



**LE STYLE
AUTRICHIEN**

**Cardigan classique et vestes
de chasse**

Contre l'hiver hostile, la solution peut être autrichienne et confortable, en chandails, grosses vestes et chemisiers délicats.

Ci-contre, cardigan en maille torsadée rebrodée de fleurs sur un chemisier en coton bordé de dentelle. Giesswein aux Galeries Lafayette. Boucles d'oreilles Dinh Van.

Au centre, longue veste à col cranté en lainage. Geiger chez Old England. Chemisier en coton à double

col plissé en dentelle. Gérard Mabe. Jeans Guess par Georges Marciano. Ceinture El Charro à sa boutique à Paris. Broche Gérard Mabe. Boucles d'oreilles Dinh Van.

À droite, veste autrichienne à col cranté en pure laine foulée. Josef Hofer chez Tunmer. Chemisier en coton à jabot et col cassé. Charvet. Jeans Liberto. Ceinture Kenzo. Broches Gérard Mabe. Maquillages Ramon. Coiffures Julien pour Alexandre Zouari

Jungle Jap et Kenzo
invitent M. **M^{me} HOFFER**
à la présentation de leur collection hiver 77-78
lundi 28 mars à 19h.
Hall Concorde. Palais des Congrès
Porte Maillot Paris 75017.

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“Jungle Jap” in St. Johann (and Chanel in Salzburg). The Fashion Fates of the Traditional *Janker*
Philipp Ekardt

I. CC: Sissi

For the Chanel 2015 pre-fall collection, Karl Lagerfeld set both the actual presentation and the points of reference of his work in Salzburg—a tried and tested procedure. This was the year’s *Métiers d’Art* show, one of those in-between collections that are now increasingly placed between the regular biannual prêt-à-porter and couture shows, owing to the rising pressure to produce ever more output that the fashion industry currently exerts on brands of a certain size. In contrast to the classic Parisian format that Chanel has been celebrating for some years now in ever more extravagant settings in the city’s Grand Palais, the *Métiers d’Art* and *Cruise Collections* are traveling shows. The chosen destinations also often define the thematic baseline for the clothes presented, such as the 2013 *Rodeo Collection* in Dallas.

As if Salzburg itself did not have enough semantic resources to draw on, the makers of this show also decided on an additional filmic reference to charge the collection: *Sissi* of all things. This was done with a digital clip in which the Chanel *It-Girl* of the moment, Cara Delevingne, was humorously yet fittingly cast as a chambermaid who by night is transformed into a Romy Schneider “empress” figure while her partner, a pageboy played by Pharrell Williams, becomes the “emperor.” Pharrell also provided the accompanying song *cc: The World*. This was precisely the kind of show one has come to expect from Lagerfeld. Kicking his usual production principle into high gear, he tuned the fashion-reference machine to “costume” and “decoration,” as he had done before in neo-historicist settings or in reference to various social scenarios (the supermarket, the casino, the art academy). In this manner, Lagerfeld has routinely ensured the generation of old-new looks for more than a decade. In this case, the real or perhaps just imaginary inventory of local traditional dress and its afterlives in the fashion industry and in film sets were smoothly integrated into Lagerfeld’s Chanel idiom. Produced with the breathtaking skills of

the Chanel studio and thus technically impeccable, viewers were treated to *Lederhosen* cut to the length of hot pants or mini-skirts; a black leather jerkin that would normally be worn with a dirndl but here was worn above a dress cut in a vague Empire style; generous Edelweiß embroidery at calf-level—where the socks that are normally worn with knickerbockers would be, but here on skin-tight tailored stirrup pants; small Edelweiß appliqués on cocktail dresses with a ruff, and, as was to be expected, a couple of loden capes and loden costume jackets. In his well-practiced way, Lagerfeld thus incorporated formal elements of a partly imaginary and partly real Salzburg region and so made this show into yet another distinctive Chanel performance.

II. The Mittersill Myth of Origin— What Would Coco Have Done?

Seen alone, this fashion maneuver is not much worth talking about and is hardly different from Lagerfeld’s normal procedure. But the designer included one reference that signals that this 2015 *Métiers-d’Art* Collection and its referrals to local inventories of forms and textiles can also be seen as an example of a specific general way of generating fashion. In an interview with the fashion journalist Tim Blanks, Lagerfeld stated that one reason why he had chosen Salzburg was that Coco Chanel was inspired there to create the form of what is probably her most significant invention after the “little black dress”—namely that classically reduced tailored jacket that has since come to define a Chanel suit.¹ As replayed in the film plot of *Reincarnation*—in which Geraldine Chaplin plays a lookalike of Gabrielle Chanel, who encounters a pageboy while walking to her hotel room in Schloss Mittersill—the form of this jacket originates in one of those conversions from clothing for everyday use (usually male) into elevated women’s wear that so typify Chanel’s approach. In other words, what has become a reduced classic in the system of women’s fashion derives this quality not least because it transposes the pattern and construction of the working uniform of a hotel boy.² A look that also included the traditional *Janker* boiled wool jacket—at least according to the myth.

Here one of the founding myths of the Chanel fashion house and of twentieth-century fashion as

- 1 “Chanel *Métiers d’Art* in Salzburg,” online video clip, FashionTube, December 5, 2014, accessed January 5, 2016, www.fashiontube.com/videos/5vi2f7/chanel-metiers-dart_in_salzburg/.
- 2 On the displacement of “male” connoted forms of fashion in the work of Chanel, see Barbara Vinken, *Mode nach der Mode: Geist und Kleid am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993), p. 29.

a whole is re-enacted, a gesture that Lagerfeld's Salzburg Collection also broadly appropriates by showing how the local color of a place can be processed in the KL/CC system. We are witnessing how a moment of productive difference and the ensuing fashion production are turned into a narrative, re-enactment, drama, and spectacle. The deciding factor is, however, that this theatrical element is completely contrary to Coco Chanel's invention and creative gesture of 1954. Chanel did not transfer the functional cut and specific degree of formalization of a service boy's loden uniform so as to make her women's suit the vehicle of never-ending chatter about Salzburg and its great traditional clothing. She wanted to create a specific kind of understatement, achieved by introducing a functional cut and a certain gender difference—an understatement whose neutralizing tendency also seems to delete the specific circumstances of its genesis (the costume jacket does not openly communicate the fact that it descends from a loden uniform).

The Lagerfeld roadshow runs contrary to the spirit of Chanel's invention in another way too—its costume drama is in fact closer to the concept that Coco criticized in the work of her rival Christian Dior. Chanel denounced Dior's voluminous new look with its fitted waists (certainly also partially in a homophobic way) as "faggy fashion." Dior's method was miles away from the androgynous style that she had helped to establish in the nineteen-twenties. Here Chanel was, for one thing, formulating a critique of Dior's designs as the result of the projection of a certain ideal of femininity that contradicted the everyday needs of the women who might wear these clothes. If the delicate questions of gender and sexual orientation are removed from her invective, there still remains a structural divergence. Dior, according to Chanel, pursues a dress-up principle in fashion, an understanding of fashion as costume. By contrast, her conversion of the pageboy uniform was not about dressing women up as pageboys. The reference and the construction principle of this item of clothing rather served to create effects within a fashion continuum that did not culminate in the representation of young male service personnel by women. In this respect, Chanel was a critic of representation *avant la lettre*. Lagerfeld by contrast at least tends to see fashion as fancy dress, as costume, as make-believe.

The second difference is also related. In the case of the suit jacket, Chanel precisely did not

make use of the principle that Lagerfeld now stages. For her evening wear, Chanel did not use the loden that the supposed *Janker* jacket was tailored with. She did, however, perform this kind of transfer in another, much earlier example, also using a traditional material, Scottish tweed, which she had come to admire during her visits to the country with her British lover at the time, the Duke of Westminster.³

III. An Anchor into the Local

The collections of the Hofer company archives that Kathi Hofer has researched allow us to imagine a different fashion story—and fate. This concerns the firm's most prestigious traditional item, the *Walkjanker*. This was made between 1947 and 2003 using the complex and expensive production method in which the jacket is first knitted in one piece and then shrunk by boiling so that the material becomes denser. As the years went by, this quality product came to be worn not only by well-to-do local people but also by the international jet set. There are photos of Gary Cooper and Ernest Hemingway wearing *Walkjanker* jackets, and also of Grace Kelly at a time when she was already Gracia Patricia, enjoying regal Monégasque winter sports in Austria with her husband and daughters all in Hofer jackets.

This practice sets styles and touches on questions of fashion, but only indirectly. The choice of a *Janker* that has also made it onto a photo in the *Spécial Autriche* in *Vogue Paris*, where it is shown together with a picture of the company signet, is based initially on an experience that connotes in the broadest sense a specific region and which links two possible types of wearer: local inhabitants whose families identify with this item of clothing and its production (to various degrees)—as local traditional dress—and a still comparatively small number of visitors who come to the region to ski and spend time in the Alps.

This principle is similar to travelers choosing fishermen's pullovers when visiting the seaside resorts of southern France, Brittany, or Cornwall. It is important that this type of traditional clothing is not "expressive," but has rather proven itself by dint of a local use value and practicability. Owing to the way it is made, a *Walk* jacket will stay good for decades. A fisherman's pullover can be worn equally on deck, on the beach, or in the harbor. And both can be easily combined with other items

3 See Justine Picardie, *Coco Chanel: The Legend and the Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2010), pp. 162–163, and Valerie Steele, *Women of Fashion: Twentieth Century Designers* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), p. 41.



of clothing that do not derive from either traditional costume or working wear, without creating any costume-like effects. Thanks to their local reference, their durability, and their quality, these clothes are not made *en masse*, and so they become prototypical elements of the *elevated casual*. (A dirndl works locally in its own specific way, but Kim Kardashian in a dirndl looks dressed up, and not because she is Kim Kardashian. By contrast, Grace Kelly in a Hofer *Walkjanker* has added an item of clothing to her own range that remains a signifier of her own style—and not just as a result of her classiness and general elegance.)

Nonetheless, the Hofer *Janker* jacket worn around the Western world has contributed to the creation of an imaginary Salzburg and region, and even an imaginary Europe. Only, this is not the Salzburg based on the imagery we know from *The Sound of Music* or the Sissi heritage industry, but one that probably rather belongs to images of the continent as developed, for example, in the Ripley novels of Patricia Highsmith. Embedded in its everyday reality and interspersed with realistic references, the Hofer *Janker*, like the stylistic world of Highsmith's European cast, is also subtly divorced from these regions and not subject to the burdens of daily life (as the inhabitants of St. Johann im Pongau certainly are). The Hofer *Janker* is an anchor into the local.

IV. Kenzo in St. Johann

Let's take a look at a different picture. A model is crouching upright on the ground. Her right knee is bent while she rests her weight on her left leg. We see her in a field; in the background there is a blurred forest. This fashion photo appeared in 1976 in *Vogue Paris*. The colors are slightly off-primary (indigo-heavy blue, cherry red, pale yellow, and a turquoise that tends towards petroleum), and the whole emits a sense of relaxed diversity, realized in part through the styling of her outfit. There is a pleated patterned silk scarf and a dress, arranged a bit like a sash, contrasted with woolen gloves and a cloth draped around the model's shoulders like a poncho, but it might just be a simple blanket. The hunter's hat with a pheasant's feather corresponds to the generous—almost oversize—*Walk* jacket with black border. Over-the-knee leg-warmers are made of the same material and in the same color—the turquoise that makes this usually forest-green jacket seem a little artificial. These *Walk* items (jacket and leg-warmers) are the result of a short but successful period of collaboration between the Japanese designer Kenzo Takada with his label Jungle Jap, based in Paris, and the Hofer company. Once again the traditional *Janker* is transferred into the system of fashion.

Kenzo's procedure is very different from that chosen by the Chanel fashion house, whether at the time of its founder or under its present head designer. This is not only because Kenzo actually collaborated with the makers and designers of the traditional wear. Kenzo is also not interested in the opulent and evocative heritage value of this clothing, as was Lagerfeld, or in its appeal to some imaginary cosmos. And, unlike Gabrielle Chanel, he is not concerned to outmaneuver the pitfalls of women's fashion by drawing on the traditional form of the *Janker*. Working very close to the original, Kenzo just shifts the color spectrum of this item and only minimally modifies its cut. His jacket seems more voluminous than the Salzburg or Tirol versions that are documented in the Hofer company archives, but this might be down to the model's pose. Perhaps the stylist just chose a jacket that was one size too large—it was the late nineteen-seventies and early eighties that later produced the bomber jackets of the New Beat Kids and the Buffalos. In sum, Kenzo's method is closer to contemporary cross-branding, or to more discrete collaborations restricted to limited numbers, such as between Comme des Garçons' Dover Street Market boutiques and smaller more traditional or more traditionally oriented manufacturers like the British clothing label Sunspel or the Swedish sports shoe firm Spalwart.

Within the Kenzo system, the appropriation of the *Janker* materials and collaboration with local producers is no more than one of many available ways of referring to regionalisms and traditional attire. Here, the *Janker* stands beside outfits and materials that draw on Bedouin scarves, Japanese kimonos, and Mexican ponchos. These designs, which are often spread over different collections, Kenzo presents in overviews in look-books and photographs. From his perspective, this is no more than a further use of the principle of the appropriation of potential fashion material and its transposition into the realm of the luxurious and to positions marked as "exotic." Unusual for a European audience here—if it even ever came to their attention—was the fact that in Kenzo's work their own customs in the shape of traditional dress had become the object of a fashion-creating process. The proverbial view from outside—it sometimes comes from surprising angles. Kenzo has been watching you, but so discretely that the European fashion subject probably never even noticed.⁴

Kenzo's designs occupy a place within the system of fashion from which it is possible to understand both the schematic primary color block system of Oliviero Toscani and Luciano Benetton and the current enthusiasm for the moderate post-hippie aesthetics of Isabel Marant, who

comes from a Parisian perspective and the tradition of Saint Laurent / Bergé where one is always happy to cast an eye on Casablanca and Tangiers. To just see all of this as naïve would itself be naïve. This is made clear by the almost unbelievable name of Kenzo's line: Jungle Jap.⁵ "Jap" is a disrespectful and even racist term for the Japanese, the equivalent of "Chink" for the Chinese. Behind Kenzo's fashion, which is generally perceived as being soft, and behind this tongue-in-cheek brand name, there is in fact a terminology in operation that, from the position of a non-European producer who enters the Western system of fashion, immediately makes a claim to two exoticisms and clarifies through this combination that any positions vis-à-vis the corresponding styles have everything to do with relationality and nothing to do with heritage. This principle is also applied in the use of the Hofer *Walkjanker*.

At the same time, Kenzo is not designing for any branding machine like the one Chanel has become under Lagerfeld's leadership, and this marks his proximity to the easiness of Benetton, which derives from the flat hierarchies and lateral structures of northern Italian production collectives. This means that for Kenzo the *Janker* requires no recasting as something inherited—neither in regional terms nor in terms of the history of the label. (On the contrary, it is precisely marked as the product of collaboration between two producers: Kenzo and Hofer.)

The Kenzo *Janker* is just another item of clothing, among many other possible items of clothing. Its potential multi-relatedness is also evident in the relative ease with which it can be combined with other clothes, as can be seen in the *Vogue* fashion photo discussed above. There it or its leg-warmer counterpart could be simply put together with garments that derive from very different stylistic territories. This maximum

style-ability, in which the single item counts and is noteworthy because it can enter into the greatest possible number of relations to other items, is certainly partly due to the dawn of the style of the nineteen-eighties, which were to achieve mastery in the bricolage discipline of "mix & match." It is also just as much about the character of the *Walkjanker*, which was made for maximum durability and therefore had to be combinable with a large range of legwear. And it is due to Kenzo's own personal touch, which privileged the idea of the "side by side" over the Chanel principle and the latter's inherent tendency to want to control a look *in toto*, whether in the historical form of its inventor or the historicizing version that Lagerfeld so effectively creates. The options for combinations of even the most reduced Chanel suit jacket always remain more restricted than those of the "side by side" that a Kenzo *Janker* invites: Tokio—Paris—St. Johann im Pongau.

- 4 Kenzo's method would thus be a further variant of those strategies that Japanese designers have employed to counter the problem of Orientalism. On this, see Barbara Vinken's analysis of the work of Rei Kawakubo and her reference to the fashion of Hanae Mori, which to a degree integrated Orientalism: "Orientalism was part of a very French tradition, from Poiret to Yves Saint Laurent. The clothes of Hanae Mori, the grande dame of Japanese fashion before Kawakubo, could not be more Parisian, but had a touch of orientalism." Kawakubo by contrast, whose slogan "Comme des Garçons" is within the Chanel tradition of cross-dressing, counters this ascription, according to Vinken. See Barbara Vinken, "The Empire Designs Back," in *Future Beauty: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion*, ed. Akiko Fukai, Catherine Ince, and Rie Nii (London: Merrell, 2010), pp. 27–39, here p. 34.
- 5 Kenzo opened his Paris Jungle Jap boutique in 1970. See Fukain, Ince, Nii, *Future Beauty*, p. 110. On the naming and on Kenzo's "world" style, see Valerie Steele, "Is Japan Still the Future?," in *Japan Fashion Now*, ed. Valerie Steele (New Haven, London, and New York: Yale University Press in association with the Fashion Institute of Technology, 2010), pp. 1–140, here p. 16.