Melanie Haller (Hamburg): “Meggings – from Subculture Styles to New Body Images of Masculinity?”

Abstract

In the last 10 years, the interdisciplinary and international fashion studies discovered men’s fashion as a subject of interest. Since then, the research areas are increasingly growing and the subject of male bodies is implicit from the beginning. It is notable that in this contemporary research, the concepts of male bodies in fashion are limited among hyper-masculinity on the one and the rare concept of Dandys and Queers on the other hand. In times when street style gets more and more important, fashion blogging still rises and a fashion theoretician talks about “stylistic proliferation” (Steele 2000:7), the question arises, what happened to men’s fashion and their body ideals. Meanwhile, the meggings – leggings for men – are becoming more and more popular, but also highly controversial.

From the Perspective of a bodysociologist and a fashion-theoretician, my lecture shows how body ideals of masculinity are materialized on fashion and anti-fashion. A brief look into the history of fashion shows, that the emphasis on men’s legs is not that much controversial, but much more a question of hegemonic masculinity in a specific timeline. In this regard it is necessary to question the controversial fashion discourse on the body images of masculinity and its historical emergence. On that account, the meggings style as an anti-fashion is intertwined with Japanese street style, hints on gay ballet dancers, conjunctions to the athleisure-trend and his athletic body norms, Hedi Slimanes ‘new’ concept of masculinity up to the historic distinctions of the Bourgeoisie and a ‘modern’ concept of fashion.