

Press Release

**SYMPOSIUM IN THE MAK:  
THE FASHION SYSTEM / REVISITED: (Psycho-)Analytical  
Approaches**

A cooperation between the Wiener Psychoanalytische Akademie and the MAK

Venue	MAK Lecture Hall MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Date	24 – 25 June 2016
Admission	MAK admission ticket authorizes a visit of the symposium € 9.90 / Reduced € 7.50 / Family Ticket € 13 Free admission for children and teens under 19

The term fashion permeates nearly all realms of life. Its meaning is most popularly understood when referring to clothing. What we wear represents not only a fundamental factor of identity formation in the individual and collective sense. Fashion characterizes the image of human beings in cultural spaces and eras, refers to social differences, controls and reflects the role behavior of the sexes. With a focus on the current zeitgeist, the Symposium *THE FASHION SYSTEM / REVISITED: (Psycho-)Analytical Approaches* (MAK Lecture Hall, 24 – 25 June 2016) organized in the context of the MAK exhibition *FASHION UTOPIAS: Haute Couture in the Graphic Arts* (MAK Works on Paper Room, until 4 September 2016) by the Wiener Psychoanalytische Akademie in cooperation with the MAK analyzes secret motives and unconscious interpretations of fashion-conscious behavior.

“Fashion Studies” has in recent years crystallized into an especially significant theoretical approach to fashion. As an expression of the postmodern mentality, it constitutes a “post-fashion” clothing culture in opposition to the normative-repressive fashion character of emancipatory tendencies. The established and institutionalized fashion business as defined by haute couture and “Prêt-à-porter” is thus confronted with fashion phenomena in the sense of singular extravagances or a normatively powerful street style which it can’t remain uninfluenced by.

In addition to literary reflections, as well as philosophical, psychological, and sociological theories of fashion, psychoanalysis in the post-Freud generation also incorporated its questions and answers into the thematic complex in order to ultimately emphasize

the sexual urge as the most important motivation for the origination of clothing and the erotic signal effect of fashion.

“The scientific involvement with clothing and fashion experienced a particular boom not influenced by psychoanalysis through French Structuralism, whereby especially Roland Barthes semiotically analyzed clothing in 1967 in his publication *Système de la mode* and classified it as a special language system into everyday mythology,” is how the psychoanalyst and specialist for psychiatry and neurology August Ruhs, initiator of the symposium, outlines the significance of a psychoanalysis with a cultural and social theoretical foundation for dealing with fashion.

The eminently cast symposium *THE FASHION SYSTEM / REVISITED: (Psycho-)Analytical Approaches* analyzes the present state of fashion research from the perspectives of various disciplines, with the goal of countering the provocations typical of fashion with pointed statements. That is unless, according to Ruhs, Karl Lagerfeld’s statement was incontestably valid: “Anyone wearing tracksuit pants has lost control of their life.”

## **Program**

**Friday, 24 June 2016**

**3 p.m.**

### **Welcome**

Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Director, MAK  
August Ruhs, Wiener Psychoanalytische Akademie

**3:30–4:30 p.m.** Moderator: Beate Hofstadler (Wiener Arbeitskreis für Psychoanalyse)

**Elisabeth Skale:** “The secret motives of the fashion designer”

**5–7 p.m.** Moderator: Barbara Karl (Curator, MAK Textiles and Carpets Collection)

**Thomas Oláh:** “The naked future”

**Anna-Lisa Dieter:** “Divan poetry: orient, fashion and psychoanalysis in the horizontal”

**Saturday, 25 June 2016**

**10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.** Moderator: Jeanne Wolff-Bernstein (Wiener Arbeitskreis für Psychoanalyse)

**August Ruhs:** “The ‘sapeurs’ of Brazzaville. Dandyism as subversion”

**Brigitte Felderer, Cosima Terrasse:** “Growing in. Children in fashion”

**Lunch break**

**3–5 p.m.** Moderator: Walter Seitter (philosopher)

**Rudolf Heinz:** “The fashion of ‘last things.’ Matters of psychoanalytical origin of permanent vogue”

**Olaf Knellessen:** “What does psychoanalysis have to do with fashion?”

**5:30–7 p.m.** Moderator: Monika Pessler (Director, Sigmund Freud Museum)

**Silke Birte Geppert:** “Like a virgin—fashion and/as religion”

**Subsequent podium discussion with the speakers**  
(The symposium is held in German)

**The speakers**

**Anna-Lisa Dieter**, PhD, research associate in the excellence cluster “Cultural foundations of integration” at the University of Constance.

**Brigitte Felderer**, curator and cultural scientist, Vienna.

**Silke Birte Geppert**, PhD, fashion and art historian, exhibition curator, 2000–2004 Director of the Museum Schloss Ahrensburg, Germany.

**Rudolf Heinz**, PhD, retired university professor for philosophy at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf; psychoanalytic training, clinical-psychopathological activity with focus on supervision.

**Olaf Knellessen**, private practice psychoanalyst in Zurich, participant and lecturer at the Psychoanalytisches Seminar Zürich.

**Thomas Oláh**, M.A., PhD, lives and works in Vienna and Berlin as a freelance costumer.

**August Ruhs**, university professor, MD, specialist for psychiatry and neurology, psychoanalyst. Until 2011, deputy head of the Universitätsklinik für Psychoanalyse und Psychotherapie of the Medical University of Vienna.

**Elisabeth Skale**, MD, psychotherapist, training analyst of the Wiener Psychoanalytische Vereinigung, specialist for psychiatry/neurology. Free practice as a psychotherapist (psychoanalysis) and specialist for psychiatry.

**Cosima Terrasse** (\*1990 in Paris), lives in Vienna, studying in the masters program in “Social Design” at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

MAK Press and PR

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