# Fashionably Late

July 2018

Italy

## Issue #1

## The Present in Disguise

Everything you need to know about

**Dressing is Easy**

Archizoom in Japan:

**Is Dressing Easy?**

Interview with

**Dario Bartolini (Archizoom)**

Cover: *Dressing is Easy*, Archizoom Associati (1973)

**Fashionably Late**

**Editorial project developed during the Research Residency program at Tokyo Arts and Space (May/June 2018)**

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***Dressing is Easy* video courtesy of Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione (CSAC)**

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*Dressing is Easy* garment, Archizoom Associati (1973)

# About Fashionably Late
## *Issue #1 The Present in Disguise*

Fashion designer Hussein Chalayan, whose work has often been praised for its architectural qualities, once said: "You don't call buildings fashion just because they don't look architectural, so why call fashion architectural unless it really is?" Maybe, this querelle on fashion and architecture simply comes down to a narrow understanding of fashion as clothes and architecture as buildings.

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It would be unfashionably late to insist on structural parallels between fashion and architecture, derived from the idea of clothing as the smallest living environment. Excellent research has already been carried out on the relationship between dressing, body and identity, looking from the clothes inward. Instead, my interest lies in the relationship between fashion and context, so to say, from the clothes outward. In the words of Bradley Quinn, "the visual coding of fashion frequently corresponds to the type of architecture it was intended to be worn in, transforming the figures moving through urban space into walking signifiers of it". I am trying to understand how dressing practices integrate with the urban environment.

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This research project sparked from my interest in 1973 sartorial manifesto *Dressing is Easy* by Italian group of architects Archizoom Associati (Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, Massimo Morozzi, Dario Bartolini, and Lucia Bartolini). Denying sartorial traditions, seasonal and gender-specific clothing, *Dressing is Easy* was a radical attack on Western fashion at the time. Interestingly, Archizoom's fashion project shows similarities with Japanese traditional clothing in terms of aesthetics and structure, for instance in the flatness of the garments and the zero-waste pattern making. This brought me to Tokyo Arts and Space for a research residency, where I spent a couple of months investigating the connections between Italy and Japan, fashion and architecture, avant-garde manifestos and contemporary practices.

In Tokyo I came across fashion label PUGMENT, founded in 2014 by young designers Karin Imafuku and Masahiro Otani. Despite belonging to different contexts and generations, Archizoom's and PUGMENT's works resonated with each other. I decided to present both of them along with my research in a fictional fashion magazine, *Fashionably Late*, that you are now holding in your hands. I wanted to experiment with the format of fashion press, which is normally not expected to carry any real substance, and fill its format with critical content. I thought publishing could be an apt medium for this project also given the role press had in the dissemination of Archizoom's work: too radical for commercial distribution, *Dressing is Easy* was featured in several architecture and fashion magazines in 1970s. On the other hand, PUGMENT's practice sitting on the conceptual end of fashion design, I enjoyed the irony of seeing their work published in what that looks like mainstream fashion press.

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Archizoom's and PUGMENT's fashion projects stem from a critical representation of the times when they were conceived. This suggested to me the overarching theme for *Fashionably Late*'s first issue: *The Present in Disguise*. Architecture should be as modern as one's dresses, but fashion as a medium moves faster than architecture. Sometimes the Present wears future apparel, and has us under the illusion of being further ahead than we actually are. At other times, the Present reassures us wrapped in familiar, predictable outfits, while society is undergoing change.

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The first issue of *Fashionably Late* is about speculative fashion, urban visions and radical representations of the Present. The Future is a tired trope for anxious speculations in both fashion and architecture – What are we going to wear next Fall? What will the the Future of architecture look like? The Future is up for grabs for utopian thinkers, but the Present is for radicals to imagine.

*Dressing is Easy* garment, Archizoom Associati (1973)

# Editorial

*Dressing is Easy* belongs to the history of Italian radical architecture
which nowadays has become a fashionable topic for nostalgic exhibitions.
*Fashionably Late* attempts to bring *Dressing is Easy* back to
the present through analogies, parallels and mutual influences
between contemporary practice and history.

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*Everything you need to know about Dressing is Easy*
presents the radical sartorial manifesto and attempts
to trace its mixed references: the spirit of socialist workwear and
the structure and aesthetics of Japanese clothing.

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*Dressing is Easy* was a provocation.
Archizoom's members knew that clothing carries cultural,
social and ideological narratives – yet they tried to deny them by creating
an 'easy' fashion project, where dressing is reduced to materials and shape.
The second feature article, *Archizoom in Japan: Is Dressing Easy?*
acknowledges this complexity.
This brief and incomplete history of fashion in Japan shows
how Eastern and Western identities are also "sartorial constructs"
(Min-Ha T. Pham, 2016). Bodily differences in ethnic groups were emphasized
through a specific clothing practice, whose meaning
shifted in different times and contexts.

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The Italian edition of *Fashionably Late* ends with an interview
with Dario Bartolini who together with his wife and
fellow Archizoom member Lucia Bartolini,
was the person most involved in *Dressing is Easy*.
In the extraordinary setting of the only radical architecture ever built,
the house him and Lucia designed for themselves on Florentine hills,
we talked about what fashion and architecture can do
about the present and the future.

*Dressing is Easy*, Archizoom Associati for Fiorucci (1973)

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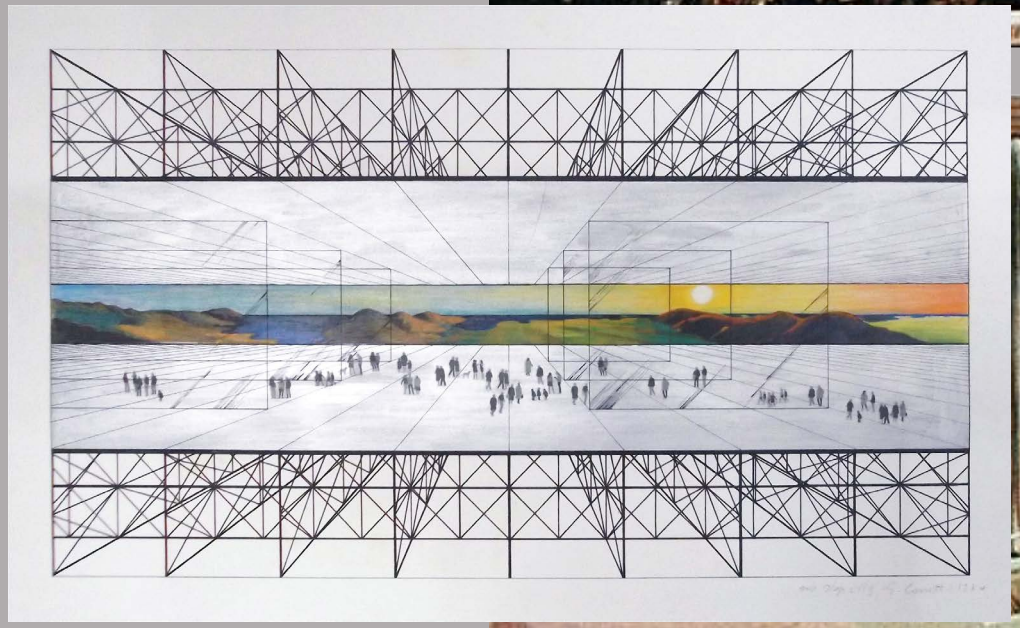
# BEST PLACES TO VISIT: NO-STOP CITY

***No-Stop City*** **(1968-1971) is an unbuilt project by Archizoom Associati: an endless and featureless city modeled after the concept of the factory and the supermarket. A generic habitat in which humans would live a nomad life camping in tents and surrounding themselves in ready-made industrial products. *No-Stop City*'s architectural blankness can allow everything, from the most extreme consumerism to the total emancipation of the individual.**

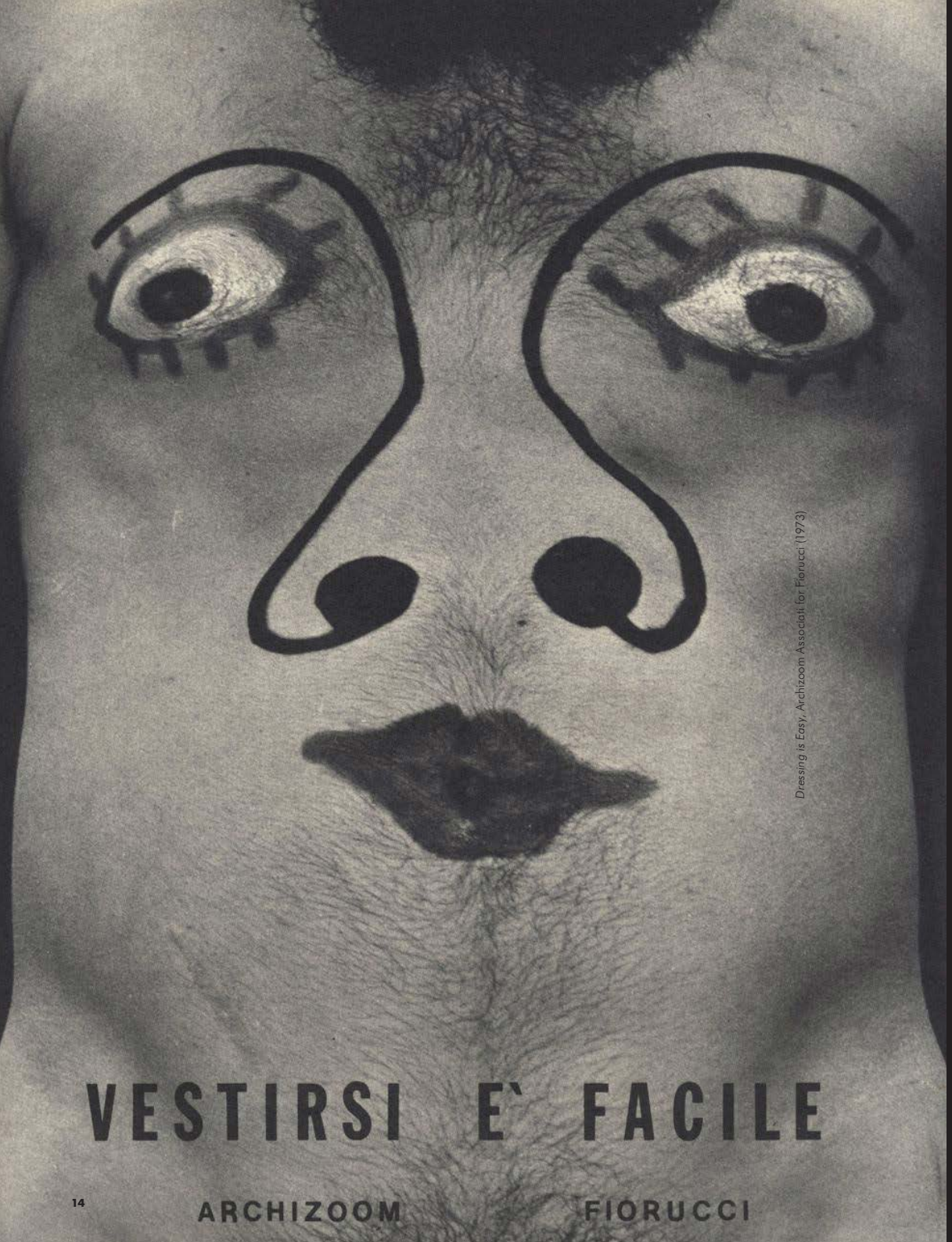


↑→ *No-Stop City*, Archizoom Associati (1970)

# WHAT TO WEAR IN NO-STOP CITY

**Within this artificial environment, clothing too needed to be rethought. In 1971 Archizoom started experimenting with fashion with *Dressing Design: Nearest Habitat System*. *Dressing Design* expressed the freedom of dressing within the *No-Stop city* by ironically breaking with conventional clothing. Leotards wore over jumpsuits and shirts, hairy stockings, funky patterns – that was the look for *No-Stop city*.**

↑→ *Dressing Design: Nearest Habitat System*, Archizoom Associati (1971)




*Dressing is Easy*, Archizoom Associati for Fiorucci (1973)

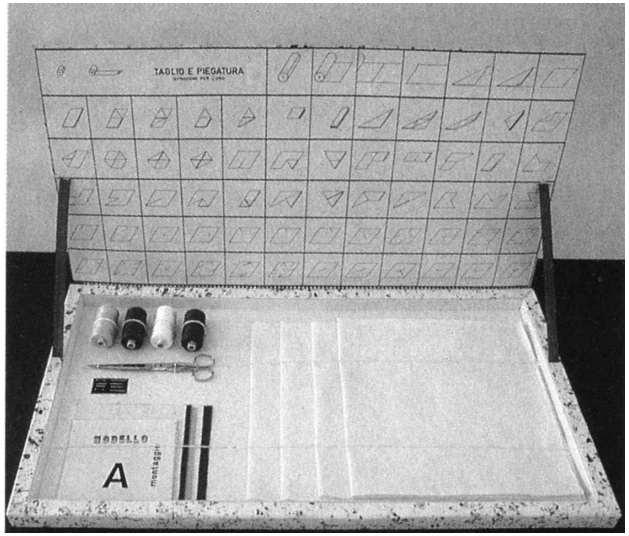
# DRESSING IS EASY

**In 1973 Archizoom realised their second fashion project: *Dressing is Easy*.**

→ Shapes for *Dressing is Easy*, Dario Bartolini (2009). Courtesy Dario Bartolini
↓ *Dressing is Easy* domestic assembly kit, Archizoom Associati (1973)

# THE SIMPLE SOLUTION TO FASHION: A SERIOUS PIECE OF KIT

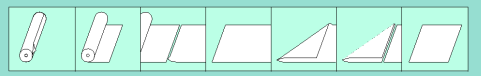
**This time Archizoom approached fashion design as an architecture project on the scale of the body. *Dressing is Easy* was an essential and gender-neutral way of dressing based on a piece of fabric and a "domestic assembly case" containing an instruction manual, scissors, needles and thread. Following these diagrams to fold and sew fabrics, one could create and self-produce their own clothing.**



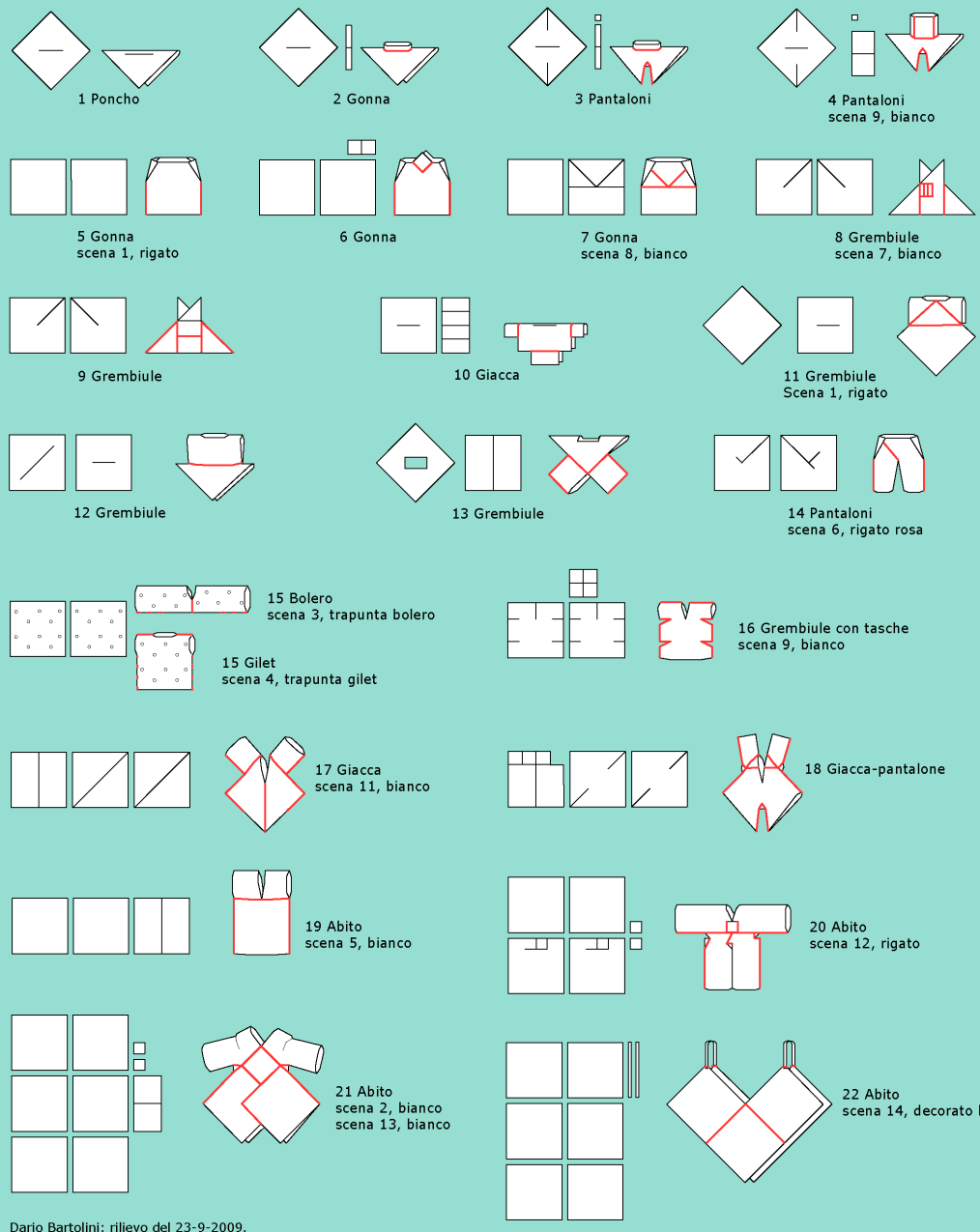



## Fogge in "Vestirsi è facile" 1973

Tipi realizzati
Scene nel cartone animato



Estrazione di un quadrato dalla pezza di tessuto.



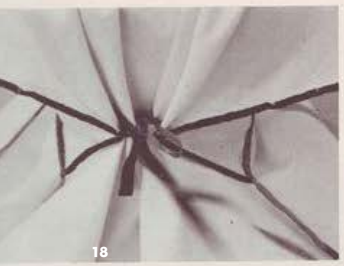

Dario Bartolini: rilievo del 23-9-2009.

*Dressing is Easy* published on Casabella 384 (1973)

***Dressing is Easy* was never commercially produced, but it circulated through press: in 1973 it was presented on the architecture magazine Casabella.**

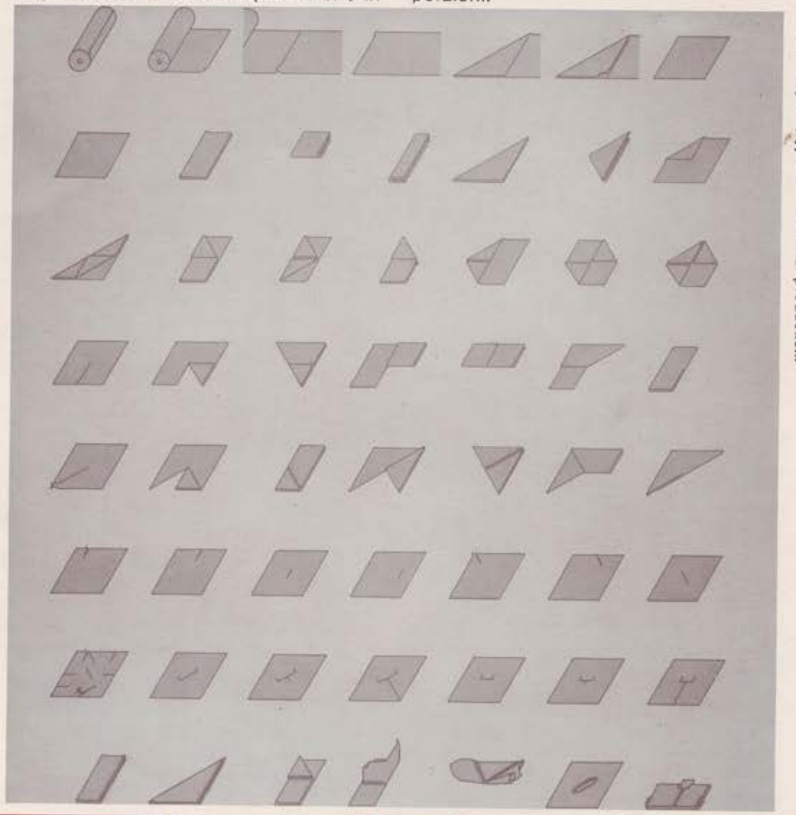
e immagini, cuciture e decorazioni e una unta indossabile come corpetto o come ma- ; una scatola di montaggio per uso domesti- on quadrati di stoffa, fili colorati, ago e forbi- onsente di realizzare questi capi attribuendo colare cura alla funzione decorativa che le ture hanno come unico materiale di apporto. questo materiale è stato realizzato un film ccasione della XV Triennale prodotto dalla Print.

In the illustrations, stitchwork and embellishments, and a quilt used for bodice or sleeving; a domestic assembly case with square pieces of cloth, coloured thread, needl and scissors. This material makes it possible to realize these articles with special attention given to the decorative function which is the on contribution made by the stitching.
This material was the subject of a film produce by Abet Print and shown at the XV Triennale.



Si assume come elemento base il quadrato ricavato dalla pezza di stoffa quale primo logico impiego della materia prima. Questo permette di utilizzare senza scarti il materiale, di operare su un elemento geometricamente definito e come tale progettabile, rifiutando qualsiasi operazione imitativa di rilievo antropometrico. Infatti è solo rinunciando ai metodi tradizionali di tipo sartoriale, presenti in larga misura anche nella produzione industriale, che si possono affrontare e utilizzare correttamente le tecnologie e i metodi produttivi, derivando i criteri di progettazione direttamente dalla natura dei processi produttivi. In questo caso la prima operazione fondamentale è quella di considerare il tessuto o la stoffa come un nastro continuo a larghezza costante, non una indefinita superficie sulla quale si ritagliano a caso delle porzioni.

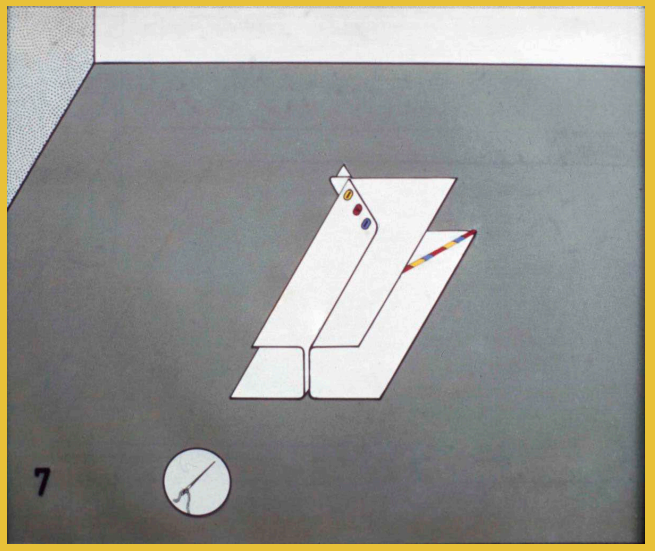
Operando con tagli e pieghe elementari su mediane e diagonali si ottiene un sistema limitato di figure complesse che permettono di realizzare elementi semplici o composti; l'assemblaggio è ottenibile con cuciture realizzate in piano da macchine cucitrici o saldatrici eliminando i problemi e la complessità della cucitura curva nello spazio tipica della produzione sartoriale.

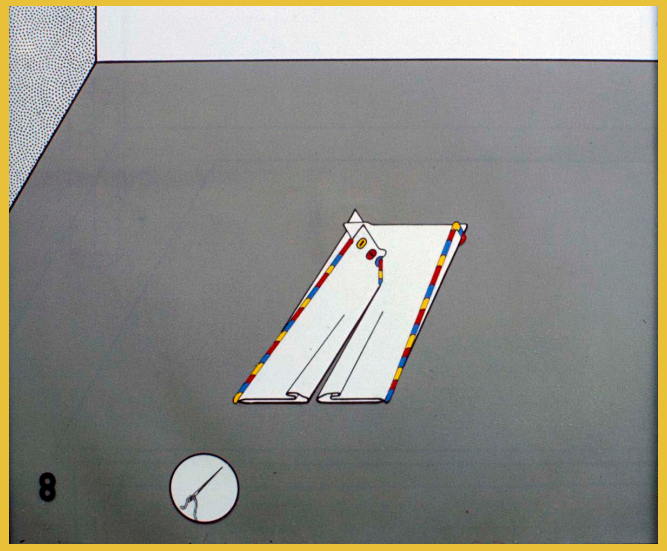


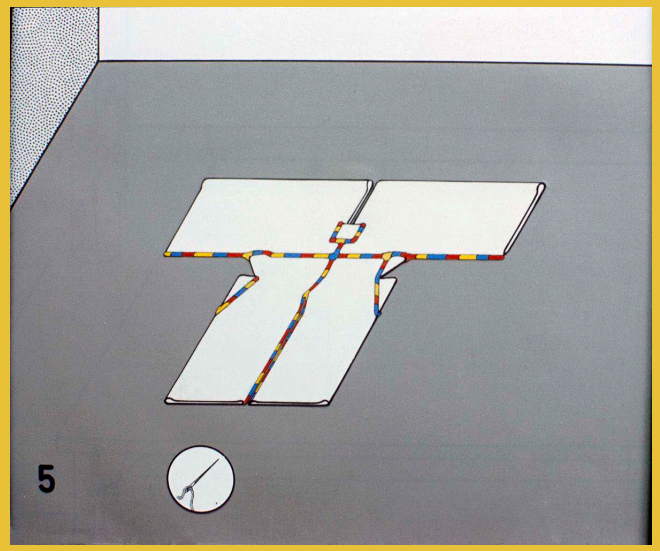
the realization of simple and composite elements; the assembled result can be obtained with on-plane stitches made with sewing or welding machines which eliminate the problems and complexities of curved stitching in the space typical of sartorial production.

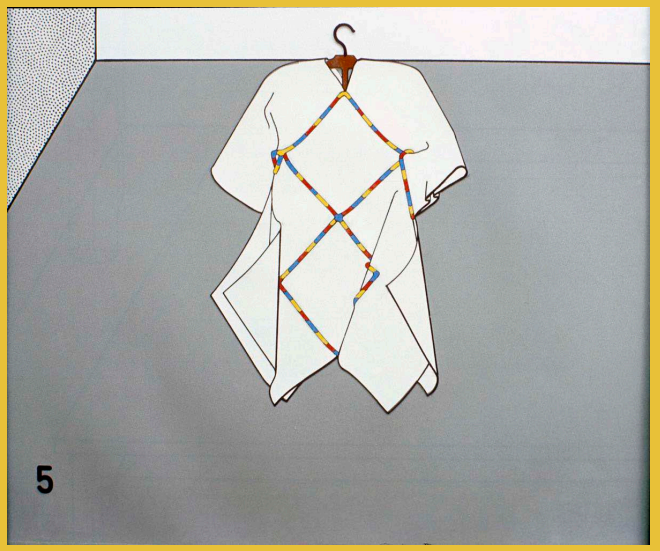
**On the same year *Dressing is Easy* was also presented as a stop-motion animation at the XV Milan Triennale.**

Frames from video *Dressing is Easy*, Archizoom Associati (1973).
Courtesy CSAC and Dario Bartolini



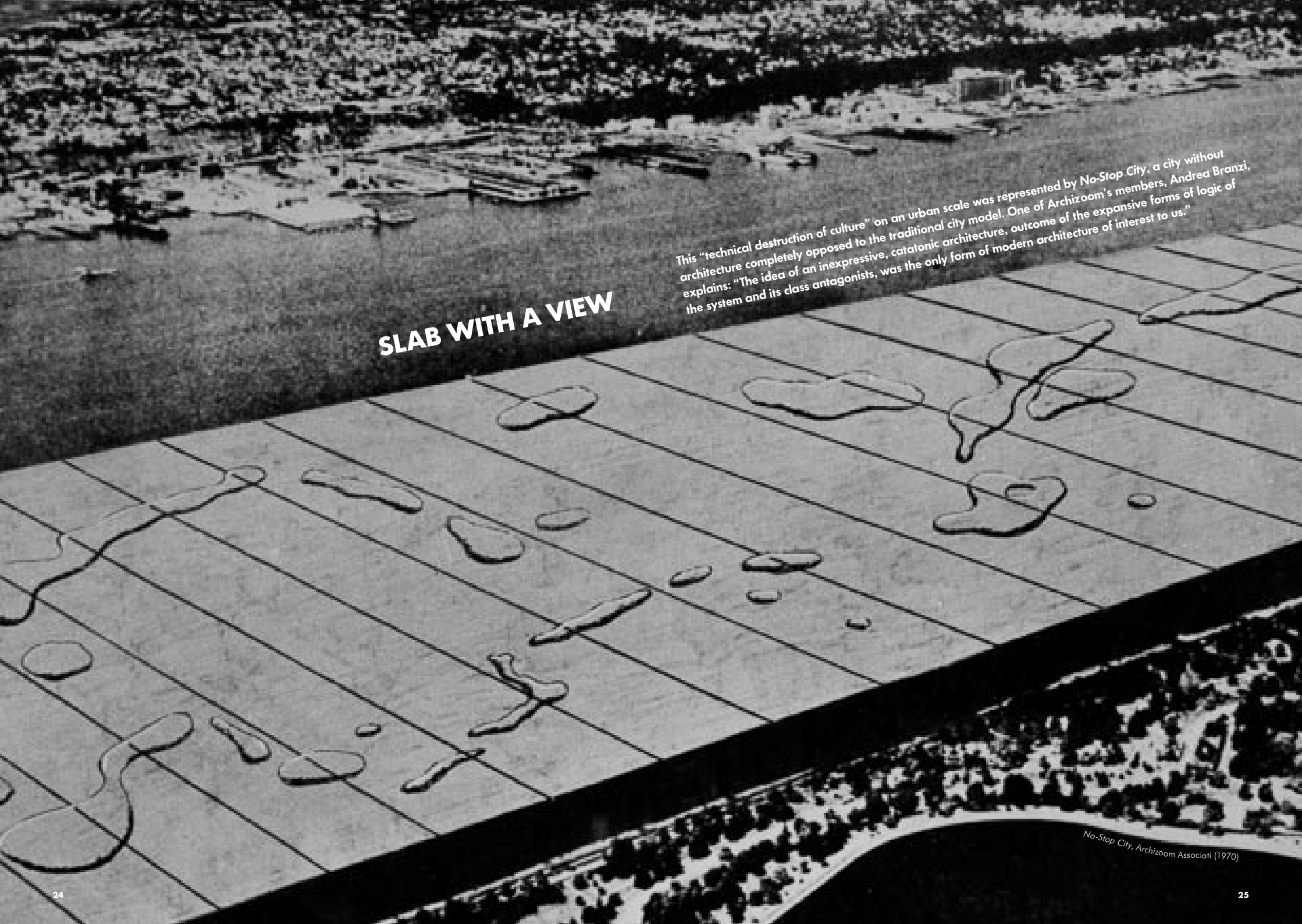
# FLORENCE'S HAUTE CULTURE

**Archizoom's practice was aimed at the "technical destruction of culture", culture being all the values and meanings — moral, religious, and aesthetic — of a certain society. This image represents everything that Archizoom were aiming to destroy: Italian architecture and fashion as carriers of cultural and ideological conservative narratives.**

Italian fashion in 1967. Creations by Farsoni fashion house presented in Florence

# SLAB WITH A VIEW

This "technical destruction of culture" on an urban scale was represented by *No-Stop City*, a city without architecture completely opposed to the traditional city model. One of Archizoom's members, Andrea Branzi, explains: "The idea of an inexpressive, catatonic architecture, outcome of the expansive forms of logic of the system and its class antagonists, was the only form of modern architecture of interest to us."

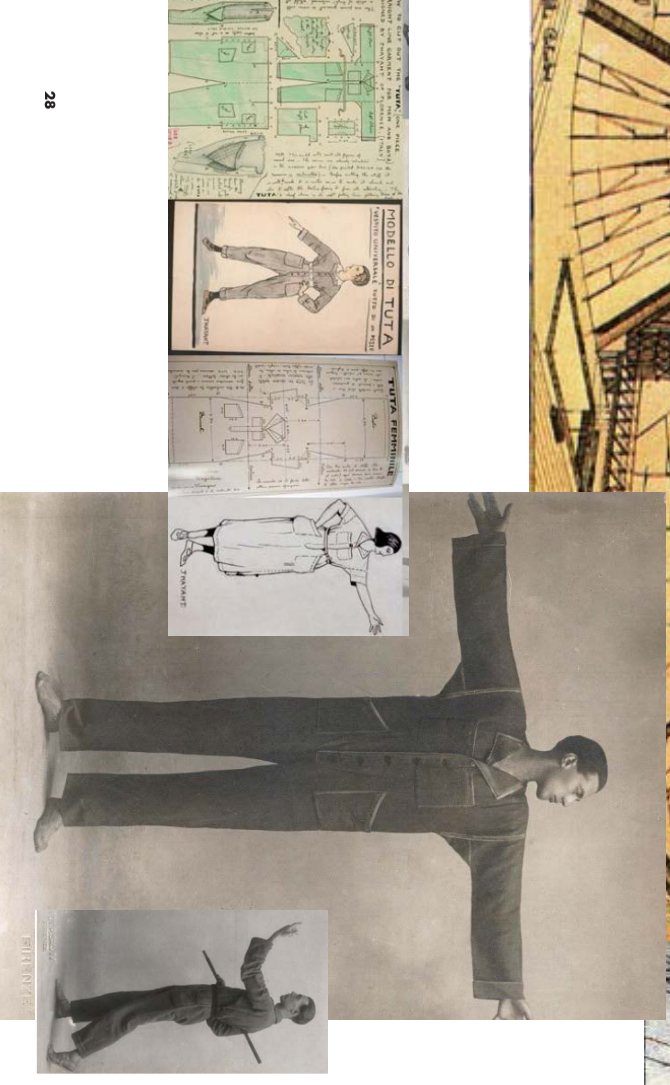


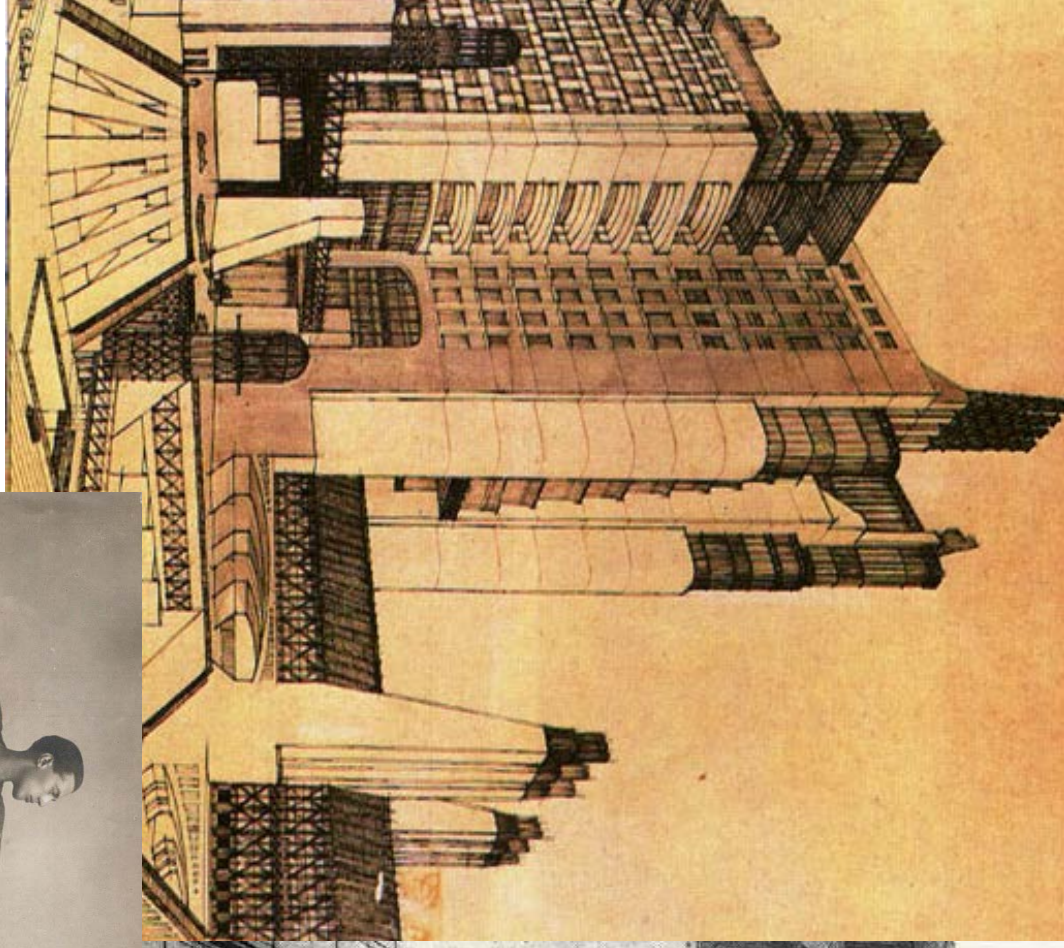
*No-Stop City*, Archizoom Associati (1970)

Frame from video *Dressing is Easy* (1973)
Courtesy Dario Bartolini

## TAKE IT EASY

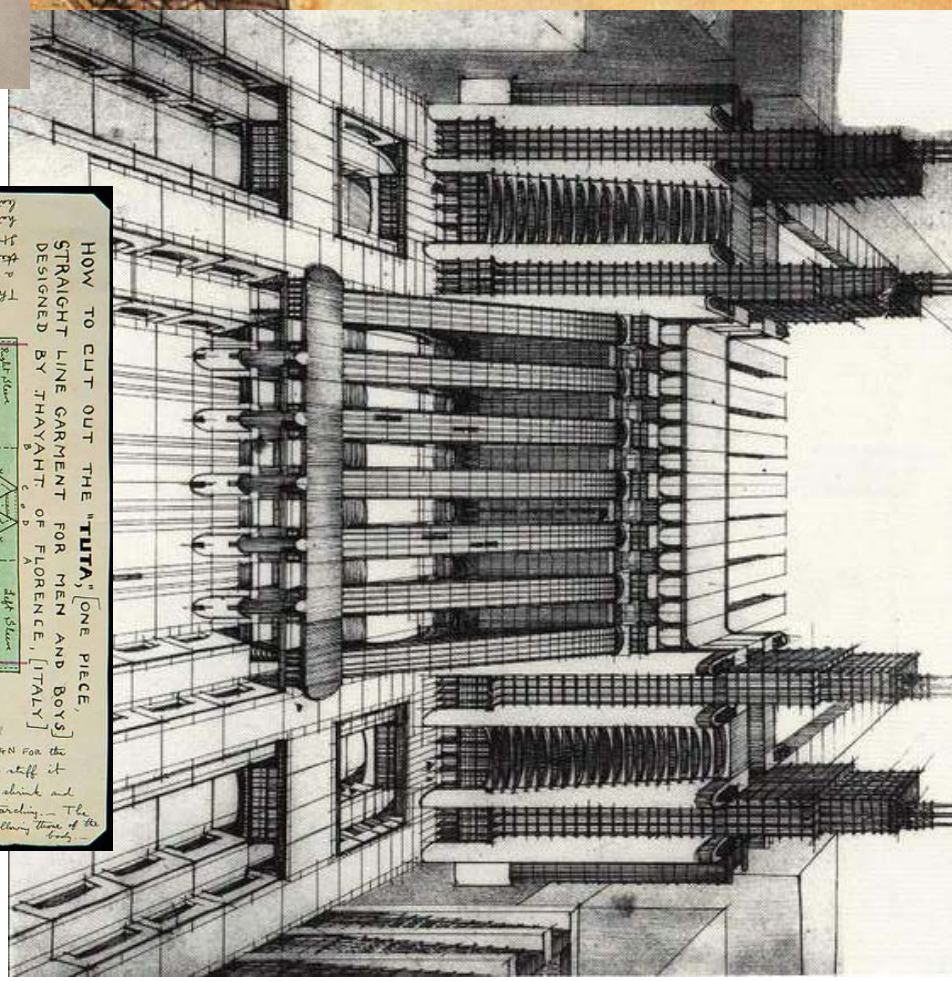
**Similarly, *Dressing is Easy* was a radical attack on the culture of fashion by denying sartorial traditions, seasonal and gender-specific clothing and abolishing the distinction between producer and consumer through simplification of the techniques.**

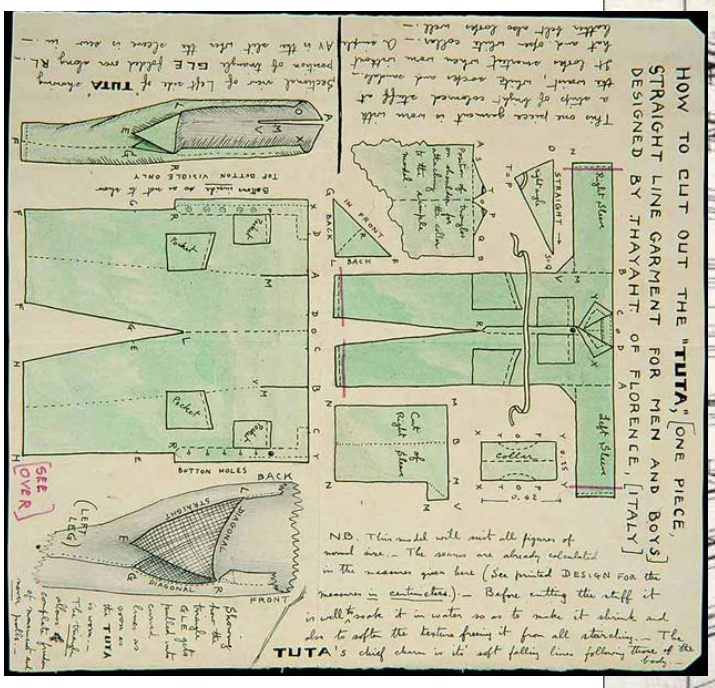











→ *La Città Nuova*, Antonio Sant'Elia (1914)
← *Tuta*, Thayaht (1919)

# WARDROBE ESSENTIALS: THE FUTURIST SUIT

***Dressing is Easy*** **was forerun by the work of another Florentine, Thayaht (pseudonym of Ernesto Michahelles), who designed the *TuTa* in 1919. The sartorial proposal for the *TuTa*, practical, affordable workwear for everyday use, was part of the Futurists' program of total renovation and re-organization of life. This new system of clothing was meant to match a new urban landscape that would break with tradition and history.**

# DRESSING IS EASY-MADE IN JAPAN?

**Besides referencing anti-fashion experiments such as the *TuTa, Dressing is Easy*'s flat structure and material calls to mind Japanese garments. As suggested by Arata Isozaki in his 1975 book *Kenchiku no kaitai*, *Dressing is Easy* resembles the *mompe*, Japanese workwear during World War II – practical clothing realized in resistant fabrics.**

Japanese *mompe*



*Dressing is Easy* garment, Archizoom Associati (1973)

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*The Geographer*, Johannes Vermeer (1669)



# PJ PARTY: JAPANESE LOUNGEWEAR

**This transcultural reference stroke me, even though it is hardly something new. The introduction of Japanese garments in the West dates back to the 17th Century, when Dutch East India Company started to import in Holland the kimono, which was called *Japonse rocken* (Japanese dressing gowns). Wearing the kimono was considered acceptable in non-formal situations, such as at home or at costume balls. In the West "Japanese fashion" represented freedom from everyday social code – both in terms of extravaganza and comfort.**

*Madame Monet in a Japanese Costume*, Claude Monet (1875)

# POWER DRESSING: THE WESTERN UNIFORM

**In Japan, European clothing was deeply connected with the discourse on modernity and power, during the Meiji era (1868 -1912), it was first introduced for uniforms in the military. Contrary to Japanese clothing in the West, which represented an individual loungewear choice, Western clothing in Japan was not a singular identitarian choice, but a uniform. The adoption of Western clothing was instrumental to make Japanese people look more civilized to Western eyes and potentially equals.**

*Chinese Generals in Pyongyang Surrender to Japanese*, Toshihide Migita (1894)

# ROKUMEIKAN STYLE

The *Rokumeikan*, designed in 1883 by British architect Josiah Conder, became a symbol of Westernisation. This building was aimed at providing a Western-style space of social meeting where Japanese foreign ministers could attempt friendly relations with people from the West and hopefully revise the unequal treaties signed during the Edo Period (1603 – 1868). Japanese who attended events in the *Rokumeikan* had to observed Western dress code.

Ballroom dancing at the *Rokumeikan*, Yoshu Chikanobu (1888)

*Rokumeikan*, architect Josiah Conder (1883)

# FASHIONING NATIONALISM

**Within the general framework of ongoing Westernisation, Japanese aesthetics were revived during the Showa Era (1926–1989) as nationalist symbols part of the Imperial culture of Japan. The *senninbari*, a soldier's good-luck belt with a thousand stitches embroidered by a thousand different women, referenced many signifiers of traditional "Japaneseness": the tiger, white and red colours, the rising sun symbol.**

↘ Women stiching *senninbari* for men going to war in China (1937)
→ WWII Japanese Army Navy *senninbari* with Rising Sun Flag and tiger
↓ Rising Sun Flag

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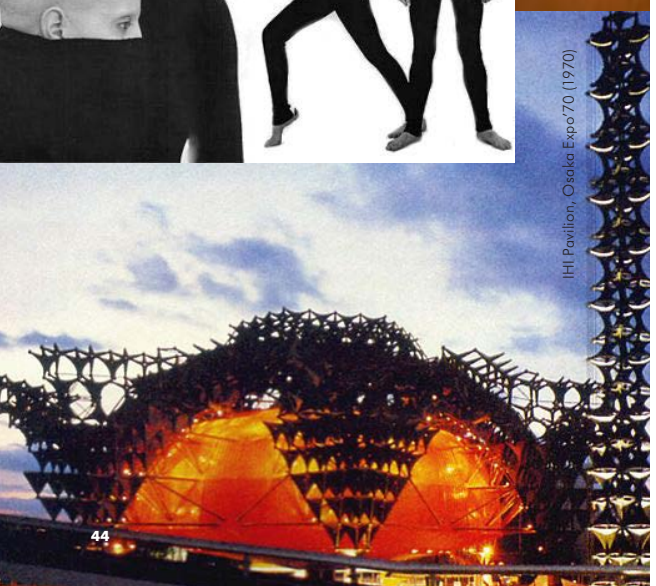
# AMERICAN BEAUTY

**After the II World War Japan entered a period of rapid economic growth. The Hibarigaoka Housing Complex was built in 1959 as a solution to housing shortage with 2.714 dwellings units in total. Each housing unit consisted of two rooms, a dining kitchen, a flush toilet and bathroom. Modern Western apartments complexes (*danchi*) became a dream of the many, but could only be afforded by salary men who earned above a certain level of income. Similarly, Western clothing came to represent a desirable, modern and sophisticated lifestyle, less connected with authority and more with women, consumer culture and leisure. It was the so called "lifestyle revolution".**

↖ *Danchi Dreams*, Cody Ellingham (2018)
↙ Modern clothing in Japanese fashion magazine (1960)
→ Model of living unit in Hibarigaoka Housing Complex, Tokyo Edo Museum

Records from Expo'70, Shukan Sakei (1970)

*Unisex Project* photographed by Patricia Faure for Osaka Expo'70 (1970)



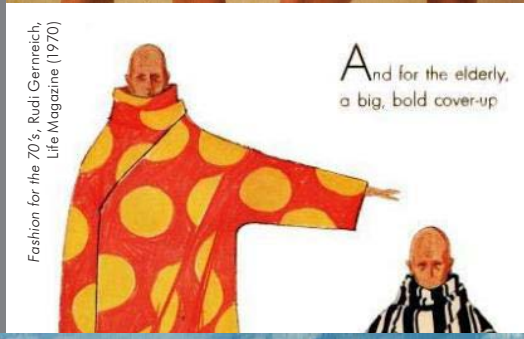
IHI Pavilion, Osaka Expo'70 (1970)

*Unisex project*, Rudi Gernreich (1970)

*Unisex Project* photographed by Patricia Faure for Osaka Expo'70 (1970)

## FUTURE PRESENT – OSAKA 1970

**The Osaka Expo opened in 1970 under the theme *Progress and Harmony for Mankind*. The futuristic setting of the Expo'70 inspired fashion designer Rudi Gernreich to present the *Unisex project*. The photo shooting in Osaka was sensational - bald men and women wearing outfits that Gernreich described as "an anonymous sort of uniform of an indefinite revolutionary cast"**




*Fashion for the 70's*, Rudi Gernreich, Life Magazine (1970)

*Fashion for the 70's*, Rudi Gernreich, Life Magazine (1970)

Hitachi Pavilion, postcard Osaka Expo'70 (1970)

# IS JAPAN THE FUTURE?

**With its fast economic development, along with the techno-digital revolution and consumerism, during the 1980s Japan embodied the idea of modernity in the West. Japanese culture started influencing the West: Cyberpunk urban imagery became prominent and creations by the 1980s generation of Japanese fashion designers significantly affected the global fashion system.**

Rattan body, Issey Miyake (1982)

Irving Penn regards the work of Issey Miyake: Protographs 1975-1998

Frame from *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott (1982)

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## Everything you need to know about Dressing is Easy

## Archizoom in Japan: Is Dressing Easy?

## Interview with Dario Bartolini (Archizoom)

# Interview with *Dario Bartolini* *(member of Archizoom Associati from 1967 to 1974)*

**How did you see the future fifty years ago and how do you see it today?**

Fifty year ago my future was very uncertain, but the world's future seemed more positive. Now my future is clear, it is the future of society that concerns me.

**Is design a way to solve or to create problems?**

Design should try to solve problems by proposing new ways of living for the present and for the future, since the future is always implied in the present. It's some architects' terrible habit to be utopian, to imagine new worlds without concentrating on the present they live in.

**Do you think destruction is necessary for creation?**

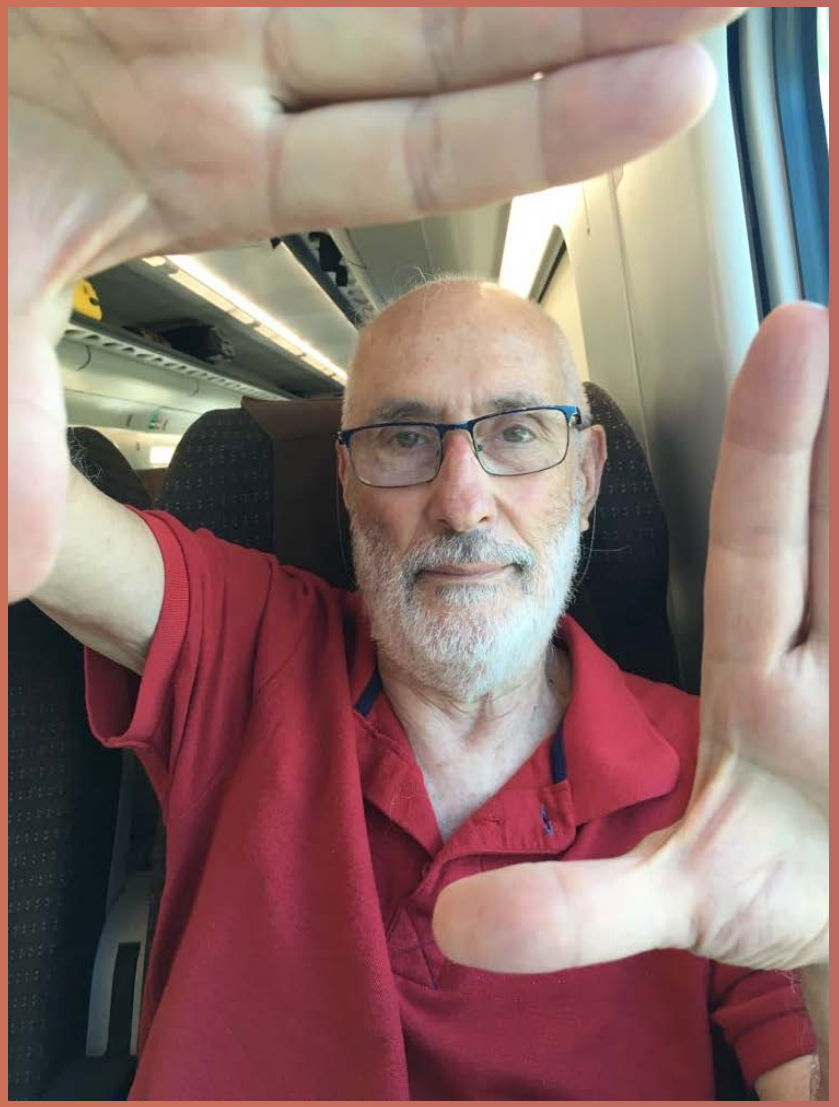
I think so – It's a bit tragic but I would say so. It doesn't need to be like this anyway: certain things need to be destroyed, other things are destroyed for no sake and some other things are going to self-destroy anyway. I do not mean destruction necessarily as an aggressive action, but a space that needs to be created for new things to happen.

**How do you 'stay radical' or how or how do you stop being one?**

Staying radical in the same exact way as we used to be at the time would make absolutely no sense. Only by changing one can stay radical, because radical is a certain attitude in front of reality, which is always changing. Radical thinking consists in being able to put into question the fundamentals. I still feel a bit radical because when there is a problem I like to understand it by questioning to the very core of the subject.

**What projects are you currently working on?**

I am now working on perception which, in my opinion, is the most radical thing an artist can do: trying to understand why we see things the way we see them. I create drawings altering images that I find online so that, by looking at these drawings, memory is stimulated to reconstruct the original shapes.



Dario Bartolini