of art holds open the open of the world. »The work as work, in its presencing, is a setting forth, a making«. A model liberates the freedom of the open and establishes this freedom in the becoming truth. In that the model sets forth and erects something it also brings about the openness of that something when what has been set forth is a work [of art].

And it is precisely here we find the fascination – fetishizing – of the model, or as in our example: the dummy and equally »pre-model« for garment and fashion models [toiles]: the tailor's mannequin. In generic terms the tailor's mannequin means the presences of certain qualities as well as the absence of others. However, a pre-model like the tailor's mannequin or any other form of artistic and scientific model also means the presence and absence of its associated greater whole in the same moment as in indicates but does not replace. The pre-model of garment making is at once both the presence and absence of the human body. On one hand, as a pre-model, the tailor's mannequin is made to suggest a quality of blandness and impartiality, and therefore more open to possibilities than the toile it will host. To draw on Henri Bergson; the pre-model becomes a matter from which spirit borrows the perceptions on which it feeds and restores them to matter in the form of movements – the toile as an vision – which a creative spirit has stamped with its own freedom. However, on the contrary to Bergson's amoeba as he suggested to be open to endless possibilities, even the pre-model – considered in becoming or as something become – the freedom with which it might be stamped »always seems to have its roots deep in necessity and to be intimately organised with it« as the pre-model also has its history and future, which have given it its distinct form. This is to say; there is in a model both a resistance to transformation post by its matter as well openness to revolution because of its disability for closure. Hence, a model [conception] is a perhaps not neglected, but most often underestimated form or phase of creation that can either set its will against or work in favour, regardless if its initial classification was scientific or artistic – they are all creation.

This article is as much about the contextualisation – necessity and pre-organisation – of models [theories] in general, as it is about the space between absence and presence formed by the model; the model's gestalt quality if you like, here formed by the space between the absence and presence of human beings in the tailor's model.









References

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