

THE BEAT OF CHANGE – FASHIONED BY THE PEACOCK REVOLUTION

by

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Abstract

The development of British menswear during the first phase of the Peacock Revolution from 1960 to 1965 demonstrated a significant visual change in the representation of masculinity. Examining the elements that helped shape this moment in style indicates a deep-rooted relationship between a group of upper-class dandies and rock music icons. This practice-based study addresses gaps in existing research, qualitatively exploring the collaborative role of fashion and music that supported the progression of menswear. The methodological framework investigates the process of sociocultural evolution through the study of memetics, accompanied by a semiotic analysis of oppositional dress. Bricolage was applied as a method of shaping and applying new meaning to the themes investigated in this research, expressing the potential of music to serve as a vehicle for change. An interactive audio-visual installation piece has been created to stimulate audience participation, encouraging the public to question more generally how fashion and music collaborate to facilitate shifts in identity.

Keywords: Peacock Revolution, London, menswear, music, masculinity, dandyism, identity, consumption, memetics, semiotics, bricolage, audio-visual installation, audience participation

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Chapter One: Introduction

Be extreme. Be anything on earth, be ugly or scabrous or idiotic but do not be lukewarm.

– The Rolling Stones (qtd. in Cohn 87-89)

The development of British menswear from 1960 to 1973 demonstrated significant changes to visual representations of masculinity. In response to the restricted colors and austere styles of male dress formulated a century-and-a-half earlier by the Great Masculine Renunciation, men became increasingly interested in fashion during this period. An analysis of the elements that helped shape this renaissance in menswear indicates a deep-rooted relationship between the Peacock dandies, including budding entrepreneurs, and rock music icons. *The Beat of Change – Fashioned by the Peacock Revolution* is a practice-based study concerned with exploring the collaborative role of dandy fashion and rock music in London from 1960 to 1965 that supported a new masculine ideal.

In 1930, John Flügel theorized the phenomenon that plagued the earlier wardrobes of men as “the Great Masculine Renunciation of Fashion.” Commencing at the start of the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, “men gave up any display in their clothing, renouncing colors, shiny fabrics, ornamentation, jewellery, cosmetics, and anything else that would hint of a desire to attract the eye (earlier modes or aristocratic dress had connected power, including masculine power, with vibrant display)” (George 2). Men of all classes accepted the practical grey, flannel, three-piece suit, producing a stark division between the sexes. It was socially acceptable for women to display an interest in fashion and consumption, but men would face ridicule if they cared for anything other

than rational clothing.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term 'revolution' is used to indicate a lasting dramatic change in the nature of society, while the term 'peacock' contextualizes this transformation, bearing an association with the display of male beauty, elegance, and/or accomplishments ("social revolution, n."; "peacock, v."). Pierre Cardin's introduction of the collarless suit in 1960 marks the dawn of the Peacock Revolution, as it inspired young British designers to adapt and develop similar innovations in menswear (Frank 189). The movement was driven by men who reclaimed a shared interest in their appearances, signaling the power of the changing male demographic and their liberated attitudes towards flamboyance in dress. "Swinging London" emerged as an international fashion capital, characterized by an increase in consumer affluence amongst teenagers and young adults, and new perspectives towards popular culture, freedom and sexuality (Breward and Gilbert 18). This "New Establishment" revolted against pre-war conventions and lifestyles, lacking any desire to resemble the previous generation of their parents. The new generation embraced an image associated with youth, excitement and individuality (O'Neill 492).

A small group of dandies who resided in Chelsea and Kensington, later classified as the emerging Peacocks, helped initiate this movement in London (Cohn 93). Capturing the upper-class market, their distinct style position was confined to high-end boutiques along the West End, King's Road and newly reformed areas of Savile Row (Ross 49). The dandies rebelled against normative standards of masculinity through dress, as their involvement in the production and consumption of male high fashion are viewed as revolutionary acts

during a pivotal time in the development of menswear. By 1962 the emerging Peacocks grew in population, initiating the second wave of the Peacock Revolution from 1965 to 1973. As the movement grew larger and influenced diverse groups of men, the original concept of style created by the dandies became generalized to simply mean the donning of exquisite dress (Ross 13).

Cohn states the most powerful leaders during this period were prominent rock musicians (94). Performers such as the Beatles (1960) and the Rolling Stones (1962) possessed a profound impact on the advancement of male fashion. The transition into rock music embodied the spirit of the time, gathering an unprecedented number of listeners from various subcultures (Headlam 60). The sartorial innovations of the Peacock Revolution paralleled this mood, perceivable in the narrowing of the male silhouette, the mixing of sumptuous textiles, the adaptation of foreign dress styles, and the incorporation of colors. Based on the relationship between the dandies and rock musicians from 1960 to 1965, representations of masculinity evolved in response to a new aesthetic ideal, the propagation of trends, and the spectacle of the shopping experience.

This Major Research Project has presented me with a valuable opportunity to learn through the process of making. The purpose of this research is to qualitatively explore the intrinsic connection between dandy fashion and rock music during the first wave of the Peacock Revolution, to understand the ways in which this relationship played a seminal role in the reintroduction and adoption of 'fashion' in menswear. Investigating the influence of music on society during this movement reveals how subcultural identities are shaped through fashion. Music behaves as a catalyst for change, possessing the ability to

affect various groups of people at once. The manner in which individuals interpret music through fashion is a reflection of their abilities to abolish conventions and act through distinction.

Sociocultural evolution is investigated through the study of memetics. The Peacock Revolution is recognized as a shared culture comprised of information, trends, and behavior practices. In this model, the dandies are identified as 'fashion innovators' who succeeded in producing a *tipping point* in London's fashion scene that escalated into mass popularity. Analyzing this phenomenon from a semiotic perspective provides an understanding of how and why meanings are made through signs of oppositional dress. Clothing acts as a type of nonverbal communication, allowing wearers to speak through a visual language. The symbolic messages communicated through dress become characteristic of a constructed group identity, revealing mutual values, beliefs, associations and aspirations.

An audio-visual installation piece has been created as a metaphor for the relationship between fashion and music in the construction of identity. Working with visual, tactile and aural materials have offered a strong set of connections to the fundamental properties of this research, while stimulating audience participation through multiple senses. Bricolage was applied as a method of shaping and applying new meaning to the themes investigated in this research. Common and readily available materials were recontextualized to enable a rich dialogue between the audience and the installation piece. *The Beat of Change – Fashioned by the Peacock Revolution* is a physical experience

intended to incite commentary on our perception and awareness of the manner in which fashion and music operate to facilitate shifts in identity.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Existing literature offers a general overview of the connection between fashion and music in London during the 1960s, demonstrating the need to analyze their causal relationship in the case of the Peacock dandies and rock musicians. As a result, this study closely examines two insider accounts from Nik Cohn, *Today There Are No Gentlemen* (1971) and Geoffrey Aquilina Ross, *The Day of the Peacock: Style for Men 1963-1973* (2011). These authors and their work have been extensively cited in academic research, demonstrating their credibility and validity as a foundation for this Major Research Project.

History of the Peacock Revolution

The sociocultural climate in London during the Peacock Revolution illustrates a rich context for the changes that occurred. As Cohn traces the development of post-World War Two English menswear, he stresses the function of music as a symbolic solution to the problem of austerity in male dress. Without overlooking the groundbreaking contributions made by renowned young retail entrepreneurs such as Christopher Gibbs, Michael Rainey, Rupert Lycett Green, Eric Joy, Charlie Hornby and Douglas Hayward, he clearly states the most powerful force of this movement were Pop stars such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones (94). Although supported by the dandies and other subcultures, these musicians did not identify themselves as belonging to any particular group (82). In this regard, music is viewed as the catalyst that precipitated change, without directly having the intentions to initiate this movement in dress.

Eyerman and Jamison (1995) discuss the reciprocal and mutually reinforcing connections between social movements and popular culture during this decade in their

article, "Social Movements and Cultural Transformation: Popular Music in the 1960s." The authors investigate how cultures change and influence the masses to transform their identities, adopting new values and patterns of behavior. It is suggested that music provides a sense of belonging amongst the young, promoting the joint pursuit for personal and political liberation (464). This idea confirms that music is capable of providing a foundation for change, based on its appeal to youth culture.

Frank (1997) analyzes this demographic from an advertising perspective in his book, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. He explains the inescapable theme of "youth" in the menswear business as a metaphor for "that quality in art, in fashion, in consuming, that insisted on breaking the rules, on changing for no other sake than for change alone" (214). The attainment of youth through change coincides with the appearances of the dandies and members of the Rolling Stones. Cohn explains they did not possess a recognizable uniform or symbol, only behavioral traits which sought to challenge social conventions. These characteristics included their display of elitism or snobbery toward others, and constant change in their attire (88,94). Based on the lack of supporting research, the motivations for the dandies to adopt new dress codes cannot be universally assessed. Therefore, it is questioned whether the dandies chose these styles of dress to emulate their adored Pop stars, or as a means of social revolution.

Ross and O'Neill (2000) raise awareness to the economic status of this consumer group as a cause for their heightened sense of comfort and confidence (52, 501). The financial stability of the dandies enabled them to actively participate in the process of making longstanding contributions to menswear, as there was less risk involved. Cohn

states the Rolling Stones openly encouraged their listeners to be unconventionally ugly or beautiful (87). The dandies selected the latter ideal, narcissistically infatuated with their appearances to the point of obsession. Self-indulgence through fashion was their defense against conventionality. They solidified a masculine identity in opposition to other consumer groups based on their affluence, presenting designers and store buyers with the market required to develop male high fashion.

Dandyism

Entwistle (2000) discusses concepts of appearance and social class as tools for self-creation in her book, *The Fashioned Body*. She supports the dandy as an important figure in the development of male fashion and style. Entwistle quotes Charles Baudelaire stating, dandyism occurs when ““a certain number of men, detached from their own class, disappointed and disoriented, but still rich in native energy, formed a project “a new sort of aristocracy”, based on superior indifference and the pursuit of perfection”” (129). The Peacock dandies were selective in their process of detaching themselves from their inherent class position. They substituted the values of their fathers for those of the ‘Pop aristocracy,’ but used their allowances to become the fashion equivalent of the rock music personality.

Exploring the legacy of the iconic nineteenth century dandy, Beau Brummell, George (2004) states the figure of the dandy “embodies cultural tensions around masculinity, fashion, performance, gender, and sexuality” (3). The dandyism of the emerging Peacocks is more adequately described as a moment in style that challenged the status quo by fashioning a new image of idealized masculinity. Cohn suggests the dandies

did not demonstrate a resemblance to the social phenomenon of Brummell, as their flamboyant image was cultivated for attention (93). Ross assesses the emerging Peacocks as a group of men who did not produce any revival in traditional dandyism, but a transition from “closed and aristocratic to a more democratic context, when dandyism simply came to mean the donning of fancy-dress ruffles and retro-chic militaria by anyone who could afford boutique prices” (13). He uses the influence of Eric Clapton and Mick Jagger to exemplify rock musicians as style frontrunners that prompted the masses to adopt trends such as the military jacket, the drummer jacket, and the tunic. This connection implies the fashion industry may have exploited prominent members of the music industry as a branding method to disseminate widespread fashion trends.

Attention is focused on Christopher Gibbs (antique shop owner, editor of the shopping guide for *Vogue for Men*) as providing a base for the dandies due to his avant-garde style of dressing (flared trousers, apricot silk pajamas, etc.) (Cohn 92). Cohn emphasizes that in the true nature of Pop, the dandies gambled, smoked drugs, and immersed themselves in music, but they also acquired new boutiques or antique shops from their fathers to provide them with the illusion of purpose (92). The dandies blurred the line between production and consumption, securing a distinct style position. Their appearance served as a tool for self-creation, and the advantages of their social class allowed them to effectively acquire the dress they demanded to signify a new masculine identity.

Masculinity and Consumption

Gill, Henwood and McLean (2003) provide an exploration of the different factors that contribute to the development of new masculine ideals in their study, "A Genealogical Approach to Idealized Male Body Imagery." New social movements, increased fashion retail consumption, new cultural intermediaries and new musical trends, are four specific categories that coincide with the construction of the dandified image. These factors code the young male body in a way that permits its gaze and desirability. The authors suggest new representations of masculinity emerge when they are viewed as encompassing female traits (188). Similarly, Bengry (2012) discusses ideas of hegemonic masculinity in his dissertation, "The Pink Pound: Commerce and Homosexuality in Britain, 1900-1967," using the figure of the dandy. The dandy is analyzed as possessing links to ideas of homosexuality, effeminacy, and fashion, based on his detachment from the predominant ideal of manliness (65). Ross confirms many of the Peacock dandies were heterosexual, therefore, like the peacock fowl they used their extravagant display to signal their presence and availability to the opposite sex (72). The terms 'queer,' 'gay,' and 'homosexual' were erroneously used to describe the dress worn by the dandies (72), depicting their pleasure in consumption and appearance which contrasted the restrained masculine qualities of the Great Masculine Renunciation.

Frank explains that the challenge of persuading men to accept fashion prior to the 1960s was attitudinal and cultural, as there was no new ideal for men to follow (189). Cohn uses the metaphor of the 'Superman' to describe the tall and thin vision devised for male fashion, an ideal best typified by Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones (106). Ross confirms this

body type was common amongst the dandies; a reflection of the number of eating disorders that began to develop in men at this time (78). It is more suitable to suggest the dandies made greater contributions to the development of dress and retail practices, as they were less open to ideas of masculinity apart from their 'Superman' ideal. The second wave of the Peacock Revolution eventually grew more accepting of different representations (72-73).

As the rock musician ideal helped abolish gender-specific associations previously related to fashion, it might have been what O'Neill, Cohn and Ross describe as a commercial marketing strategy created by influential manufacturers and retail entrepreneurs who sought to tap into the menswear market. It is explained that music was an active component in boutiques, used as a method of encouraging men to take pleasure in the new shopping experience (O'Neill 494). Sexualized images of male celebrities graced the walls of retailers, and rock music played aloud to project a hypermasculine mood. The spectacle of these retail environments exploited music as a merchandising technique to aid in the progression of menswear by catering to the tastes of the dandies.

Hauge and Hracs (2010) also explore inventive business strategies in their research paper, "See the Sound, Hear the Style: Collaborative Linkages Between Indie Musicians and Fashion Designers in Local Scenes," considering how key urban centers are more apt to connecting their fashion and music industries. Analysis of the 'exclusivity model' explains how small batches of niche products were customized in the 1960s to target sophisticated consumers as a competitive advantage, by reflecting the changing tastes and values of a movement (126). The authors explore the benefits of merchandising music within the

fashion scene as a way of emphasizing exclusivity, authenticity and “scene appropriateness” to clothing-related products (126). Based on the information in this study, it is questioned whether the dandies would have successfully created a shift in menswear if their concept of style was not associated with music culture. The hypermasculine mood of rock music attracted men to fashion, therefore, without music would menswear have become more acceptable during this time?

O’Neill asserts the possibility of class and style characteristics embedded in the streets of London (487). Shopping at high-end boutiques along the West End, King’s Road and updated areas of Savile Row, the dandies maintained their sense of individuality through location and price differentiation. Ross explains their familiarity with bespoke tailoring (quality, proper fit) was a product of their privileged upbringing. As young men, they accompanied their fathers to fittings at prestigious shirtmakers and suit tailors on Jermyn Street and Savile Row (71). The dandies’ inability to detach themselves entirely from the traditions of their social class position is evident in the fine details of their attire, operating as signifiers to distance themselves from other middle-class consumer groups, such as the Mods, who purchased mass-marketed clothing. It is understood that the dandies may not have intentionally preferred to disrupt class categories, but instead treated fashion as an outlet to better approximate themselves with their celebrity aspirations.

Fashion, Music and Creativity

Calefato (2001) examines the emotional development of subcultural youth identity through the senses, and the manner in which they are able to interact, combine and

substitute one another. In her article, “‘Light My Fire’: Fashion and Music,” fashion and music are explained as two forms of worldliness. She refers to ‘beyond genres,’ such as rock music, as being capable of articulating the ‘new’ world before others are aware of its arrival because they are “a universe of choices, values, lifestyles, and trends; an imagery open to continuous affiliations’, both in a popular context and in an avant-garde one” (493). Calefato has inspired me to consider the use of visual and aural materials in my artistic investigation. The reoccurring theme of rock music as a vehicle for change, demonstrates its authority in fashion through the process of interpretation. The fashion of subcultures possesses a distinct visual identity that is a behavioral response to the ideas communicated by musicians and their music.

Approaching academic research through creative activity is addressed by Aziz (2009) in her study, “Shifting the Frame: From Critical Reflective Arts Practice to Practice-based Research.” She explores how the medium of sound can be used to re-examine social events, and acknowledges the importance of artistic investigation as a means of developing new narratives for historical topics. Exploring sound and image through the technique of acousmatic sound (sound heard without viewing the cause) as a method of conjuring multi-sensory imagery in the mind of the listener (74), correlates with Calefato’s discussion of music and fashion as a process of interpretation. Understanding the value of sound is imperative for my installation, as it is my intention as an artist to develop an insightful narrative that encourages emotional receptivity amongst viewers.

Audience participation is a significant area of consideration in my material exploration. Nedelkopoulou (2011) analyzes Drew Leder’s theory of the absent body

arguing, “participation is a corporeal experience during which bodies stand out of themselves to enter into a communality with the rest of the world” (117). She explores the series of *Walks* produced by installation artists, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, and demonstrates the technique of ‘binaural’ audio (three-dimensional reproduction of sound) as a way of capturing sounds the way individuals ordinarily hear them (117). This has encouraged me to focus on audio in my process of creating a corporeal experience, connecting participants to key themes of my research through the manipulation of space and time.

Cheryl Pope addresses issues of connectivity and identity in her artwork. The installation piece, *Up Against*, is described as a ‘playground’ for audience engagement. Participants must walk through seven hundred transparent water balloons hanging at head level. A chain reaction of movement is created once the human head comes in contact with the balloons (Draganovic 1). Participants are faced with the challenge of not bursting the balloons as they walk across the piece (2). According to Draganovic (2010), the form of the balloons is reminiscent of the human head, while the water inside and the movement that is created is a reflection of its interior. The relationship between the participants and the balloons that generates a large movement is evocative of inner struggle, inciting questions about larger social issues that affect the human body. In this installation, touch encourages participants to actively engage in the process of interpretation. When touch produces a change in state, participants are more likely to assume greater responsibility in deciphering their relationship with the themes exhibited, as they are directly involved.

According to Sanders (2006), performance artist and sculptor, Nick Cave, “intentionally challenge[s] viewers to discover contained meanings, commentaries, and lessons about life” (6). His *Soundsuits* sculptures (2003-2006) are elaborately created from deconstructed beaded and sequined thrift store garments. The sculptures strip the visual identity of the wearer, and present viewers with narratives that are discovered through contemplation and discussion. Cave’s sculptures are described as “visually musical but physically silent,” as they illustrate a visual rhythm through color and surface pattern, and produce sound during performances (6). My interest in this work lies in Cave’s ability to present viewers with themes of identity such as race, gender, and sexuality, by recontextualizing available materials, and the ways in which he achieves a unity between the visual and aural senses.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

The changing cultural landscape in London during the sixties resulted in a paradigm shift, characterized by an increase in consumer affluence and liberated attitudes towards popular culture, freedom and sexuality. The Peacock Revolution was a response to these changes, more specifically a collective rebellion against the dress codes established by the Great Masculine Renunciation. The Peacock dandies engaged in revolutionary activities through the consumption and production of male high fashion. The spectacle of their attire functioned as a form of oppositional dress that defied social norms and reclaimed male beauty. In *Fashion as Communication*, Barnard (1996) states it is unsatisfactory to explore the theme of revolution in fashion. He suggests revolution implies a once-and-for-all change, incompatible with the nature of fashion that is rooted in constant change (122). As visual representations of masculinity continued to develop after the close of the Peacock Revolution, sociocultural evolution is discussed to better convey the contributions made by the dandies.

Memetics

The adoption and diffusion of dandy fashion operated through two opposing dominant fashion systems. The influence of music fostered a 'trickle-up' effect to the elite dandies, while the styles developed by the dandies 'trickled-down' to the masses. Therefore, Blumer's 'trickle-across' theory is used to describe this type of fashion innovation, as it developed from diverse social groups (124). In this model, "fashion is seen, not as a response to class differentiation and emulation, but as a response to 'a wish to be in fashion...to express new tastes which are emerging in the changing world'" (qtd. in

Barnard 124). As a result, new forms of fashion emerge across related fields in the fine arts and in the wider social world through a process of 'collective selection' that captures a shared mood, taste and choice (Braham 356-357). Additionally fashion innovation is attributed to a small number of 'fashion innovators' or 'fashion leaders' who possess the greatest influence on society (358).

The connection between dandy fashion and rock music that fostered a sociocultural evolution during the first wave of the Peacock Revolution can be understood through the study of memetics. In *The Selfish Gene*, Dawkins (1976) proposes a model for the characteristics of information communication by using the mechanisms of biological evolution. Similar to a gene, a meme is used to convey a unit of culture such as an idea, which carries the potential for propagation through a process of imitation from memory to memory (206). The basis of memetics is founded on a meme's degree of fitness as a replicator, as it must exhibit longevity, fecundity and copying-fidelity to develop a cultural element shared by a community (208).

Dawkins suggests, "we are built as gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators" (215). Applying this model to the Peacock dandies, evolution occurred via horizontal transmission. Their meme communicated a new masculine ideal in fashion, and became exchanged and imitated between members of the same generation who demonstrated an obvious relationship and proximity to one another (Heylighen and Chielens 14). The dynamics of meme replication and spread is discussed in four stages using the 'virus' metaphor (10-12). The first stage, assimilation, is accredited to

Christopher Gibbs who is recognized as the first Peacock dandy (Cohn 91). Gibbs is identified as the host of the dandies' meme, which was retained in his memory and expressed via behavior and dress characteristics such as the display of snobbery and flamboyant attire (color, cut, textile, style). The message created by Gibbs was transmitted to other individuals in his immediate circle of friends such as Michael Rainey and Mark Palmer (91). This process continued to repeat itself from 1960 to 1965, immediately 'infecting' others such as Rupert Lycett Green, Eric Joy, Charlie Hornaby and Douglas Hayward (98). The replication and spread of the initial meme formulated by Gibbs ultimately led to a collective sociocultural evolution in British male high fashion.

Gladwell (2000) offers a popular culture perspective on memetics that can be used to understand the collaboration between the dandies and rock musicians that supported a new masculine ideal. He simplifies this theory using *The Tipping Point* to describe a critical moment that "determines whether an idea, product, message, or behavior will explode into mass popularity" (Schmidt and Olson 199). He also believes "small groups create an ideal context for the adaptive entrepreneurial behavior by encouraging cultural intimacy, interdependency, and efficiency" (202). Gladwell's *Law of the Few* suggests there are three types of highly influential people: Connectors, Mavens and Salespeople (199). Prominent musicians such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones are perceived as Connectors, as they influenced a large number of people and connected individuals with common or complimentary characteristics. The dandies are identified as Mavens, based on their expert knowledge of bespoke tailoring and their ability to project future fashion trends through the production and consumption of menswear. As many practicing dandies were also

tailors and shopkeepers, these entrepreneurial figures are regarded as Salespeople in this model. The Salespeople persuaded others to adopt this new type of dress, building a level of trust and rapport with those involved in the Peacock Revolution.

The Power of Context (201) explains how the interconnectedness of London helped facilitate a *tipping point* in male fashion. The activity within influential high-end boutiques along the West End, King's Road and areas of Savile Row conceived a supportive environment for this group of men, providing a foundation for this movement to develop and grow into mass popularity. Gladwell's concept of *The Stickiness Factor* exemplifies the appeal of the message and social practice generated by the dandies as memorable, practical, and personal (200). Their meme was unforgettable and remarkable during the early sixties, as they deviated substantially from the grey flannel suit and the lack of shopping practices that prevailed for the past century-and-a-half. The wealth, time and personal care dedicated to maintain these appearances were practical for the dandies based on their interests and privileged backgrounds. The efforts of the dandies were personal, as they strived to cultivate a new identity for themselves.

The analysis of memetics has inspired me to consider the process of sociocultural evolution in the representation of identities in my artistic investigation. The message of my installation is intended to 'stick' with the audience. Stimulating the visual, tactile and aural senses is projected to produce a memorable experience in the minds of participants. Participation adds a practical component to my message, allowing the audience to mentally and physically engage with the installation. Participants will develop a personal

position in this process, encouraging them to question their relationship between fashion and music in the creation of identity.

Semiotics and Bricolage

Clothing is a form of nonverbal communication that allows the wearer to speak a visual language. Eco proposes “any cultural phenomenon is *also* a sign phenomenon” (qtd. in Barnard 146), highlighting the semiotic dimension of dress in society and culture. Semiotics is a method of exploring how and why meanings are made through signs, a form of symbolic communication in which messages are sent and received (27). From a sociocultural perspective, Fiske analyzes semiotics as a branch of “social interaction as that which constitutes the individual as a member of a particular culture or society” (qtd. in Barnard 29). Fashion acts as a system of communication that enables individuals to construct a shared identity based on particular signs of dress.

Detail was perhaps the most powerful sign the dandies communicated in their vestments. Barthes explores the concept of detail in eighteenth century dandyism and fashion as an aesthetic category in clothing that focuses on meticulous styling and textile selection (66). Dandyism is viewed as an ethos and a technique utilized to continually develop distinctive traits that function as a way of escaping the masses (67). Detail does not act as a concrete object, but rather a ‘next-to-nothing’ way of subtly altering the value of clothing. The quality and style of bespoke garments worn by the Peacock dandies signified the value of accessibility and privilege, distinguishing themselves from other male consumer groups. The dandies revived the high fashion market as a means of liberating

menswear from the tyranny of the Great Masculine Renunciation and the conventionality of ready-made clothing.

Barthes explains the importance of creativity in dandyism through the 'artist' metaphor. He states the dandy "would conceive his outfit exactly like a modern artist might conceive a composition using available materials" (68), demonstrating the role of the dandy as a creator. Semiotician, Lévi-Strauss discusses the artistic use of readily available and common materials in the context of the bricoleur. The bricoleur is "someone who undertakes a wide variety of tasks and who is forever making do, not necessarily using either the correct tools or the proper materials" to complete a job (qtd. in Barnard 166). Gill, Henwood and McLean examine the playful relationship between clothes and identity that stem from new musical trends, analyzing the encoded references to gender within bricolage. In this context, bricolage is defined as "the putting together of things that are normally kept apart" (192), to abolish signifiers of social norms. The commonality between the dandy and the bricoleur exists in their pursuit to shape new meanings from existing materials. The dandies' physical activity and involvement during the Peacock Revolution allowed them to create a new masculine identity through fashion.

Yakhlef (2010) discusses the phenomenology of participation in his article, "The Corporeality of Practice-Based Learning." The body is examined as a locus for internal and external dialogue, which encompasses the potential for learning and understanding through the five senses (415-416). Learning is perceived as a process of identification with the figure of the hero (419). For the dandies, the process of identification existed in the 'Superman'/Jagger ideal, and was obtained through the visual, tactile and aural senses.

Considering Yakhlef's ideas in my artistic investigation, the figure of the hero is used to metaphorically conjure ideas of identity and desirability in the minds of the audience. Therefore, interactivity stimulates multiple senses to promote audience receptiveness. Additionally, the practice-based nature of this research has presented me with a valuable opportunity to learn through the activity of making. Merleau-Ponty considers the body as a system for action to "explore learning and knowing processes as *doings*, action and practices, providing a more comprehensive understanding of embodied learning" (qtd. in Yakhlef 415). This physical investigation has allowed me to further analyze and comment on areas of this research topic, beyond the scope of examining existing literature.

This framework has inspired me to approach my artistic process through metaphorical representation based on the importance of semiotics. Bricolage is used to shape and apply new meaning to the relationship between the Peacock dandies and rock musicians. The use of readily available and common materials presents a rich narrative for audience engagement. The careful selection of visual and aural signs guides audience interpretation, expressing fundamental aspects of this research. It is acknowledged that interpretation is subjective to each participant, and diverse perspectives are welcomed. The objective of this installation is to offer audiences an opportunity to question how identity is created through fashion and music.

Chapter Four: Artistic Investigation and Outcomes

Phase One: Concept and Initial Construction

My artistic investigation was informed by the research conducted, motivating the communication of particular research and theoretical ideas through visual, tactile and aural materials. Principally, I was inspired by the reoccurring theme of music as a vehicle for change in fashion. Applying a semiotic lens, I began with a series of brainstorming activities in which I was searching for a metaphor capable of articulating the essence of my concept. The symbol of the musical jewellery box emerged from the resultant gathering of key words, ideas, sounds and images from my research, and was selected for several prominent similarities with aspects of this study.

The musical jewellery box is a small mechanical display case. Belonging to the automata family of instruments, they traditionally play popular tunes from a set of pins on a cylindrical device (Fowler 45-46). The jewellery box is a gendered object and characteristically suggests an association with fashion and music. Functionally, they are meant to contain women's fashion-related adornments, and play music when wound-up and opened. This metaphor conveys aspects of identity, and the centrality of music to transform the context in which it is played and interpreted. I perceived the physical structure of the jewellery box as a signifier for the fashioned body, based on visual and tactile properties that signal craftsmanship and spectacle. The music played from a jewellery box acts as a form of entertainment, generating excitement and desire, reminiscent of the rock music-driven scene in London during the early sixties.

Referring back to Barthes, he examines the semiotics of jewellery in his essay, *From Gemstones to Jewellery* (62). Similar to the function of detail in the dress of the dandies that signified accessibility and privilege, Barthes argues jewellery is also a great and energetic form of detail that reflects value and taste. Jewellery possesses the ability to modify, harmonize and animate the significance of clothes (63). These symbolic connotations support the underlying idea of the musical jewellery box as a container for change, comprised of valuables that hold layers of meaning. As a result, the use of detail was fundamental in drawing literal and creative connections to diverse parts of the installation piece.

Assuming the role of the bricoleur as discussed by Lévi-Strauss, I collected various materials to begin construction. Innately tied to fashion and consumption, the stainless steel frame (Fig.1) and wooden shelves (Fig.2) were discarded parts that belonged to a merchandising table from a retail store. Other types of wood and various hardware components were purchased to complete the basic structure of the musical jewellery box (Fig.3). Parallel to the nature of this research that revisits a historical movement in a contemporary context, the method of bricolage was utilized to recontextualize readily available and common materials to develop my narrative.

Scale and functionality were investigated to reflect ideas of sociocultural evolution and audience participation. To manifest the reality of this research topic and promote physical engagement, the installation is life-size, approximately 35 inches by 61 inches in dimension. Utilizing Gill, Henwood and McLean's description of bricolage in fashion to abolish social signifiers of gender, the scale and mixing of materials inherently reflects a

contrast between conventional ideals of femininity and masculinity. The petite, pretty and delicate nature of a traditional jewellery box was reconstructed to create a large, bold and heavy structure.

Phase Two: Stylistic Exploration

The second stage of my investigation involved the exploration of stylistic elements. The aesthetic choices are reflective of my visual interpretation of the Peacock dandies, as I desired to communicate key characteristics of their appearances such as flamboyance, beauty, luxury, detail and color. I searched for a textile reminiscent of the emerging Peacocks, and selected a printed fabric that depicts a medley of sinuous lines, circles, flowers, and birds, in an array of bright colors and shades (Fig.4). The flamboyant birds are a literal signifier for the beauty and liberation sought by the dandies. The birds are grouped in small clusters and gaze at one another, further representing their group association and high esteem.

The pattern animated the tone of the installation, influencing the overall aesthetic direction. The fabric was upholstered onto sections of the side panels, the drawers, and the bases. Ornate hardwood moldings were applied onto the wooden panels to suggest a handmade quality, communicating human involvement and the prestige of bespoke tailoring (Figs.5-8). A navy velveteen fabric was laid inside the top section and inside the drawers to evoke additional tactile qualities of luxury. The installation was painted poppy red and bright pink, capturing the energetic and passionate mood of the dandies.

Phase Three: Connecting Fashion, Music and Identity

Encouraging the audience to question their relationship between fashion and music in the creation of identity was achieved through sound, reflection and participation. As Cohn analyzes music as a symbolic solution to the progression of menswear and masculinity during the first half of the Peacock Revolution, I used sound to recontextualize central ideas within this argument. The rotating base in the center of the musical jewellery box is devoid of a figurine (Fig.9), but continues to elicit elements of fantasy, beauty and desire. The base is covered in the patterned textile, highlighting the foundation provided by the Peacock dandies with the assistance of music. An ultrasonic range finder located above the first drawer detects motion within two and a half feet from the installation piece (Fig.10). When a participant approaches, the base begins to rotate counterclockwise and the audio plays for forty seconds.

Aziz's study of sound as a tool to re-examine past social events has inspired the construction of my narrative to emphasize the potential of music. I referenced music without playing a particular song, to reduce audience preconceptions. The prominent sound of a needle reading a vinyl record represents music and indicates the past. Two key aspects are presented in the clip, the end of a record is being played, and the tuning and needle are manually adjusted three times. The end of the record signifies the end of the Great Masculine Renunciation of Fashion, a cyclical and dull noise. The intervening sounds and the counterclockwise motion of the base imply the rebellious efforts of the Peacock dandies.

The installation is positioned on wheels, revealing that the piece is not site-specific and is relevant to different contexts regardless of place or time. Three vanity mirrors appear inside the lid, directly communicating beauty, narcissism and identity (Fig.11). The mirrors are angled and magnify reflections, ambiguously capturing fragments of the face. When the drawers are slid open the participant is once again confronted with his/her obscured identity, as vanity mirrors extend out of bases (Figs.12-14). Fixed on the multiplicity of images, the audience is encouraged to reflect on their identity and decipher their relationship with the signifiers presented in the installation.

Outcomes

The Beat of Change – Fashioned by the Peacock Revolution is a self-contained audio-visual installation piece (Fig.15). Inspired by the Peacock dandies, each individual aspect bears its own significance, working together as a whole to communicate the potential for music to motivate a change in identity through fashion. The selection and composition of materials stimulates audience participation, creating a corporeal experience that immerses the body in the narrative of this work. Upon mental and physical engagement with the installation, visual, tactile and aural cues are magnified.

The materials and the construction of the installation intrinsically suggest qualities of human involvement through its craftsmanship. Close inspection reveals the piece is subject to imperfections, representing signs of the maker that portray human endeavor. The vibrancy of the physical structure is contrasted against the dissonant sound of a needle playing the end of a record. Three principle ideas are represented in the sound; the maintenance of the status quo, the demand for change, and the anticipation for something

new. Music is communicated as a form of worldliness, subjectively internalized through a process of interpretation in which fashion is exploited to emulate the desired hero.

The success of this piece rests in its ability to communicate the social phenomenon of the Peacock dandies, while more generally expressing key ideas that encourage the public to question how fashion and music collaborate to facilitate shifts in identity. The physical aspects of the installation are reminiscent of the fashioned body. The audience is placed at the forefront of the installation, conjuring emotional and physical receptivity as they are faced with the challenge of deciphering their role in this context. The mirrors offer a multiplicity of images, obscuring and fragmenting identities.

My artistic exploration of semiotics and bricolage in the construction of this installation has allowed me to understand the potential of recontextualizing readily available and common materials. The metaphor of the musical jewellery box operated as a means of familiarizing the audience with the themes I desired to communicate. Throughout this process, I analyzed and reanalyzed the concepts explored in my research, motivating me to revisit my interpretation of the relationship between the Peacock dandies and rock musicians. The greatest challenge in this work was my ability to creatively explore a historical movement in a contemporary context without merely representing my findings or disassociating them from my research in order for the audience to develop a meaningful connection with the installation. The audience experience was important, as it was among my goals to signify the authority of music in society in a practical, memorable, and personal manner, relevant to the research conducted. *The Beat of Change – Fashioned*

by the Peacock Revolution enables a rich dialogue between the participant and the installation.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The development of British menswear during the Peacock Revolution from 1960 to 1973 demonstrated significant visual changes in representations of masculinity. The cultural landscape in London resulted in a paradigm shift, characterized by an increase in consumer affluence and liberated attitudes towards popular culture, freedom, and sexuality. The previous dress codes established during the Great Masculine Renunciation were challenged by a collective pursuit to reclaim male beauty. An analysis of existing research reveals a fundamental relationship between a group of upper-class dandies and rock music icons from 1960 to 1965, based on a new aesthetic ideal, the propagation of trends, and the spectacle of the shopping experience. This practice-based research is concerned with exploring the collaborative role of fashion and music in the construction of identity.

The Beat of Change – Fashioned by the Peacock Revolution is an interactive audio-visual installation. Informed by the research conducted, fashion and music are communicated throughout visual, tactile and aural materials. A life-size musical jewellery box has been created as a metaphor for the reoccurring theme of music as a catalyst for change in fashion. The metaphor conveys the centrality of music, and its potential to alter the context in which it is played and interpreted. Barthes' discussion of jewellery has encouraged me to perceive the musical jewellery box as a container for change, comprised of valuables that hold layers of meaning in relation to identity.

Based on the discussion of memetics and semiotics, a model for the characteristics of information communication provide a basis for this study. The method of bricolage was

used to recontextualize materials, creating a rich dialogue for audience engagement. The stylistic exploration of the physical object reveals my subjective interpretation of the emerging Peacocks through color, ornamentation, and textile selection. Sound was used to signify the potential of music, encompassing three underlying ideas; the maintenance of the status quo, the demand for change, and the anticipation for something new. A series of mirrors reflect a multitude of images, encouraging the audience to be introspective in questioning their identity. The audience is situated at the forefront of the installation, conjuring emotional and physical receptivity, as they are faced with the challenge of deciphering their role in this context.

Throughout this study, the interaction between academic research and my artistic process has helped me develop an installation that embodies fundamental attributes of the Peacock dandies, while motivating the public to question more generally how fashion and music collaborate to facilitate shifts in identity. The greatest challenge of this work rested in my artistic ability to analyze a historical topic in a contemporary context. The final installation piece subjectively expresses areas of the research conducted, creatively exploring the activity of audience participation through multiple senses. My artistic investigation motivated me to analyze and reanalyze fundamental arguments of this study, enabling a form of embodied learning through the process of making. As a result, it is my goal to continue exploring under-researched areas concerning the relationship between fashion and music.

Appendix

Figure 1. Phase One: Stainless Steel Frame. January 25, 2014.



Figure 2. Phase One: Wooden Shelves. January 25, 2014.



Figure 3. Phase One: Basic Structure. February 14, 2014.



Figure 4. Phase Two: Textile. February 20, 2014.



Figure 5. Phase Two: Wood Moldings. February 26, 2014.



Figure 6. Phase Two: Wood Moldings; Lid. March 9, 2014.



Figure 7. Phase Two: Wood Moldings; Side Panels. March 9, 2014.



Figure 8. Phase Two: Wood Moldings; Drawers. March 9, 2014.



Figure 9. Phase Three: Rotating Base. March 20, 2014.



Figure 10. Phase Three: Ultrasonic Range Finder. March 20, 2014.



Figure 11. Phase Three: Vanity Mirrors; Lid. March 30, 2014.



Figure 12. Phase Three: Vanity Mirrors; Drawers. March 30, 2014.

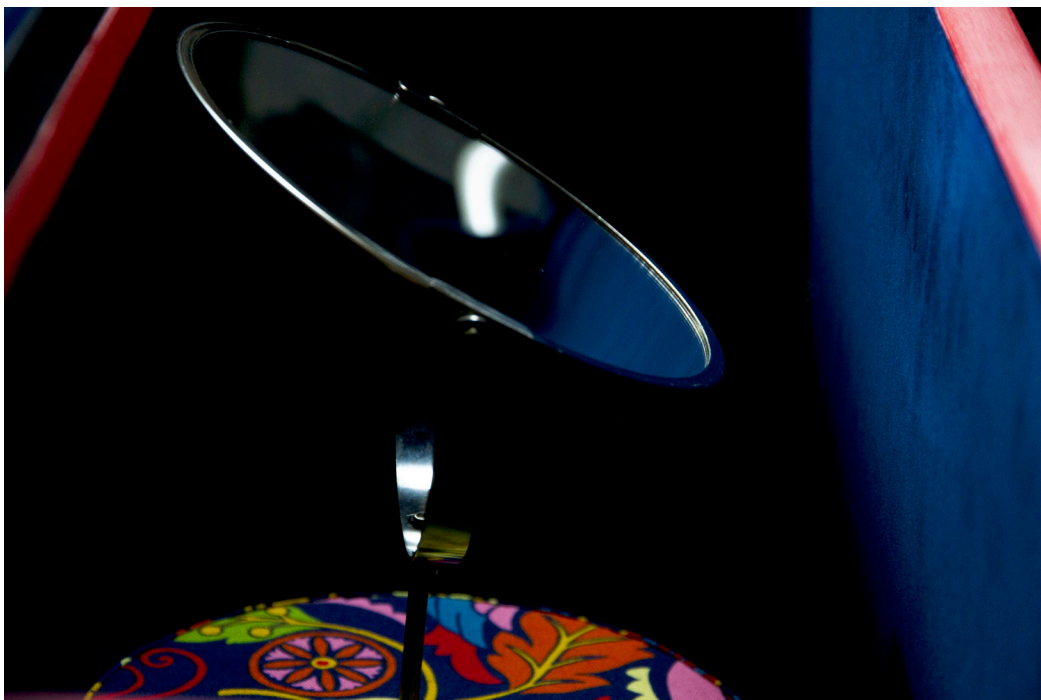


Figure 13. Phase Three: Vanity Mirrors; Top Drawer. March 30, 2014.



Figure 14. Phase Three: Vanity Mirrors; Bottom Drawer. March 30, 2014.



Figure 15. Phase Three: Final Installation. April 5, 2014.



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