

# Fashionably Late

July 2018

Japan



## Issue #1 The Present in Disguise

A style guide to  
the end of the world:  
**1XXX-2018-2XXX**  
by **PUGMENT**

Speculative Shopping  
**PUGMENT vs Archizoom**

Interview with  
**Karin Imafuku and Masahiro Otani**

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**Fashionably Late**

Editorial project developed during the Research Residency program at Tokyo Arts and Space (May/June 2018)

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*Dressing is Easy* video courtesy of Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione (CSAC)



Fashion designer Hussein Chalayan, whose work has often been praised for its architectural qualities, once said: “You don’t call buildings fashion just because they don’t look architectural, so why call fashion architectural unless it really is?” Maybe, this querelle on fashion and architecture simply comes down to a narrow understanding of fashion as clothes and architecture as buildings.

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It would be unfashionably late to insist on structural parallels between fashion and architecture, derived from the idea of clothing as the smallest living environment. Excellent research has already been carried out on the relationship between dressing, body and identity, looking from the clothes inward. Instead, my interest lies in the relationship between fashion and context, so to say, from the clothes outward. In the words of Bradley Quinn, “the visual coding of fashion frequently corresponds to the type of architecture it was intended to be worn in, transforming the figures moving through urban space into walking signifiers of it”. I am trying to understand how dressing practices integrate with the urban environment.

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This research project sparked from my interest in 1973 sartorial manifesto *Dressing is Easy* by Italian group of architects Archizoom Associati (Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, Massimo Morozzi, Dario Bartolini, and Lucia Bartolini). Denying sartorial traditions, seasonal and gender-specific clothing, *Dressing is Easy* was a radical attack on Western fashion at the time. Interestingly, Archizoom’s fashion project shows similarities with Japanese traditional clothing in terms of aesthetics and structure, for instance in the flatness of the garments and the zero-waste pattern making. This brought me to Tokyo Arts and Space for a research residency, where I spent a couple of months investigating the connections between Italy and Japan, fashion and architecture, avant-garde manifestos and contemporary practices.

In Tokyo I came across fashion label PUGMENT, founded in 2014 by young designers Karin Imafuku and Masahiro Otani. Despite belonging to different contexts and generations, Archizoom’s and PUGMENT’s works resonated with each other. I decided to present both of them along with my research in a fictional fashion magazine, *Fashionably Late*, that you are now holding in your hands. I wanted to experiment with the format of fashion press, which is normally not expected to carry any real substance, and fill its format with critical content. I thought publishing could be an apt medium for this project also given the role press had in the dissemination of Archizoom’s work: too radical for commercial distribution, *Dressing is Easy* was featured in several architecture and fashion magazines in 1970s. On the other hand, PUGMENT’s practice sitting on the conceptual end of fashion design, I enjoyed the irony of seeing their work published in what that looks like mainstream fashion press.

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Archizoom’s and PUGMENT’s fashion projects stem from a critical representation of the times when they were conceived. This suggested to me the overarching theme for *Fashionably Late*’s first issue: *The Present in Disguise*. Architecture should be as modern as one’s dresses, but fashion as a medium moves faster than architecture. Sometimes the Present wears future apparel, and has us under the illusion of being further ahead than we actually are. At other times, the Present reassures us wrapped in familiar, predictable outfits, while society is undergoing change.

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The first issue of *Fashionably Late* is about speculative fashion, urban visions and radical representations of the Present. The Future is a tired trope for anxious speculations in both fashion and architecture – What are we going to wear next Fall? What will the the Future of architecture look like? The Future is up for grabs for utopian thinkers, but the Present is for radicals to imagine.

## Editorial

PUGMENT's collection 1XXX-2018-2XXX is set in the year 2XXX – which might as well be the present year 2018. The scenario of irreversible ecological disaster described feels more like an intense representation of present than a fanciful image of the future.

A style guide to the end of the world: 1XXX-2018-2XXX – in this feature article we are confronted with PUGMENT's hazmat suits, protection garments, ghosts, bustle-style dresses, WWII Japanese women workwear. Everything looks as if it comes either from the past or from the future – but, in fact, it belongs to the present.

The second article, *Speculative Shopping. Archizoom vs PUGMENT*, traces parallels between Archizoom's and PUGMENT's work. While Archizoom present a critique of the beginning of consumerist society, PUGMENT deals with the aftermaths of consumerism – overproduction and waste.

The Japanese edition of *Fashionably Late* (JP) features an interview with Karin Imafuku and Masahiro Otani, aka PUGMENT. The conversation between us unravelled in multiple spaces offline and online: PUGMENT's studio in the outskirts of Tokyo, a pub in Shibuya, a facebook chat and Google documents.

1XXX-2018-2XXX suggests that either fashion continues on its course, which will end up bringing humankind to an end, or it dies so that humanity might be able to survive.

As in PUGMENT's science fiction narrative, fashion seems to be a force that perpetrates itself to the detriment of everything else: the ecosystem and the workforce exploited in its production. Is it too late to change fashion?



Histories of Japanese Fashion, Koji Oyamada (2018)

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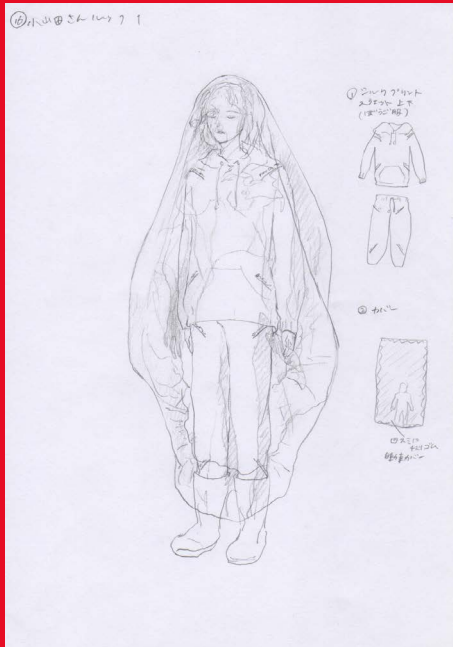
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## FASHION: TOO FAST TO LIVE TO YOUNG TO DIE

PUGMENT is a fashion label founded by Karin Imafuku and Masahiro Otani in 2014. Their 2018 fall/winter collection 1XXX-2018-2XXX is set in a world where humankind is extinct and masses of clothes are decomposing at slow speed.



↑ Sketch for 1XXX – 2018 – 2XXX, PUGMENT (2018)  
→ Textile waste in a landfill around Damascus, Syria.  
Photo by Mohammad J. Taherzadeh (2015)



It is the year 2XXX. Due to a devastating occurrence, the light from the sun exceeded human capacity. Humans were forced to survive by wearing white protection garments that insulated them from sunlight. Over time, people began enjoying fashion by projecting images of historical fashion motifs. But soon, another disaster obliterated humanity. The only thing left on earth was the machine that continued to manufacturing protection garments, while the knowledge of fashion remained as *light*. The unique quality of the protection garments completely blocked sunlight, but caused the clothes to decay after a period of time. Fashion has a consciousness and adapts constantly to changing emotions. Eventually fashion came to despair its immortality of endlessly repeating itself. One day, fashion became aware that, when irradiated on clothes as *light*, it had a body like a human. Fashion seeks to obtain life by searching for clothes and meandering on **them**.

## NUCLEAR FALL/WINTER

Survivors of the heralded natural disaster  
have to wear protection garments  
that resemble of hazmat suits.



1XXX-2018-2XXX runway at KAYOKUYUKI, FUGUMENT (2018)





## FASHION VICTIMS

Forced to wear these uniforms, survivors keep memory of fashion by wearing veils printed with a collage of the history of Japanese fashion.

1988-2018-2022 runway at KAYOKUYUKI, FUGUMENT (2018)



# GHOSTS OF FASHION PAST

These veils are printed with  
collages by stylist Koji Oyamada  
representing ironic

*Histories of Japanese Fashion.*

These compositions integrate  
references to the complex and  
multifaceted history of Japanese costume:  
1980s iconic designers along with  
traditional garments and  
contemporary pop culture.



↑ 1XXX–2018–2XXX backstage of runway at KAYOKOYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)  
→ *Histories of Japanese Fashion*, Koji Oyamada (2018)

↑ 1XXX–2018–2XXX backstage of runway at KAYOKOYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)  
→ *Histories of Japanese Fashion*, Koji Oyamada (2018)







## ROKUMEIKAN STYLE RELOADED

This look recalls Western bustle-style dressing introduced during the Meiji era (1867 -1912). Initially, Western clothing was adopted as military male uniform, but from the end of 1880s it extended also to womenswear. The bustle style was also called *Rokumeikan-style* after the name of the building where Japanese used to wear Western dress to attend Western-style parties and dances.



- ← 1XXX-2018-20XX installation at KAYOKOYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)
- ↗ Women in Western dress in various hairstyles, Yoshu Chikanobu (1888)
- ↓ Histories of Japanese Fashion, Koji Oyamada (2018)

## THE MOMPE GIRL



1XXX-2018-2XXX runway at KAYOKOYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)



1XXX-2018-2XXX runway at KAYOKOYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)

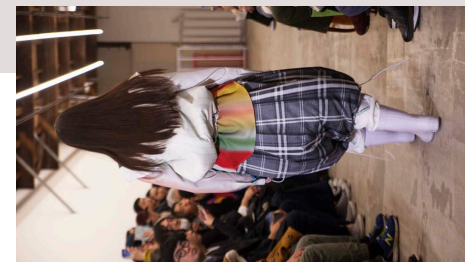


Girl wearing a mompe published in 'Mainichi Mook Series: Memory of the 20th Century - War of Japanese Empire Vol.2' (1940)

One of the outfits in the collection recalls the *mompe*, traditional women workwear in Japan during World War II. *Mompe* trousers featured in a Japanese effort to encourage women to play a greater role in the workforce: they were part of the uniform worn by civilian women's neighborhood battalions. PUGMENT reference lesser known Japanese costume history – not the usual kimonos but working-class garment associated with Japan's nationalistic wartime politics.



1XXX–2018–2XXX runway at KAYOKOYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)  
 Patterns for 1XXX–2018–2XXX, PUGMENT (2018)



## PUGMENT PULLS A FAST ONE

Along with the critical reappraisal of Japanese costume history PUGMENT reference patterns and shapes from 'fast fashion'. Consumerist and critical attitude are merged in their designs.

Gradient fabrics for 1XXX-2018-2018-2XXX, PUGMENT (2018)  
1XXX-2018-2XXX runway at KAYOKUYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)



## SARTORIAL FLASHBACK

The gradient fabric used in the collection is realised by blurring several images of the history of Japanese fashion – like in a flashback before the definitive death of fashion.

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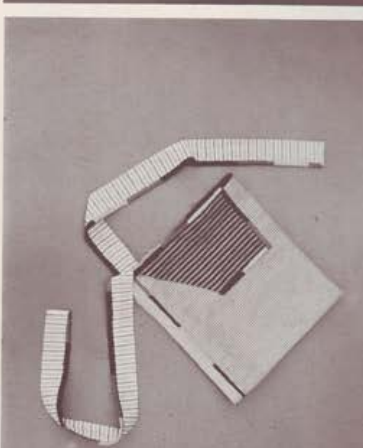
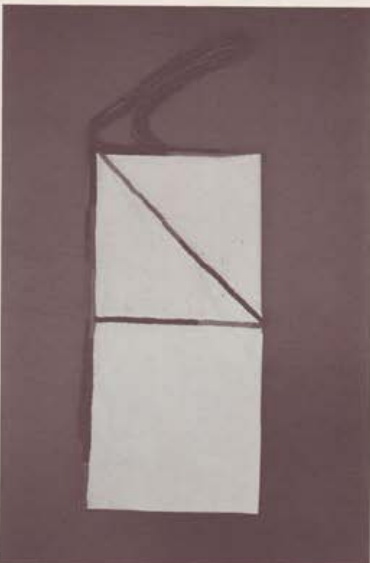
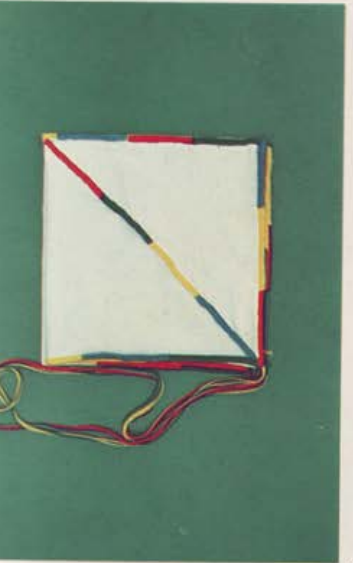


defined here as a basic element is a square piece of cloth. This first logical element of the raw material eliminates waste, enabling one to operate on a geometrically defined element with which one can plan, rejecting imitative operations of any anthropometrical importance.

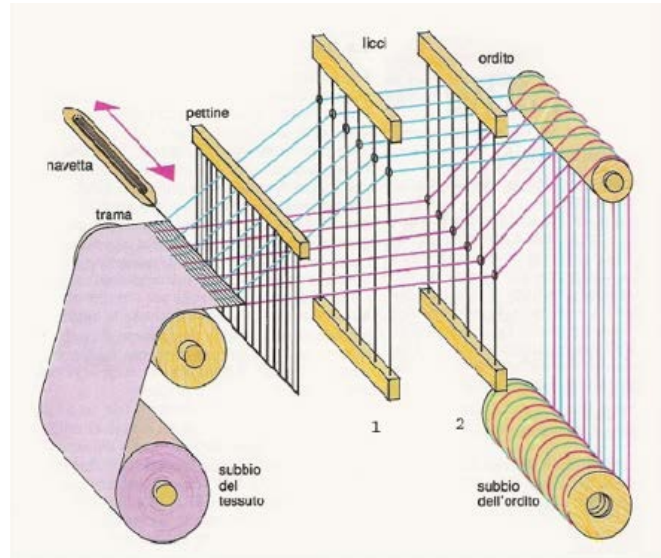
Indeed, it is only by abandoning traditional sartorial methods still so ubiquitous in industrial



production that we shall be able to cope with and correctly utilize productive technologies and methods, drawing planning criteria directly from the nature of the productive process. In this case the first fundamental operation is to consider the fabric and the cloth to be like a continuous ribbon of unvarying width, and not an indefinite surface from which portions are haphazardly cut out.



1. Pantaloni in cui il cavallo è ottenuto con un unico taglio senza scarti da due quadrati; un nastro posteriore permette di adattare il capo ad un ampio numero di taglie (sequenza 4).  
 2. Sottana multitaglia con tasche.  
 3. Giubbotto e sottana in tessuti rigati.  
 4. Cambiolo

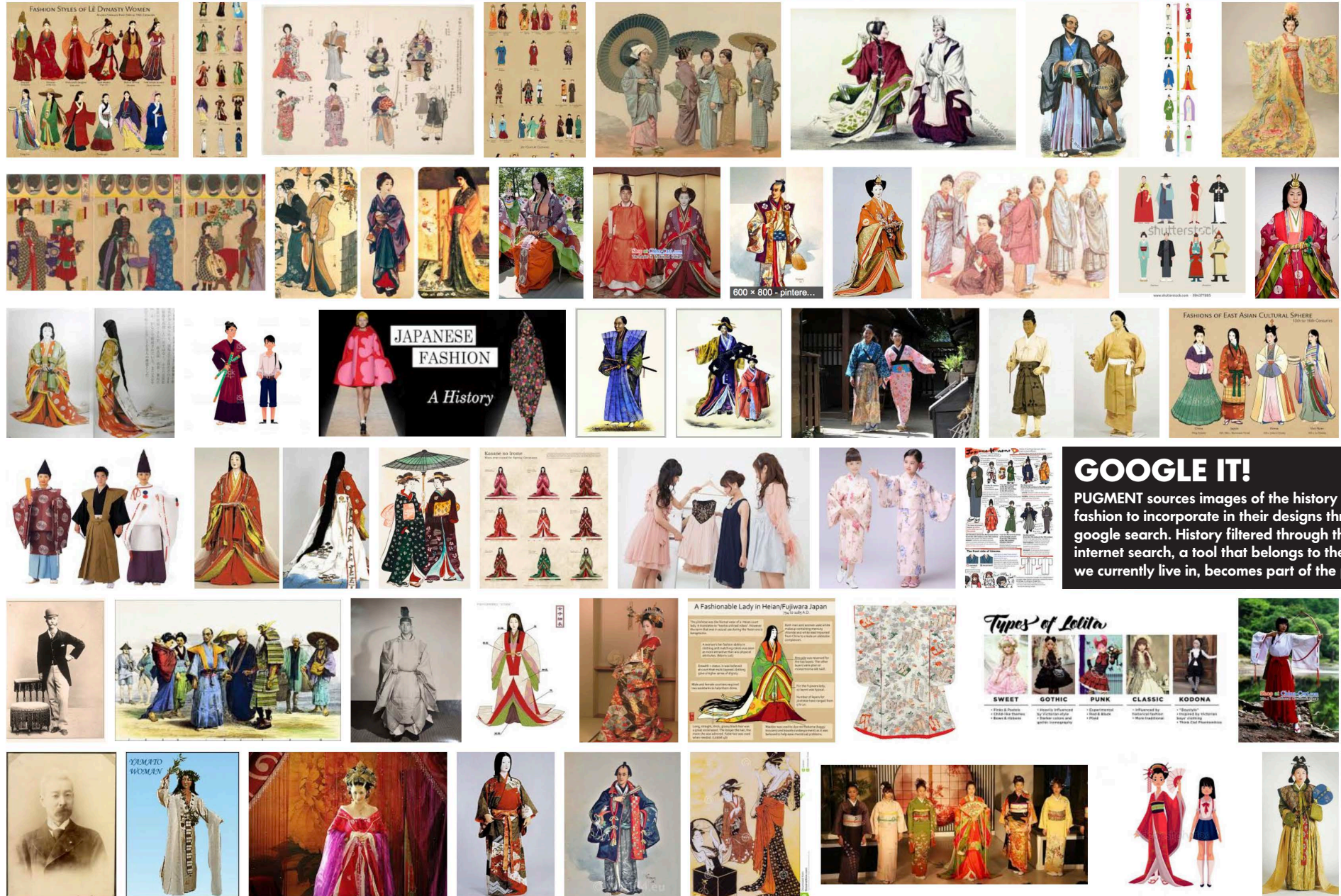


## MACHINE AESTHETICS

Both PUGMENT and Archizoom integrate technological advancements that marked their era in their work. Archizoom witnessed the transition from handloom to textiles' industrial manufacturing that changed fashion production to what it is today. Archizoom's objective was the "technical destruction of culture" and *Dressing is Easy* embodies this anti-cultural and anti-humanistic stance: a clothing system that is not tailored on the body, but based on proportions dictated by industrial production techniques.

← *Dressing is Easy* published on Casabella 384 (1973)  
 ↑↑ Handloom machine for weaving  
 ↑ Textiles industrial production

- 18th century
- vietnamese
- heian court
- evolution
- chinese japanese
- korean chinese
- ao dai
- timeline
- mongolian
- culture
- nobleman
- traditional
- years
- kimono
- japanese kimono
- samurai



**GOOGLE IT!**  
 PUGMENT sources images of the history of fashion to incorporate in their designs through google search. History filtered through the internet search, a tool that belongs to the time we currently live in, becomes part of the present.



Florence during flooding (1966)

# AVANT MOI LE DELUGE

Both Archizoom's *Dressing is Easy* and PUGMENT's *1XXX-2018-2XXX* originate from a disaster scenario. In 1966 Florence was devastated by the flooding of Arno river. This photomontage by Archizoom is part of the series *Salvage of Italy's historical centers (Your Italy)*. It presents the ironic solution of a permanent flood for Florence: "The only possible salvage is destruction once more..." Archizoom embraced natural disaster as the condition for a new genesis in architecture.



# DISASTER DRESS CODE

The 2011 Japan was hit by the Tohoku tsunami and earthquake, which provoked the triple meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Images of people wearing hazmat suits became widespread in international media.

Concerns about safety infiltrated lifestyle and fashion, prompting to explore a new kind of clothing that would be needed in case of emergency.

PUGMENT's 'protection garments' are influenced by this disaster imagery: some of them are inspired by the hazmat suit others use protection fabrics such as quilted moving blanket to point at preparedness within Japanese society.



# HYPER PRESENT



No-Stop City, Archizoom Associati (1970)



An example of early 1960's consumerism

Archizoom described *No-Stop City* neither as utopia or dystopia, but as an hypertopia, a more extreme and parodic image of the present they were living in. *Dressing is Easy* is the speculative fashion proposal for this accelerated urban scenario.



## FAST FORWARD

1XXX-2018-2XXX is also set in the hypertopia of present times. With textile industry responsible of water, air and solid-waste pollution, people still seem intentioned to salvage their clothes but not the world they live in. PUGMENT's science fiction story, where machines producing protection garments keep on manufacturing clothes until it blocks the sunlight, is an ominous comment on the overproduction crisis generated by faster fashion production cycles.



*Venere degli Stracci*, Michelangelo Pistoletto (1967)

## FLORENCE – TOKYO ROUNDTRIP

Dressing is Easy garment, Achizoom Associati (1973)



ansational fashion project, each influence is singularly detectable and readable.

*Dressing is Easy* is a unique project: it brings to mind several references, while still looking like something never seen before. Despite being a tr

## “WE WEAR GLOBALISATION ON OUR BODIES”\*

References to hazmat uniform,  
Japanese fashion history including Eastern and Western garments,  
international sportswear and fast fashion are  
seamlessly mixed in PUGMENT's work.  
Their collection renders present day fashion's complexity  
as an industry that transcends national boundaries  
in an increasingly globalised world.

\*Gayatri Spivak



1XXX-2018-2XXX installation at KAYOKOYUKI, PUGMENT (2018)



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## Interview with **Karin Imafuku and Masahiro Otani (PUGMENT)**

### Are you more concerned about the present or the future?

For us, there is no distinction between present, past and future. Like amoebas that constantly change shape, we are concentrated on becoming.

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### How important is for you the relationship between urban space and fashion design?

We consider urban space, especially in Japan, a source of inspiration. It is an interesting place full of failed attempts to improve human life. Fashion can learn from these mistakes.

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### Do you think destruction is necessary for creation?

We think it is more effective to unravel assumptions from the inside, by questioning their core and highlighting internal contradictions, instead of attempting to destroy them. This method naturally brings about change, that we should accept in order to create something new.

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### Do you think it is too late to change the fashion industry?

No. Changes occur long before, when still no one realizes that a major transformation is happening.

•

### What projects are you currently working on?

Currently, in parallel with the 2019SS collection, we are producing performers' costumes and working on collaborations.

# PUGMENT

