

Susan Ingram and Katrina Sark, *Berliner Chic: A Locational History of Berlin Fashion* (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011). 232 pp., 59 b/w illus. £22.50. ISBN-13: 978 1 84150 432 2; ISBN-10: 978 1 84150 369 1.

Germany is one of the main exporters of fashion and textiles and has a long history of manufacturing ready-to-wear. Hugo Boss, Esprit and Escada are well-known fashion brands, and the expatriates Karl Lagerfeld, Juergen Teller and Heidi Klum are household names in the fashion world. However, apart from Jil Sander and possibly Wolfgang Joop, designers based in Germany are rarely known beyond the nation's borders. Irene Guenther's *Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004) is an exception to the rule that German fashion rarely features in English-language publications.

Using as their leitmotif a statement made in 2004 by Berlin's mayor, Klaus Wowereit, that the city was 'poor, but sexy', Susan Ingram and Katrina Sark examine very diverse aspects of Berlin's fashion identity, and these are loosely grouped together under different headings.

In the first two chapters, the authors describe how dress and related objects have been collected and displayed in Berlin and evaluate recent academic discourse. Photography is the focus of the next chapter where such different practitioners as Heinrich Zille, Helmut Newton, F. C. Gundlach and Rico Puhlman are discussed. This chapter is best read with a computer at your side. High reproduction costs have prevented the inclusion of all but a few relevant examples.

Chapter four deals with the relation between Berlin's film and its fashion industries, and includes a long 'excursus' about the use of Berlin as backdrop in the dystopian science fiction films *Aeon Flux* (2005) and *Equilibrium* (2002). Music has shaped the image of Berlin, and its clubs still attract large numbers of travellers. The authors look at the transformational power of Berlin's Hansa Tonstudio on musicians and bands like David Bowie and U2, the importance of the soundtrack to the film *Run Lola Run* (1998) and a representation of the city's techno scene in *Berlin Calling* (2008).

In the last chapter the status quo is examined, including the various attempts to turn Berlin into a fashion capital. You could read this in conjunction with another publication on the city's fashion scene published last year: Christine Bierhals' *City Fashion Berlin* (Potsdam: Ullmann, 2011).

If you are looking for a factual account of the history of Berlin fashion, this book might not be for you. While its fragmentary nature can be frustrating, it also might aptly reflect Berlin's history. At times *Berliner Chic* seems to ask more questions than it answers, but it provides many incentives and sources to explore Berlin's fashion identity further.

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