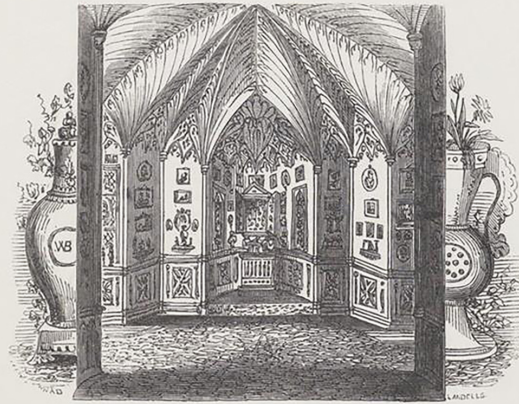
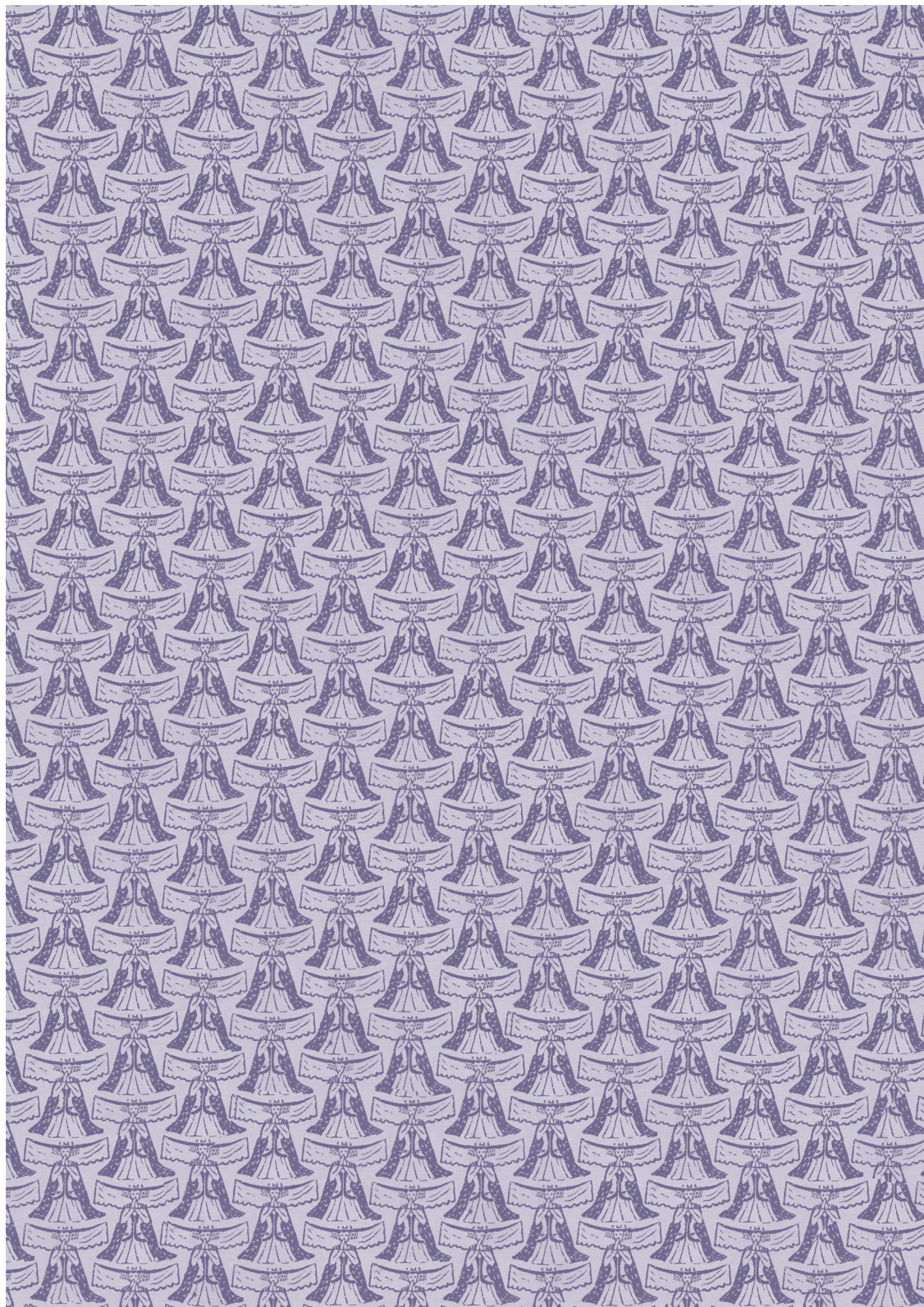


A CABINET OF SERENDIPITIES



THE TRIBUNE.
STRAWBERRY HILL.

Jenna Rossi-Camus, PhD



'A CABINET OF SERENDIPITIES'

This display is comprised of objects collected
as aides to my practice-based doctoral research in fashion curation.

The practical element of my thesis was a proposal for Fashion & Folly: a site-responsive exhibition about fashion and graphic satire devised for Strawberry Hill House, Horace Walpole's neo-gothic villa in Twickenham. Horace

Walpole (1717-1797), was a prolific author and eminent collector of art and antiquities and he designed Strawberry Hill as a thematically curated cabinet of curiosities.

Walpole also invented the term serendipity to refer to discovering things one was 'not in quest of' by 'accident and sagacity' (HW Corres, 28 Jan. 1754). Serendipity has subsequently been acknowledged as a faculty to which all scholars and collectors are in debt (Lewis, 1952). More than a mystical phenomenon, serendipity has been further interrogated as the outcome of the 'interaction of chance with the prepared mind' (Merton & Barber, 2004).

All of the objects displayed here owe their presence in my collection to serendipity, and the design of this micro-exhibition has been inspired by Strawberry Hill's decorative, architectural and taxonomic attributes.

The exhibition design elements are 21st century objects masquerading as fixtures in a neo-gothic Wunderkammer. Each object has been assigned to one of three themes, and this booklet offers museum-style captions while also echoing Horace Walpole's self-published guide to his collections at Strawberry Hill. The Cabinet of Serendipities is an experimental prototype of Fashion & Folly: in miniature, in print and as a next step in the proposal process. My thesis explored the ways and means of proposing exhibitions as a creative curatorial practice, and this display addresses new aspects of the research. It is a site-responsive exhibition of materials of fashion exhibition-making, especially devised for the Fashion Space Gallery vitrine of the Centre for Fashion Curation at UAL London College of Fashion.

JENNA ROSSI-CAMUS

SEPTEMBER 2019

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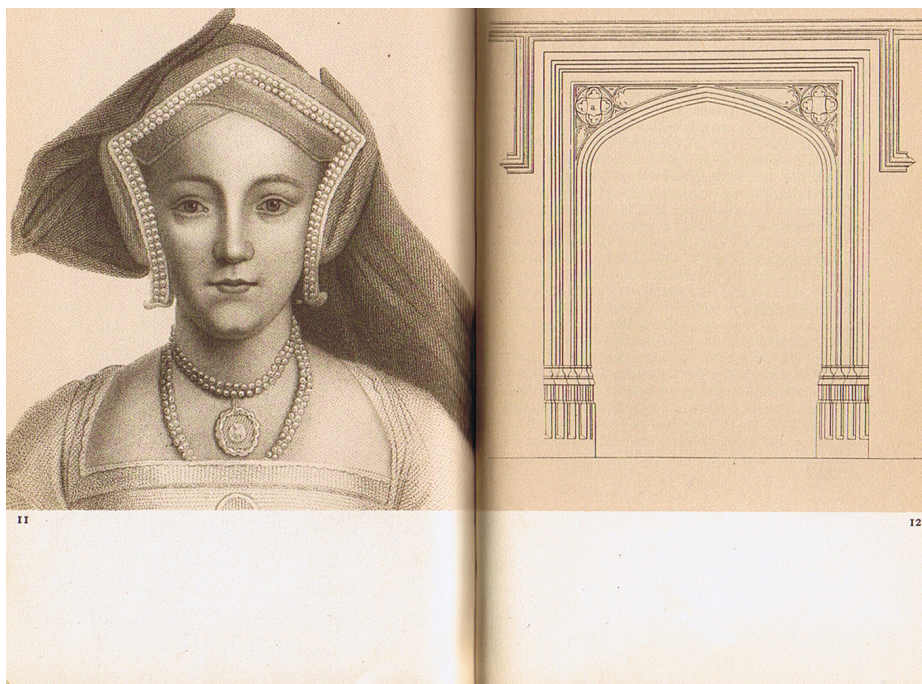
PROPHETIC TALISMANS

Objects that were part of my collection before I began the research supporting
Fashion & Folly, that resonate with serendipitous significance,
foreshadowing future preoccupations

STYLE IN COSTUME

James Laver, 1949

While studying on the Motley Theatre Design course in 2005, I discovered a copy of this book in the school's small library. Soon after, the Holbein illustration paired with a gothic arch served as my scenography business card, but the book's attitudes and juxtapositions eventually resonated with my work on a deeper level. When turning to study fashion curation, I referenced it in my admissions essay, and in my doctoral research it pointed me back towards the gothic arches and high headdresses that fascinated Horace Walpole, while endlessly reminding me that visual dialogues are the whole point of exhibition-making.



COSTUME INSTITUTE SCARF

Ruben Toledo for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996

This scarf is a wearable emblem of my path to curating and my background in illustration. I purchased it while working as a shop assistant at Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1997, and it has been part of my wardrobe ever since. On my first visit to Strawberry Hill in 2010, my husband wore it as a cravat. It is in need of conservation.

PRINTED VELVET SCARF

c. 1930s

The history of harlequin, and other fashionable fools was a significant strand of the research supporting Fashion & Folly. Harlequin's suit became a metaphor for my approach to curation as I became increasingly attracted to textiles bearing his trademark diamond print. I have owned this scarf since 2012, acquired at BangBang Clothing Exchange. It is an echo of Horace Walpole's carved wooden cravat, and I often wear it when volunteering as a steward at Strawberry Hill with a pressed metal strawberry brooch from my local Marie Curie Charity Shop.

CRINOLINE LADY BRUSH

Betterwear, 1950s

The crinoline is one of the most ridiculed fashion garments of all time. Fashion & Folly proposes a room filled with crinoline jokes in two and three dimensions that would mimic Horace Walpole's obsessive thematic collecting practices. This Crinoline Lady Brush is a personal souvenir of Punchdrunk's production of *The Masque of the Red Death* and she has occupied my bookshelf since 2008.

QUIZZING GLASS

England, circa 1800

The quizzing glass is the dandy accessory par excellence and appeared in fashion satires from the 18th and 19th centuries before being immortalised in the fingertips of Eustace Tilley, fashionable mascot of the *New Yorker Magazine*. Horace Walpole owned a watercolour of a dandy holding a similar glass while sporting striped stockings and a devilish grin. The artwork by Henry Bunbury is now held in the collection of the Lewis Walpole Library at Yale University. The quizzing glass was purchased on eBay upon submission of my thesis in early 2019, and has served its function as a magnification tool for viewing the fine print in the Fashion & Folly exhibition proposal.

RECURRING TROPES

Fashion satirical themes and images that persist across time and format; collected and juxtaposed

LASER CUT WOODEN CRAVAT (AFTER GRINLING GIBBONS)

Jenna Rossi-Camus, 2018 [back cover image]

A chance encounter with a laser-cutting machine at the Nida Art Colony doctoral residency inspired me to make a full-scale two-dimensional replica of Horace Walpole's carved limewood cravat. He wore it as a practical joke, convincing foreign visitors that such accessories were typical country house attire for English gentlemen. It is a replica of a replica, made by using modern technology to evoke an object from the past.

'AU MUSÉE DU COSTUME: LA MODE EST UNE ÉTERNELLE MASCARADE'

C. Herouard for La Vie Parisienne, 1920

This satirical illustration featuring the exchange of gaze between fashion past and present is a perfect emblem of the relationships between dress, the museum and jokes. After more than two years of searching for a copy, I finally acquired one in 2017 from HPrints for €22.00.



'HINTS FOR THE BRITISH MUSEUM COMMISSION'

Punch, 1847 Vol. 13, No. 5

This satire on the idea of the fashion museum was published long before any existed, and was a key document connecting fashion museology and fashion humour. After first encountering a copy in the library at Platt Hall, I purchased my own on eBay for £13.48.

'WE ARE THE SLAVES OF OBJECTS AROUND US'

Steven Meisel for Vogue Italia, March 2009

This editorial spread is alarmingly similar in theme and format to the "Musée du Costume" illustration of 1920. This 2009 issue of Vogue Italia was a gift from my friend and mentor Simon Costin and had been in my library for three years before I began my doctoral research.

'MONSTROSITIES OF 1816'

After G. Cruikshank, published by Thomas McLean, London, 1835

A series of prints depicting fashion "monstrosities" were published continuously by printsellers from the 1760s through the 1830s. Coloured versions of the original prints by George Cruikshank exist in museum and library collections. I purchased a set of six uncoloured reprints made in 1836 on Ebay from a dealer in France for €150.00.



'A DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF FASHION'

The Kinks, 1966

This record sleeve features a fashion parade of swinging sixties styles that is reminiscent of the "Monstrosities" fashion prints. This fashion humour anthem is imagined as theme song to Fashion & Folly, and the record was purchased on eBay at a 1960s price: a little less than £1.00.

'ADVICE TO BORES' // 'LE DÉSASTRE'

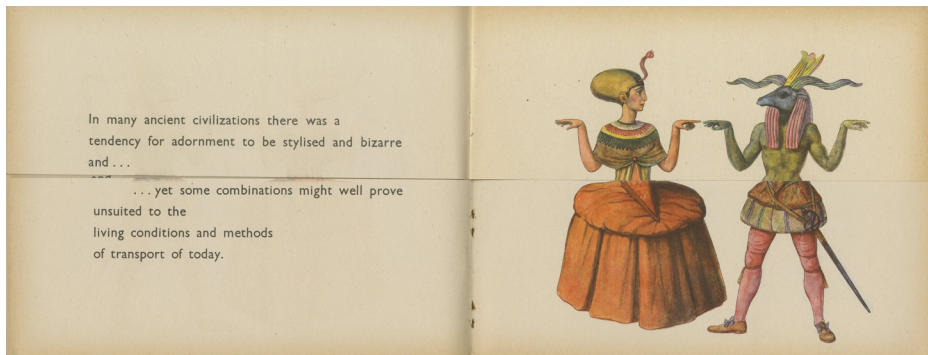
Charles Dana Gibson, 1906 // Leon Bonotte for Fantasio, 1923

The Gibson Girl is one of fashion satire's enduring protagonists. The joke that sees a trailing train trapped underfoot, is a recurring trope and Fashion & Folly reconnects these genealogies. The Gibson Girl print (purchased from Period Paper for \$29.00 in 2017) is displayed here in tandem with one of its subsequent incarnations.

THE FARCE OF FASHION: A RIDDLE BOOK

James Riddell and John Berry, 1946

This children's book offers readers a playful game of fashion history cut-and-paste. Mixing styles and captions it also evokes the processes of fashion museology and using juxtaposition to play with the past. After purchasing this from Abe's Books, I decided to borrow its title for one of Fashion & Folly's sixteen curatorial themes.



COSTUME: JUNIOR HERITAGE BOOKS

By James Laver with illustrations by John Mansbridge, 1956

Fashion satires have frequently been taken out of their ludic contexts and appropriated as illustrations of fashion historical fact. This dress history book for young readers adapts a satirical image of the Duke de Villiers for its cover.

A COMPLETE VIEW OF THE DRESS AND HABITS OF THE PEOPLE
OF ENGLAND: FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SAXONS IN
BRITAIN TO THE PRESENT TIME (VOL. 2).

Joseph Strutt, 1799

A HISTORY OF CARICATURE & GROTESQUE // DE MODE
IN DE CARICATUUR

Thomas Wright, 1875 // Cornelius Veth, 1927



Joseph Strutt published the earliest illustrated dress history texts published in England and Horace Walpole owned a copy of an earlier edition of this volume, which includes a fashion satirical image alongside the style it lampoons. This discovery came after having been acquainted with the drawing of the pig in a hennin from Thomas Wright's *History of Caricature and Grotesque* (1875) and learning of its derivation from the margins of a copy of Froissart's *Chronicles* (1470) in the British Library [Harley MS 4379]. She re-appeared in Cornelius Veth's scrapbook of fashion satire in 1927, a copy of which was gifted to me by a friend in the Netherlands. This little piggy has become a talisman to my research and now also appears as a tattoo on my right forearm; a reminder to take fashion humour seriously, but not too.

ENGLISH COSTUME OF THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Iris Brooke, 1935

The endpapers of this dress history book feature the bifurcated or "horned" headdress of the type that fascinated Horace Walpole, inspiring him to research this garment's origins and appearances in the tombs at Earl's Colne, Essex. In homage to Walpole's pioneering activities as a dress historian, I borrowed the print, recoloured it in a palette evocative of Strawberry Hill and use it as both endpaper and wallpaper.

HISTORY OF BRITISH COSTUME:
THE LIBRARY OF ENTERTAINING KNOWLEDGE

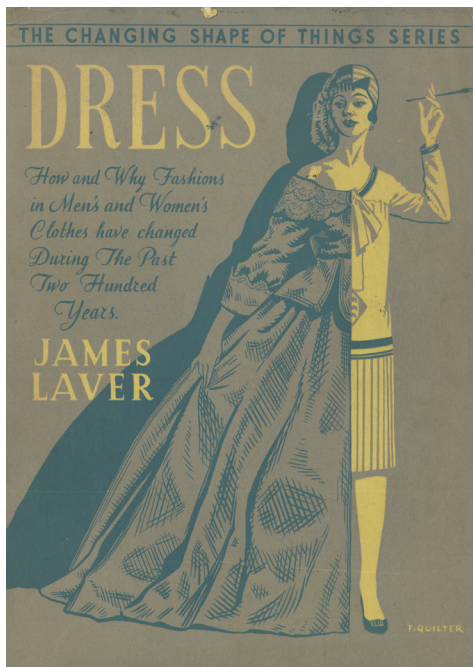
J.R. Planche, 1834

The high hennin also features in this 19th century dress history text. I purchased a copy after first coming across this diminutive volume in the library at Winchester School of Art.

DRESS: THE CHANGING SHAPE OF THINGS

James Laver, illustrated by F. Quilter, 1950

The cover of Laver's classic introduction to dress history, features a 20th century re-imagining of a satirical portrait of the Chevalier d'Eon. Horace Walpole was fascinated by the cross-dressing Chevalier, and he owned and extra-illustrated a copy of his memoirs. Recently, the Chevalier has been adopted by Gucci as a figurehead of "camp," appearing on limited edition Metropolitan Museum Costume Institute merchandise. The half-man half-woman lewk is a popular fancy-dress costume, and this book's dust jacket demonstrates how fashion satirical images evolve and resonate across time.



Mademoiselle de Beaumont,
or the Chevalier d'Eon, 1777
Courtesy Lewis Walpole Library,
Yale University [LWLPR 04221]

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS

Instances where serendipitous finds, gifts or purchases contributed to understandings of fashion satire and Horace Walpole's legacies, while growing my collection

WHAT DRESS MAKES OF US

Dorothy Mary Quigley, 1896

This turn of the century fashion advice book contrasts helpful tips with scorn for the ridiculous. Its title implies that dress may make fools of us all, and it became a key artefact in the development of Fashion & Folly's content – after my mother purchased it for me at a flea market in New York City in 2015.

'LA TRIBUNE DE LAS GALERIE DE MEDICIS A FLORENCE'

Chez Ferdinand Artaria et fils, editeurs, c.1860

The Tribune at Strawberry Hill was Horace Walpole's curiosity cabinet and was named in homage to the Tribuna of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. A satirical print from 1830 by George Cruikshank sees fashionable women comparing themselves to works on display. Hours after discovering Cruikshank's print at the Lewis Walpole Library, I came upon this print of the Tribuna in the Vintage Thrift Shop in New York City. Serendipity demanded I purchase it for \$20.00.



'Comparing Notes - or the Venus de Medici among others!!!' 1835
George Cruikshank, published by Thomas McLean,
Courtesy Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University
[LWLPR 13883]

MODERN TYPES

Ronald Searle & Geoffrey Gorer, 1954

Before purchasing this book from Oxfam in Dalston for £1.99 in 2015 I was only vaguely aware of the beloved British cartoonist Ronald Searle. Further research revealed that he was not only a great illustrator, but also a historian of caricature who, like Horace Walpole had a keen interest in genealogy. *Modern Types* is part of a caricature tradition that goes back to its origins in early modern Italy, and the dust jacket features a female beatnik – making it a highly relevant artefact for my study of fashion satire. At the time of writing, the original dustjacket artwork is for sale on 1stDibs for \$11,995.00.

RESCUING HORACE WALPOLE

Wilmarth S. Lewis, 1978

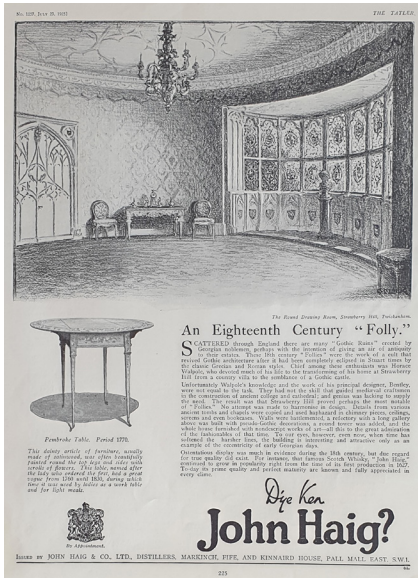
My copy of W.S. Lewis's account of his own serendipitous journeys as a scholar and collector of Horace Walpole's legacies arrived with a surprise. Tucked inside the dust-jacket was a guide to the print collection at the Lewis Walpole Library.



DEATH AND THE GALLANT

Published by T. Langley, 1748

Researching the origins of fashion satire and its connections to religious polemic set me chasing representations of those who danced with the devil. Until the late 18th century, a medieval painting of death and the gallant graced the walls of a chapel in Salisbury Cathedral. Horace Walpole lamented its destruction, and he also owned a sketch of the fresco made by Georges Vertue. While researching this history at the Lewis Walpole Library, Google whisked me to a bookseller offering what appears to be a print derived from Vertue's drawing. It took 48 seconds and £48.00 for me to become the proud owner of an 18th century print.



JOHN HAIG WHISKEY ADVERTISEMENT Published in the Tatler, July 1925

An internet search for images of the Round Parlour at Strawberry Hill led me to HPrints, where this vintage advertisement featuring Walpole's "folly" was for sale. It was the first piece of Walpoliana I purchased, and digital algorithmic serendipity made it possible.

THE DEVIL'S DICTIONARY Ambrose Bierce, illustrated by J.C. Suares, 1981

The Devil's Dictionary offers a definition of fashion as 'a despot whom the wise ridicule and obey', a paradox that guided my re-

search. The book was the very first added to my bibliography, and this edition's cover imagines Mephistopheles as a Regency dandy.

COPY OF AN 18TH CENTURY PORTRAIT OF THE COUNT- ESS WALDEGRAVE [BY JOHN HOPPNER] Artist unknown, circa 1910

Elizabeth Countess Waldegrave was a relation of Horace Walpole, and she died at Strawberry Hill after the villa was inherited by her son John, the 6th Earl. This drawing was likely made after printed copies of the 18th century mezzotint became available in 1910. I purchased it in a charity shop in Dalston in 2012 for £2.00. At the time I had no knowledge of Strawberry Hill's history and held onto the drawing in the hope that it might be of value or interest in the future.



I LOVE DICK

Chris Krauss, 1993

After working on my PhD for three years, I decided to read a book that was decidedly unrelated to my research. Krauss's book exploits the epistolary form as a means of communication and self-discovery, while also embarking on a conspiratorial art project. Horace Walpole is best known for being one of the most prolific letter writers of all time, so as it turned out, it was very much related. It reminded me that writing letters is a way to speak to others, and to oneself, and that every letter is a love letter; every project an art project.

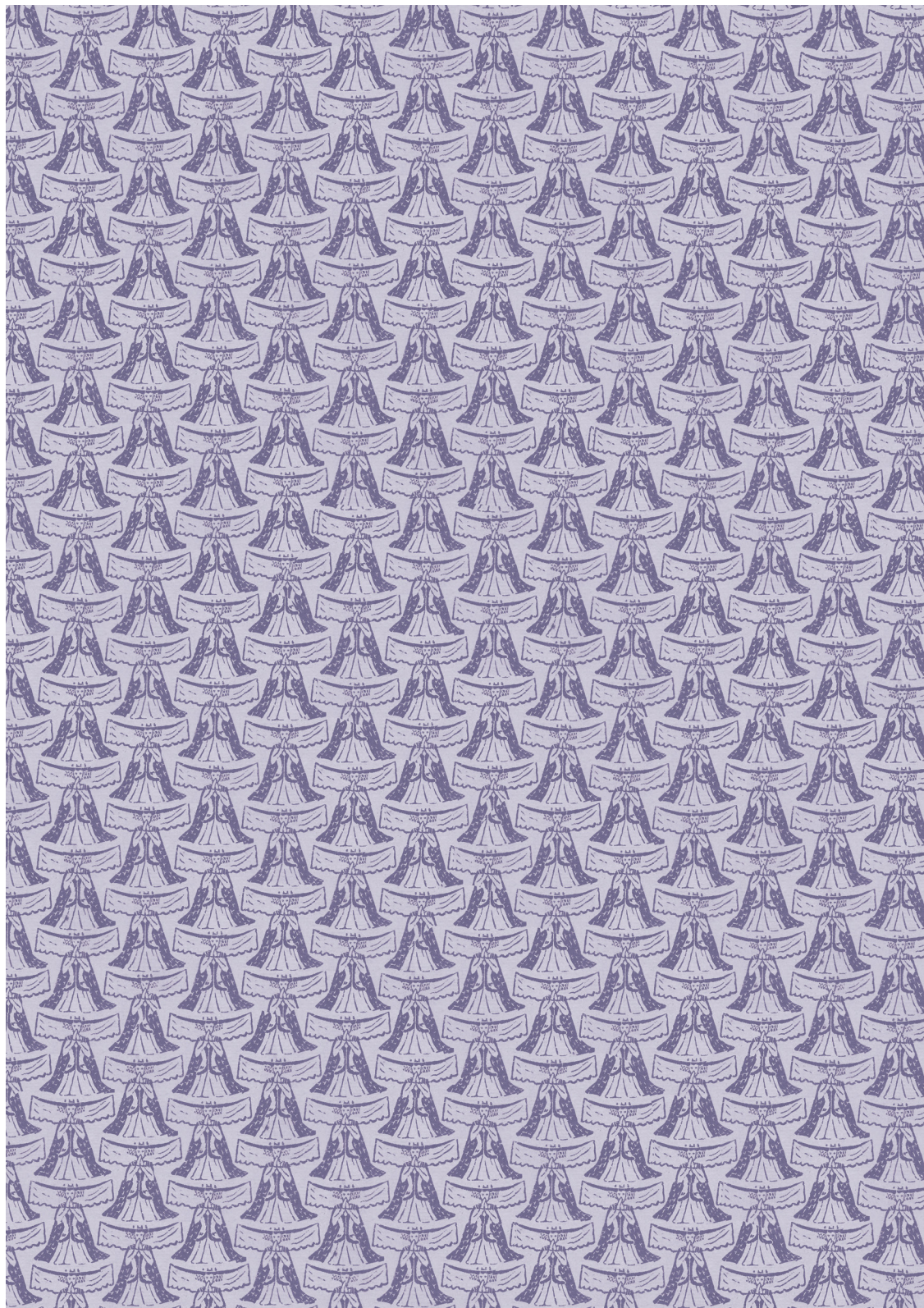
'HOBBY: WHAT ANIMALS LIKE'

Lithuania, 2018

This notebook features a cat in the guise of the Regency Dandy, and it was discovered at Maxima supermarket in Nida, Lithuania. While resident at the Nida Art Colony, I purchased 40 of these notebooks (€.40 each) to use in the presentation of my research to fellow doctoral students. Each visitor to my studio received a notebook with a hand-written letter describing my project and the significance of the dandy as a comic stock character.



[A dandy holding a quizzing glass]
Henry William Bunbury, c. 1789
Courtesy Lewis Walpole Library,
Yale University [LWLPR 06581]





This booklet accompanies the exhibition *A Cabinet of Serendipities* in the Fashion Space Gallery and Centre for Fashion Curation vitrine at UAL London College of Fashion. It has been published in a limited edition of 250, and digital copies are available upon request to: j.m.rossi@fashion.arts.ac.uk.

The exhibition has been realised with the financial, logistical, moral and serendipitous support of the Fashion Space Gallery, the Centre for Fashion Curation, The Lewis Walpole Library, NIDA Art Colony, Strawberry Hill House and Garden, UAL Artscom, Profs. Judith Clark, and Agnès Rocamora, Profs. Caroline Evans and Alistair O'Neill, my family, friends, teachers and colleagues especially my husband RM Sánchez-Camus. I also extend thanks to James Laver, Bernard Rudofsky, Diana Vreeland, Richard Martin and Horace Walpole.

Front cover:
The tribune, Strawberry Hill. (1842?)
Courtesy Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University
[LWLPR 28823]

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CENTRE FOR FASHION CURATION