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About memory in fashion: a study of the work of Clive Rundle

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About Memory in Fashion:
A Study of the Work of Clive Rundle

Erica de Greef

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

Johannesburg 2011

Abstract

In this research project I propose to investigate the notion of memory and its trace in the work of fashion designer Clive Rundle (b. 1959). This positioning of the work in the context of memory offers an approach to the reading of the fashion processes and products; one of various research options that could be used to analyse the creative approach, the fashioned objects and the complex displays of Clive Rundle's fashion within the broader creative and social context of a post-Apartheid South Africa.

The inquiry for this research is concerned with the palimpsest, as witness to the past in the form of traces, memories and histories. The evidence or renegotiation of the past in the present in fashion, which I will reference in this research is what Walter Benjamin identified as the *'tigersprung'*, and which is surfacing in the construction of new contemporary fashion narratives of a number of contemporary South African fashion designers, who together with other visual artists are currently exploring notions of memory and history as catalysts for remembrance, social commentary and healing.

By exploring the role of memory and its trace in Clive Rundle's work, I hope to investigate the layers in the palimpsest that informs the work. In this research I aim to explore how Rundle's work could offer an opportunity to investigate whether notions of loss and mourning can be expressed through fashion, how the past resurfaces in fashion, and whether this can help locate a current understanding of transformation in a post-modern South Africa.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work, other than the supervision received from Professor Anitra Nettleton. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in Fine Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university

_____

_____ day of _____ 20 ____

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Anitra Nettleton, for her academic engagement, rigour and support in this research project.

I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Clive Rundle, Donne Rundle and Mbuye Malo to make available the materials for the research and the exhibition and for their time, integrity, insight and trust in this research project.

And, I would like to thank Mike Thoms at LISOF for steering me into an academic direction and for the faith invested in my abilities to make a difference to the field of fashion theory and fashion research.

[For serious Fashion Students past, present and future]

It is this *tigersprung* into the past used to describe fashion as the "sense of the modern wherever it stirs in the thicket of what has been"

Benjamin (1939)

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curriculum vitae

CLIVE RUNDLE

fashion designer and constructionist

personal details

name	Clive Rundle
date of birth	April 09 1959
place of birth	Zimbabwe
address	02 Zebra Street, Kensington, 2094 Johannesburg South Africa
telephone	+(27)011 4028786 (studio) +(27)011 880 3839 (store) +(27)86 556 2469 (fax)
mobile	+(27)83 444 6622
email	cliverundle@polka.co.za
website	www.cliverundle.com and www.cliverundle.co.za

education

1988	Gordon Flack Davidson Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa 3 year diploma, Certificate in Advanced Patterns
1982	Fashion Design Management College, Johannesburg, South Africa 2 year diploma successfully completed in 6 months
1979	Florida Park High School, Johannesburg, South Africa

work : fashion

1994 – current	Shown annual collections at South African Fashion Week
1988 – current	Opened *Clive* store in The Mall, Rosebank, Johannesburg
1982 – current	Owner: Clive Designs CC, studio, Doornfontein, Johannesburg

work : fashion awards & recognition

2011	Fashion Film, produced by Arianne Besson & Louw Kotze
2010	Presented, by invitation at *Arise Africa International* showroom, Paris
2010	*Fashion meets Art: no 1*, installation @ Sieppel Gallery, Johannesburg
2009	*Climbing out the Wall*, installation @ AddictLab, Johannesburg
2006	Together with SAFW, showed @ *Laksme Fashion Week*, Mumbai, India
2006	Best Designer - *Marie Claire Prix d'Excellence de la Mode* Awards
2002	Premiered Spring/Summer 2003 collection, AngloGold Ashanti *Afridesia Show* @ Mercedes Benz Fashion Week, New York
1997	*Milan Fashion Week,* by invitation, Italy
1994	Under auspices of *World Gold Council,* showed in Beijing, China
1994	20 fashion shows, exhibitions, fashion awards in a single year
1993	*Rare Designers Award* @ the J&B Met, Cape Town, South Africa
1986	By invitation, showed collection @ *Coeur Des Beaux Arts*, France

proposal

gallery afronova:

With the Afronova located in the new bustling, contemporary urban space of Braamfontein, it simultaneously reflects history (location) and the present (with its focus on cutting edge creative exhibitions). This dialectic can create a fertile platform to showcase the work of Clive Rundle. Rundle's fashion explores the dialogue between **Fashion and Art,** as an integrated and complex exploration of meaning, memory and metaphor, and his work deserves a showing in a 'cabinet' outside of fashion retail. Although not essential, we could consider a commercial component to the exhibition in the form of a catalogue or book or object that extends beyond the dressing room of conventional fashion sales.

Fashion has in recent years received sustained academic interest from universities, museums and galleries, and has shown internationally in the Victoria & Albert, The Metropolitan Museum, Tokyo Museum, Istanbul Modern, the Tate, and the Barbican Art Gallery to name a few cutting-edge spaces. Contemporary artists also explore the surface of fashion/dress to interrogate multiple notions of gender, belonging, marginality and identity- including South African artists Steven Cohen, Lolo Veleko, Lawrence Lemoana, Athi Patra-Ruga, Nicholas Hlobo and Nandipha Mntambo. This post-modern blurring of the boundaries between fashion and art disciplines, positions the work of Rundle at the forefront of curatorial opportunity, and offers the Afronova a challenging prospect to engage in this important discourse.

exhibition purpose:

In fulfilling the practical component required in the Masters in Fine Arts by Coursework (Wits University), I am **curating** a dedicated exhibition as a part of my final assessment. **Clive Rundle** is considered by many to be one of South Africa's leading fashion designers and has established a reputation for his unique approach to fashion: an ability to embrace chaos, to capture fleeting memories, and to reconcile the unimaginable with the imaginable, the ugly with the beautiful, the past with the future. Considering a scope for this exhibition, I do not propose this exhibition to host a full retrospective, nor a comprehensive survey of his work; instead I will offer a focused observation and display of **notions of history and memory** as they surface in selected examples of his work. Traces, signs and metaphors of the past have been mapped, observed and identified in my research to date; these will be exhibited, locating meanings in the many memories as they surface in the material objects. This exhibition aims to highlight how Rundle's work produces significant artifacts beyond of the realm of fashion shows and retail environments common to the field of fashion.

The increased international attention and recognition that fashion has received in recent years from a number of research fields, including social theory, cultural (visual and material) studies and contemporary fine arts practices, has led to more in-depth analyses of the study of fashion. Rundle's creative development spans approximately 20 years, and therefore presents an important research archive of visual material that acts as surface and object, in a post-Apartheid, postcolonial and postmodern South Africa dealing with notions of identity and transformation.

exhibition details:

The aim of this exhibition, to showcase identified notions of **memory** (design evocations) and **history** (historical references) in Rundle's work, offers curatorial opportunities that include a variety of visual and material practices: digital, virtual and video projections; conversations and sound samples; employing surfaces that reflect, absorb, contain and disguise; still images and moving objects. The multiple manifestations of the fashion object (the image, the idea, the object) further locate the importance of investigating the signs and simulations in his work that act as social commentaries, as catalysts for remembrance and as metaphors for expression or oppression. This exhibition (informed by an in-depth **research report** critically supporting the methodology and curatorial approach taken) hopes to highlight, determine and construct new cultural meanings in the field of local fashion through this curated display of fashion objects that witness time, meaning and memory.

The exhibition will encourage collective **collaboration** between Rundle and a number of specialists with whom Rundle has worked: a videographer/filmmaker (Hedwig Bester), a conceptual artist (Mark Erasmus), a fashion photographer (Natalie Payne), a lighting engineer (Anthony Tischauser) and myself. The shared participation in the project will contribute to a multi-layering of the memory constructs, presenting a deconstruction of the layers that form, through the performance of fashion, the image of fashion and the objects of fashion. This considered approach further affords a presentation of fashion beyond the garments alone, an important feature in contemporary fashion exhibitions that aim to explore the interdisciplinary nature of the work of designers who explore the politics of the body, culture and gender.

exhibition design:

Curated around Walter Benjamin's notion of *Tigersprung*, and concepts within Baudrillard's *Signs and Simulations*, this exhibition presents a selection of Rundle's work in a number of carefully curated "forms of presentation" that address the present moment (so often expressed as fashionable); the referents to various issues and politics, past re-presentations, and the materiality of moments trapped in time. Chosen objects offer a tactile presence. Mirrored boxes reflect, absorb and hide what is inside. Photographs have been made into a book that transforms

into a hat. Videos of iconic fashion collections will loop on split screens and will be projected on curved surface skins. Sound tracks will overlap as multiple concurrent influences, while mannequins move perceptively slowly. Lighting will work to focus, to ghost, and to haunt.

Bringing an exhibition into being requires curatorial direction and planning, but also a clear indication of the chosen space (location) and the available budget. In this case, Afronova offers a commercial context, which would require attention if the commercial nature of the work is to be addressed or accessed. The final allocated exhibition space would determine the scale, the scope and the final costing of exhibition. Attached is an initial outline of costs for an exhibition, although the choice of materials, lighting and digital aids could further influence the budget.

Visual Reference 1:
YouTube Video: SSAFW: Clive Rundle

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrkfZLYGdZ4&feature=related

Visual Reference 2:
Hussein Chalayan @ Istanbul Modern
http:/www. husseinchalayan.com

Visual Reference 3:
Fashion Research & Academics
Premsela Foundation
http://www.premsela.org/fashion-culture/fashion--technology/

Visual Reference 4:
Fashion & Minimalism
Fashion Projects <http://www.fashionprojects.org>

<http://fusion.google.com/add?source=atgs&feedurl=http://feeds.feedburner.com/fashionprojects/cnfa

Contact: Afronova, Johannesburg

Tel: +27(0)837265906

Website: http://www.afronova.com

Email: afronova@tiscali.co.za

AFRONOVA ANNOUNCES EXHIBITION OPENING
Clive Rundle: About Memory explores fashion for a month

The exhibition *Clive Rundle: About Memory,* curated by Erica de Greef, opens at Braamfontein's Afronova gallery on 24th June 2011, at 6pm with an event titled "Climbing out the Wall *2", and opening by Dion Chang.

This interdisciplinary exhibition presents reflections as constructions of memory in the work of fashion designer Clive Rundle, through a study of the multiple sites of fashion that make up the collective work of this well-known fashion designer, namely; the studio, the shop, the show, the fashion shoot, the magazine, and more closely, the patterns, the sketches, the mirrors and the fashioned objects.

"I am interested in the complex negotiation that occurs in the reading of the surfaces of fashion", says de Greef, "and especially, in the work of Clive Rundle, where fragments of the past continually confront the present moment".

Underpinning this exhibition is a notion of time and layering, as a palimpsest or as a network of memory traces that reference loss and absence in the considered constructions of fashion: - in a jacket, a sleeve, a textile, or a bricolage of pieces.

The month-long exhibition (24 June 2011 – 24 July 2011) will include two walkabouts and two film screenings. See venue details and dates below.

ENDS.

Walkabouts: Saturday 09 July @ 2pm Clive Rundle
Saturday 23 July @ 2pm Erica de Greef

Film Screenings: Wednesday 29 June @ 7pm
Wednesday 13 July @ 7pm

Opening: 6pm-8pm Friday 24th June 2011. *Climbing out the Wall* *2
Opening Speaker: Dion Chang

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Friday: 13:00 to 18:00 Saturday: 13:00 to 17:00
Gallery Address: 155 Smit St, Braamfontein, Johannesburg
Henri Vergon Contact Details: 0837265906
afronova@tiscali.co.za

Exhibition Curator:
Erica de Greef lives in Johannesburg, and works in the inter-disciplinary fields of fashion, art and academia. Currently reading for a Masters in Fine Arts at Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, de Greef has developed this research field through lecturing at LISOF, Johannesburg, in various subject-specialisations. She has participated in a number of academic conferences in South Africa and internationally, has curated a number of fashion exhibitions collaborating with designers, museums, galleries and students, and has published in the cultural and critical context of South African fashion research. This exhibition forms a part of her Masters thesis project.

Erica de Greef Contact Details: 0723686621
erica@lisof.co.za

Exhibition Production:
Mark Erasmus trained at the Art Foundation in Johannesburg, and for more than a decade has researched the intensity, viscosity and anatomy of colour, the ambiguity of order and chaos, and the functions of form and image. Erasmus' solo exhibition at Obert Contemporary (Colour Terra, 2005) and the ongoing development of conceptual work reflects his diverse practice as skilled painter, photographer and sculptor. As a freelance designer and conceptual consultant, recent projects include working with The Colour Library, Mushroom Productions, Showtex, and in conceptual collaboration with Clive Rundle (Graffiti 2010, Climbing out the Wall 2009).



24 June - 24July

CliveRundleAboutMemory

You are invited to the exhibition

CliveRundleAboutMemory

Erica de Greef has explored the multiple surfaces of the work of fashion designer Clive Rundle in this multimedia exhibition that investigates various reflections and abstractions as traces of the constructions of memory

Opening:
6pm-8pm Friday 24th June 2011
Climbing out the Wall *2
Opening Speaker: Dion Chang

Walkabouts:
Saturday 09 July @ 2pm Clive Rundle
Saturday 23 July @ 2pm Erica de Greef

Film Screenings:
Wednesday 29 June @ 7pm
Wednesday 13 July @ 7pm

Tuesday to Friday: 1pm - 6pm
Saturday: 11am - 2pm
155 Smit St, Braamfontein, Johannesburg
Henri Vergon: 0837265906
afronova@tiscali.co.za

AFRONOVA modern and contemporary art

ShowTex AMAZING STAGE FABRICS IN MOTION

AFRONOVA
modern and contemporary art

CliveRundleAboutMemory

AN EXHIBITION CURATED BY **ERICA DE GREEF**

CLIVE RUNDLE **IN COLLABORATION** WITH MARK ERASMUS / MBUYISELO MALO / KEVIN MCKINTSOSH / DONNE RUNDLE / HEDWIG BARRY BESTER / SAVANNAH ERASMUS / NICOLA COOPER / LIZ VAN DER MERWE / EUGENE MARAIS / COLLEEN JACK / IVAN NAUDE / LUCILLA BOOYZENS / MERWELENE VAN DER MERWE / NATALIE PAYNE / JACKIE VAN STADEN / ANTHONY TISCHHAUSER / JACQUELINE WIJTENBURG / THE CLIVE RUNDLE WORKSHOP / MODELS AND MUSES

OPENING AT AFRONOVA GALLERY, BRAAMFONTEIN, JOHANNESBURG
FRIDAY 24TH JUNE 2011 AT 6PM

24 JUNE – 24 JULY 2011

Research in fashion has received increased attention in recent years from a number of academic fields, as a site of social study as both visual and material culture. In fulfilling a practical component required in the Masters in Fine Arts at Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, Erica de Greef has interrogated the multiple sites of fashion and layers of meaning that surface in the work of fashion designer Clive Rundle; considered one of South Africa's leading creatives.

This exhibition aims to map, witness, reflect, record and note *traces of the past* as a palimpsest of meaning and memory in the various sites of fashion, through an investigation of Rundle's fashion collections and complex creative processes. Notions of remembering and remembrance form networks of social cohesion in a collective, new South Africa, where histories are rewritten and change, instability and transformation inform the everyday.

Memory surfaces as the abstract, fluid and personal in the context of Rundle's fashion signs that negotiate absence, perhaps loss, chaos, and inevitably change. The collective components in this exhibition investigate these spaces; the mirror performs as reflective, fashion show ramp is silenced and emptied, the exploded look-book pages witness the wearing of fashion, the photographs abstract the fashioned item, the wall as a marker of time and event, and the sketches, texts and patterns as projections of process and place.

GALLERY HOURS:
TUESDAY TO FRIDAY: 13:00 TO 18:00
SATURDAY: 11:00 TO 14:00

155 SMIT ST, BRAAMFONTEIN,
JOHANNESBURG
HENRI VERGON: 083726590

CliveRundleAboutMemory

EXHIBITION LIST	NOT FOR SALE (NFS) PRICE ON REQUEST (POR)
REFLECT	foil mirror SHOWTEX 6m x 3.5m (POR)
CLIMBING OUT THE WALL * 2	graffiti canvas wall, STAR models, EUROPA shoes original event with ADDICTLAB, June 2010, wall by DREAMSETS, painted by Mark Erasmus (NFS) DVD video limited edition, IMAGE LAB, Eugene Marais (POR)
THE BOOK EXPLODED	look-book by Clive, model Nina, collaged photo shoot, original DOSSIER shoot (POR)
FRAGMENT, MAP, TRACE DIPTYCH	layered photo prints RESEARCH & notes on board, creative assistant Nicola Cooper (NFS)
NO*[3+3+1]	painting, Mark Erasmus, 2008 (POR)
THE STALKERS	photographed pen & pencil sketch & NOTES, loop WALL projection (NFS)
GHOST IN THE COLLECTION	*video 1:* A/W 2010 collection BRAILLE @ SAFW (Arts on Main) with studio - behind scenes, edited Hedwig Barry Bester, screening 29 June 2011 (POR)
PARIS '88	*video 2:* B&W photo prints 1988 originals Kevin McKintosh, reworked Merwelene van der Merwe, archived Donne Rundle, montaged Nicola Cooper, screening 13 July 2011 (POR)
MIRROR IMAGE RAMP	reworked photo print on PVC, SAFW @ SHINE studio, KEYPRINT pvc banners (NFS)
SOUNDS	SHOW soundtracks (NFS)

CliveRundleAboutMemory

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EUROPA ART SHOES: Sandton 011 8835354

ADDICTLAB: Jan van Mol jan@addictlab.com

DREAMSETS: Sean Hoey 0114645364

IMAGE LAB: Eugene Marais 08237466909

SAFW: Lucilla Booyzens 011 4427812 runwaypro@icon.co.za

MAKEUP: Liz van der Merwe 0824511414

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