

Editing an Exhibition

A Critical Consideration of “Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered”

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Abstract

In April 2019, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the six-monthly fashion magazine *Self Service*, Ezra Petronio, its co-founder and current editor-in-chief and creative director, designed and curated an exhibition in Dallas’s Design District, staged in the spaces of the Dallas Contemporary art museum. The title, “Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered”, makes Petronio’s intentions clear from the start: re-examining the history of *Self Service* through an exhibition, bringing back into circulation the contents and authors—photographers, stylists and fashion designers like Mark Borthwick, Jane How and Helmut Lang—that have contributed to the definition and consolidation of the magazine from the second half of the 1990s to the present day. Here the printed material, which often constitutes the endpoint of an exhibition project, was the starting point and the exhibition was seen as a place in which to think in three dimensions about the making of the magazine and about the editorial process conducted up until that moment. The curator formulated a multi-voiced discourse, one that brought many perspectives and languages together and played on a sensibility developed in the field of publishing, deploying means and modalities typical of the production of a magazine.

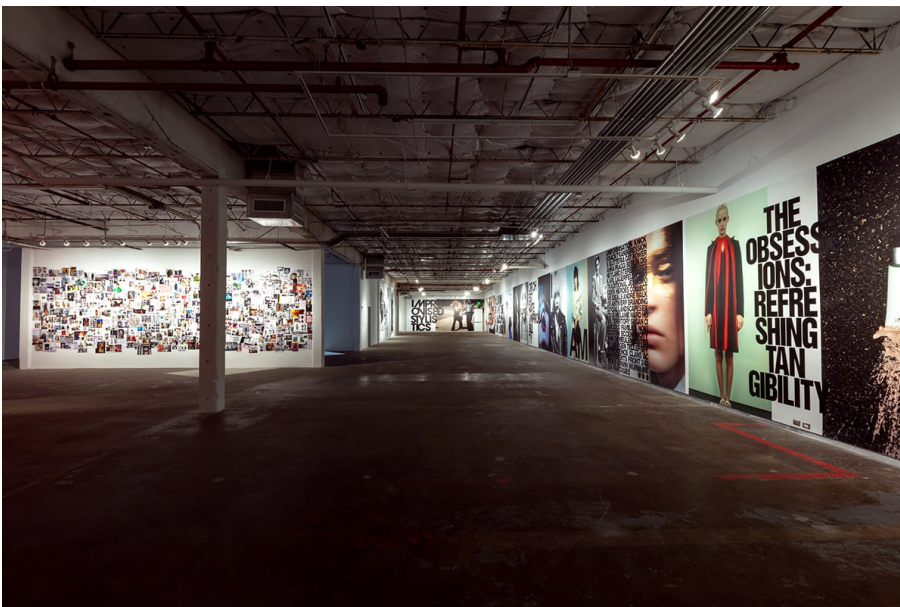
Starting out from this experience, and introducing other examples, the essay investigates the slippages between the two-dimensional space of the page and the three-dimensional space of the museum, and the ways in which editorial practices and propensities can help mould practices and propensities in exhibition-making.

Self Service is a six-monthly fashion magazine co-founded in Paris in 1994 by Suzanne Koller and Ezra Petronio: the first issue was published in October 1995. Initially quarterly, it came out at six-monthly intervals from the sixth issue onwards, allowing the founders to carry out more research and take meticulous care over the contents. From the outset, the magazine was an expression of the creative agency Work in Progress, today Petronio Associates. Active since 1993, it is at the hub of a network of fashion and luxury brands for whose communication and visual identity it is responsible, experimenting with the integration of analogue and digital

media. A creative director with a particular interest in photography and the language of typography, Petronio still edits the magazine today and continues to publish it independently,^[1] without the support of an external publishing house or publishing group.^[2]

In 2019, on the occasion of *Self Service*'s twenty-fifth anniversary, he planned a series of publishing actions intended to serve as a retrospective reflection on the magazine's history. An attention to graphic design, which makes a decisive contribution to the performativity of a publication, permeates the whole of Petronio's production, as he is interested in experimenting in this field and in reflecting on the mechanisms of seduction and involvement of the reader. Together with a limited edition of issue No. 50, sold exclusively by Saint Laurent Rive Droite,^[3] he produced two publications in collaboration with the Amsterdam-based publisher and distributor IDEA, both brought out in a 1000 copies. Titled *The Vintage You* and *Self Service 1994-2019, The Ads*, they were a tribute, to the authors and to the advertisers respectively, who had played a part in the development of *Self Service* and contributed to establishing its reputation in the fashion system. *The Vintage You* is a sort of family album that contains over 200 youthful and intimate portraits of photographers, designers, stylists and fashion editors, while *Self Service 1994-2019, The Ads*, through its republication of the advertisements carried by the magazine from its origins up until that moment, represents "a fascinating testament to and a subjective barometer of fashion's evolving aesthetic and cultural norms."^[4]

Included in this series of actions was the exhibition "Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered", curated by Petronio and staged in Dallas, Texas, from 13 April until 25 August 2019, in the spaces of Dallas Contemporary.^[5] On this occasion, unlike in the publications cited above, the editor dwelled at greater length on the making of the magazine.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Installation view. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

Approach

Dallas Contemporary is an art institution founded in the second half of the 1970s. Since 2010 it has been located in the Design District of Dallas and its transfer to larger exhibition spaces has resulted in an expansion of its programming, initially characterised by a focus on the local scene. Following the European model of the Kunsthalle i.e. an institution that puts on and hosts temporary exhibitions and does not have a permanent

collection it organises eight exhibition projects a year and has a board of directors flanked by a team of curators. Over the last decade, the interest in fashion shown by Peter Doroshenko, Executive Director of Dallas Contemporary, has led to the staging of monographic exhibitions of the work of photographers such as Inez van Lamsweerde & Vinoodh Matadin^[6] and Mario Sorrenti,^[7] and retrospectives of fashion designers like Jeremy Scott.^[8] These were, in the majority of cases, projects that used and reflected on the potential of installation where the institution's high ceilings and long corridors suggested this direction and mode of working.

It was not the first time that Ezra Petronio had taken on these exhibition spaces. In 2011 he had been invited by Doroshenko to present his own photographic project "Bold & Beautiful".^[9] Using a Polaroid Big Shot camera, Petronio had documented the multitude of professional figures and other people who passed through *Self Service*, and the result was a constantly updated and expanded corpus of portraits, characterised by the immediacy and instinctive nature of the medium. There was a strong reference to the work of Andy Warhol, who took a large number of Polaroids between the 1950s and the 1980s, an important segment of his artistic practice and documentation of a context and of the personalities, especially the celebrities, who frequented and transformed it.^[10] "Bold & Beautiful" was a project closely connected with *Self Service* since many of the Polaroids had appeared in the magazine, especially in the introductory pages, in the sections "Initiated Dialogs" and "The Obsessions": the former brought together the voices of the actors in the fashion system, while in the second the visual research, tendencies and fixations of the editorial team were intertwined to describe the objects and imagery of fashion. It is evident, however, that the role played by Petronio in "Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered" was a more hybrid one. If in "Bold & Beautiful" he was the author of the images on display it would be appropriate to consider it a solo exhibition here, in addition to playing the part of the curator, he designed the exhibition layout, drawing on a range of editorial actions and positions.

Before going into the exhibition project in greater depth, it is worth taking a look at the book *Selective Works, Subjective Inventory* produced five years earlier by Suzanne Koller and Ezra Petronio on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Work in Progress agency. A book that represented an opportunity for an open exchange of views with the authors who had been involved, in various capacities, with the publishing venture of *Self Service* and with the agency's other projects. *Selective Works, Subjective Inventory* and the more recent exhibition, both produced to mark an anniversary, offered fertile ground on which to cultivate human and professional relations, try out projects and take a retrospective look at their own history through others' eyes. In the introduction to the publication Koller and Petronio wrote:

This book is an organic gathering collected over the past fifteen years, a deliberate yet subjective journey into the very essence of our undiluted and unconditioned stylistic world. De-contextualized, presented from different perspectives and points of view, the selection wasn't a deliberate search for our absolute or quintessential representation, but ultimately about the importance we place on the creative process and experience. [...] These works are often initiated by demanding and unexpected contexts, encounters, and conversations with creative minds. It is through these productive dialogs that meaning and medium can be questioned, when individual perception is juxtaposed with conventional patterns and habits of vision, inciting inspiration.^[11]

This exaltation of the collaborative dimension is one of the keys to understanding the curatorial choices brought into play by Petronio in "Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered". The curator transferred this inclusiveness the very title of the magazine suggests that anyone can pass through and

choose in what way and to what extent to make use of it into the format of the exhibition, which he describes as a “multi-installation exhibition”.^[12] In doing so, he underlines not just the multiplicity of materials that went into it, but also the autonomy of the individual installations laid out within the expanse of the exhibition space, as if they were sections of the magazine, independent but in dialogue. Petronio came up with a system crammed with visual stimuli and devoid of temporal coordinates, which was conceived on the basis of an inspection of the spaces and their configuration and plans. An organisation that was not intended to explain and simplify but to envelop readers/visitors, calling on them to immerse themselves in an experience characterised by the use of multimedia and in a narrative that took account of the movements of the body in space.

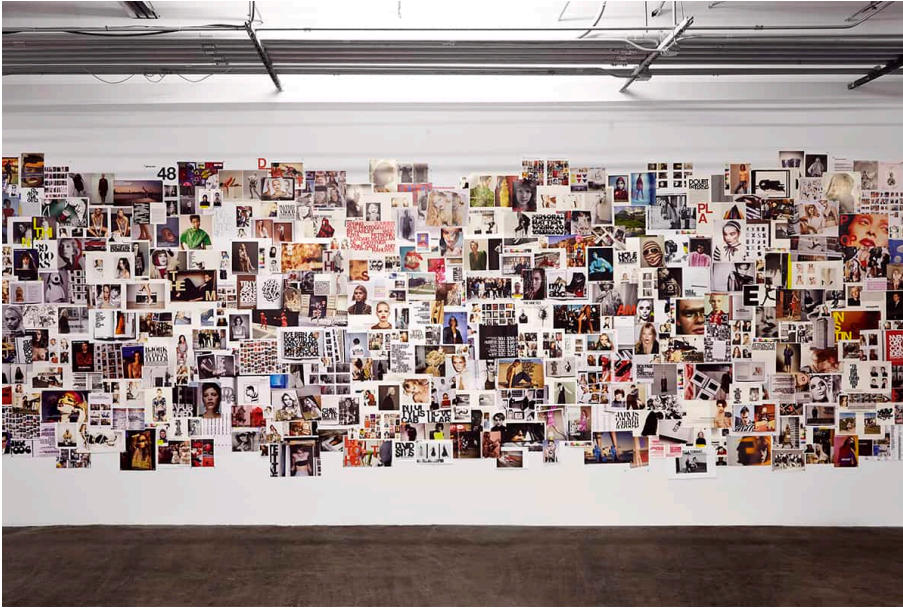
Double-page Spreads

Once past the neon sign declaring “Self Service Magazine” that marked the entrance to the spaces of Dallas Contemporary devoted to the exhibition, the visitor was faced with an introductory text written by Petronio, conceived in the form of an editorial.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Entrance to the exhibition. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

As succinct and direct as the texts that open *Self Service*, it offered a look back at the magazine’s history. Next to it, a large expanse of wall displayed images and fragments of texts, including notes, pictures that had never been published, conceptual maps of the issues and galley proofs, outtakes and flat plans, forming a mood board in which the individual elements were affixed to the wall with pins, mimicking the planning stages of a publication.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. The collaged wall. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

A wall about 60 metres long was plastered with double-page spreads that took up the whole of its surface, from floor to ceiling, printed as wallpaper or dematerialised through the beam of light of a projector.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Wall projection and giant wall installation. Photo Mathieu Boutang.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Wall and floor projection. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

The only room enclosed by four walls, with just a narrow doorway, was reserved for Petronio's Polaroids. In complete darkness, the portraits of artists, designers, curators, contributors and supporters of the magazine appeared, intermittently and in a loop; through seven simultaneous projections, the installation displayed the cultural panorama in which *Self Service* positioned itself.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Video installation showcasing Ezra Petronio's Polaroids. Photo Lana Petrushevych.

In the last area of the space available, Petronio had printed and framed a series of iconic images selected in close collaboration with the photographers who had made the greatest contribution to defining the magazine's visual identity.

As is evident from this brief description, the exhibition consisted of a concatenation of heterogeneous elements, and the practices of editing and montage were the starting point for the presentation of a sequence of three-

dimensional arguments. Usually a publication constitutes the culmination of an exhibition project, whereas here the printed material was the point of departure: as a result, the exhibition became a place in which to reflect on the process that led to the realisation of the magazine, with Petronio choosing not to produce any catalogue, journal of the exhibition-making process or illustrated brochure. Notwithstanding the inevitable dispersion of elements in the outsize space of Dallas Contemporary, the curator's attempt to convey the intimate dimension of reading and the materiality and tactility that characterise the relationship with the printed materials was evident. A central role in this experiment was played by the graphic design, which integrated and connected the various elements through the transfer and translation of the layout of double-page spreads from *Self Service* on the long walls of the space.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Giant wall installation. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

As the graphic designer and art director Peter Saville has put it, “typography is training for the eye with a concern for readability, impact, balance”, and it was specifically in this section of the exhibition that Petronio’s typographic research found full expression, as he made up the walls using fonts designed originally for the printed page.^[13] Transferred onto the wall, these typefaces took on an almost monumental appearance, a “bold” look to use a word that often crops up in his work.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Giant wall installation. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

The effect was spatial, like in Anna Piaggi's *D.P. Doppie Pagine* that gave substance to the regular feature of the same name in the Italian edition of *Vogue* from 1988 to 2012. Fashion editor, visionary and muse of fashion designers like Karl Lagerfeld, Piaggi, in synergy with the art director Luca Stoppini, wove together images and words to create double-page spreads that she described as "a non-system, a free association, a sequence, a vision that transcends the fold of a binding", and that, through the technique of collage, enveloped the reader in an attempt to overcome the two-dimensionality of the page.^[14] Like the work of Piaggi and Stoppini,^[15] Petronio's approach is an instinctive one that recognises unpredictability, obsessions and instinct as essential parts of his work: "[The artistic journey] is about constantly searching for that split second, that coincidental moment that can occur at any time and anywhere to captivate the mind and to put our thoughts in a whole new light."^[16]

Polyphony

In 2010, Sophie von Olfers curated "Not in Fashion: Fashion Photography in the 90s" at the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, with the support of M/M (Paris). The creative duo, made up of the graphic designers and art directors Michael Amzalag and Mathias Augustyniak, who often reflect on the relationship between the two-dimensionality of the printed page and the three-dimensionality of the exhibition space, was invited by Von Olfers to present their own archive of ephemera.^[17] "Fashion Archive 1995-2010" brought together catalogues, leaflets, posters and invitations designed for fashion brands since the mid-1990s, and was one of the installations in the exhibition that helped most to express the ideas of the curator, interested not so much in documenting a decade, the 1990s, as in conveying its atmosphere and the relationship between tangible and intangible aspects, as emerges from Marco Pecorari's analysis:

If exhibitions like *Not in Fashion* expand the category of fashion materiality to other non-wearable objects like invitations or catalogues, they also reveal the role of curatorial practices in exposing the crucial function of these fashion objects, in disrupting canons of authorship in fashion, constructing relationships of intimacy between professionals, or even transmitting material and visual knowledge in fashion.^[18]

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Just like in “Not in Fashion”, the construction of a polyphonic discourse through the involvement of a large group of professional figures who had participated and were still participating in the publishing project in “Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered” emphasised in a direct manner the role of the art director, who holds the different languages together, and in an indirect manner that of the photographers, stylists, designers and models. It is these last in particular who play a key role in Petronio’s work and he often stresses their importance, especially in relation to a photography that situates the performative dimension of fashion at its centre. He always tries to establish a relationship on equal terms and total complicity, doffing his photographer’s hat and donning that of the art director, even when he is the one taking the pictures. As Gabriele Monti argues, “models show themselves to be leading actors in fashion’s processes of image-making: it is not just their bodies that bring the objects to life, but a complex inventory in motion of poses and expressions that ‘make’ the fashion, and do not limit themselves to reflecting it.”^[19] Examples include Chloé Sevigny photographed by Mark Borthwick on the cover of the second issue published in 1996; Kirsten Owen, again portrayed by Mark Borthwick, on the cover of issue No. 12, published in 2000; Stella Tennant in male attire photographed by Inez van Lamsweerde & Vinoodh Matadin on the cover of issue No. 33, published in 2010, with Joe McKenna in the exceptional capacity of guest editor-in-chief.^[20] These were just a few of the faces and bodies that animated the pages of *Self Service*, now printed and framed, sometimes with a narrow mount, in one section of the exhibition. Here the images, for the most part iconic like the covers of the early issues of the magazine, were not extraordinarily large, but of medium size, all fixed at the same height and fairly close together, delineating a sort of visual horizon made up of expressions, gestures and attitudes.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Final section of the exhibition. Photo Mathieu Boutang.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Final section of the exhibition. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

The decision to involve the photographers directly in the selection I have mentioned a few of them, but it is important to recall Anders Edström, Mert Alas & Marcus Piggot, David Sims, Juergen Teller and Harley Weir too was related to a characteristic approach taken by *Self Service*, based from its inception on a collaborative relationship with its contributors that stemmed in part from the magazine's marked independence, allowing it to give them a great deal of freedom.^[21]

Petronio has a strong interest in photographers and other contributors who are able to move easily between different formats, languages and systems. An emblematic example is the duo formed by Inez van Lamsweerde & Vinoodh Matadin, who have chosen to inhabit a hybrid zone, a borderland: "They are continually carrying out displacements, not hesitating to exhibit in art galleries, with blown-up images framed in the most sophisticated ways [...] produced in a fashion context and published in specialist magazines."^[22] By putting on display the work of creatives who habitually deal with the publications in particular with periodicals Petronio underlined the fundamental role of the magazine as a means of communication and dissemination. At the same time, he asserted its importance as an instrument of fashion design, including its immaterial dimension, which evokes, ignites and produces the imagery.

The urge to orchestrate a polyphonic discourse is, moreover, connected with the peculiarity of fashion photography, which "is created for rapid consumption: its supports are newspapers, magazines, advertising space in the city and at points of transit. [...] Fashion photography is created for a precise clientele. It is the work of an author who in any case requires, as in cinema, the input of individual professional skills."^[23] With a vocabulary and a syntax of its own, it is a language that by its very rationale has to follow the rhythms of fashion. A language that finds full expression in the layout, in sequentiality and in intertextuality, through the encounter and interweaving with the titles and the captions.^[24] Installations like the large mood board at the beginning of "Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered" convey the complexity that lies behind the construction of images of fashion and the many professional skills that contribute to their production.

Dioramas

Both roles, curator and editor, work by continually developing and clarifying the relation between the establishment of a theme at an initial and general level, followed by the selection of works that indicate the range and scope of possibility inherent within a theme, concluding with particular manifestations of that theme through the specific contributions. The degree to which the editor/curator imposes and follows through the potential offered by an initial conceptual framework varies, from those projects where the individual works [...] realize a pre-existing thematic, to those where the production of new works generates the final composition both materially and conceptually, often involving a critique of the initial editorial/curatorial proposal.^[25]

The considerations of the scholar Jane Rendell emerging out of the focus on her own hybrid role in the artistic and architectural sphere lead us to reflect on the points of contact between the roles of editor and curator. Making a magazine or a book and making an exhibition are actions that always have to take account of an interlocutor, a readership or public. This is evident when we look at the pioneering work of Diana Vreeland, in which the two roles seamlessly slid into each other. Fashion editor of *Harper's Bazaar* from 1939, and then editor of the American edition of *Vogue* from 1963 to 1971, Vreeland was appointed special consultant to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1972. At *Vogue* she involved distinguished photographers and models who contributed to the success of a publishing phenomenon without precedent, and the same thing happened at the Met, where she applied the experience she had gained in publishing to exhibitions that placed fashion at the centre of the discourse and into which she infused her innate sense of spectacle, not always favourably received by the critics, but embraced by a broad and varied swathe of the public.^[26] The catalogues that accompanied the exhibitions were viewed as publishing projects that included not just documentation of the displays they were in fact produced at the moment the exhibition was over but approached as visual essays conceived expressly for the printed page. As Maria Luisa Frisa makes clear,

Vreeland's approach to publishing affirmed the power of the double-page spread, which thus also seemed to become the preferred means of fixing the exhibition temporary event par excellence, impossible to place in the archives and its grammar [...] Thus the fashion exhibition acts not just by crystallizing and monumentalizing the past, but also by nurturing and defining new trends, for it is a device that restrains and simultaneously amplifies the vision and the voice of the curator.^[27]

Magazines, like exhibitions, are designed systems of an experiential character in which the individual parts the information, the materials are connected with one another and in which the contents are negotiated on a spatial, aesthetic and emotional plane. Although two-dimensional, *Self Service* acts like a diorama: it assumes narrative rhythms, illustrates and informs, but also seduces and produces impressions and new imagery. In a magazine, like in a group exhibition, the work of creatives with different areas of expertise is brought together. In both situations those involved share a place and a time, and the proximity illuminates their similarities and differences: "The group exhibition runs counter to the canonical model of the monographic presentation. By bringing a greater mix of people into an exhibition, it also created a space for defining multifarious ways of engaging with disparate interests, often within a more trans-cultural context. Group exhibitions are ideological texts which make private intentions public."^[28]

The magazine and the exhibition are textual and visual spaces in which the authors can experiment and develop site-specific projects. This was the case with Helmut Lang, for example, in "Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered". Presented as a "visual disruptor" in the teaser that preceded the

exhibition, the fashion designer conceived a series of artworks specifically for a portion of a wall at Dallas Contemporary.^[29] His “destructive” intervention consisted in tampering with some advertising campaigns for his own brand that had appeared in *Self Service*. Here artistic appropriation barged straight into his work for fashion. The unprecedented graphic interventions in the images shook up the coordinates of the double-page spreads.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Helmut Lang's contribution. Photo Mathieu Boutang.

Although intensely interested in material interventions like Lang's, Petronio does not renounce working in the opposite direction. Pecorari comments: “[The] predominance of visuality over the materiality of fashion images became a recurrent tendency in fashion exhibitions and especially in exhibitions focusing on fashion photography or fashion magazines that, similarly to academic studies on fashion media, mostly investigated these media exclusively through their visual and textual properties.”^[30] Petronio frequently works on the slippage between one format and another from the two-dimensional space of the magazine to the three-dimensional space of the museum and the medium of film. Here it should be pointed out that issue No. 53 of *Self Service*, published in November 2020, has also been released as a film, preceded by a trailer that mimics the language of the TV news broadcast but with a glamour aesthetic.^[31] The question “Have you ever watched a magazine?” immediately triggers a sensory short-circuit: watching a magazine as if it were a film and, vice versa, reading a film as if it were a magazine. Petronio openly works with a multi-platform scenario, staying in sync with his time, and sees the fashion film as a communication tool he can use to take the reader/viewer behind the scenes, for example backstage of a photographic feature. “Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered” was also dotted with a montage of video fragments based on archive material that took the visitor, literally, into the pages of the magazine, with essentially visual narratives. Here, through the gestural character of the hands leafing through *Self Service*, aspects closely connected with its physical presence, such as the paper, the dimensions and the binding, were emphasised, while the layout and the typography, as mentioned earlier, found space on the long walls that embraced the visitor.



Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered. Wall and floor projection. Photo Kevin Todora.

In addition, there was a continual manifestation of the past in the present, in a montage that pursued the idea of a temporal collage. In connection to this, Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas's considerations on the theoretical work of Walter Benjamin are telling:

It is through the alignment of both the arbitrary and the intentional ordering of temporal units, the friction between past and present that a third meaning arises. This is not truth as such, but rather, as Benjamin conceives it, an archetype, and a standard for judging the significance of historical reality. [...] The objects of the past are not important for themselves, but for what they represent. The possibility of recognizing the image of the past further depends on being attuned to a peculiar temporality, a movement within the medium of memory in which the meaning of the past is *realized* in the present. In its first incarnation, the past appears distorted, an alteration that Benjamin compares to dreams.^[32]

Conclusion

In the 50th issue of *Self Service*, published in February 2019, two months prior to the opening of the exhibition in Dallas, Petronio staged a re-enactment: he inserted the editorial published in the first issue of *Self Service*, in French. It included something the director, screenwriter and actor John Cassavetes had said in 1968 on the importance of collaboration and on the value of personal projects, without commercial aims. The editor limited himself to translating it into English and, just like in 1995, added only one sentence: "A magazine is never made alone."^[33] In addition to the text, the editorial included a photograph by Mark Borthwick, with styling by Jane How, of the model Hélène Filières, today an actor and film director, who was also the protagonist of the image on the cover. In this regard the reflections of Alistair O'Neill are significant:

In the need to express the continual present the fashion magazine transforms multiple disparate fragments from its past into a seamless representation. In order to be made to fit into the formal structure, to be made relevant or apparently contemporary, the fragments are filed down, smoothed off; their meanings reconfigured, their referents shorn. The validity and relevance of the continual present expressed by the fashion magazine can only be asserted by disregarding, or momentarily forgetting the

continual present it replaces. Therefore, the repetition of replacement without recall practised by the fashion magazine can only function by the equal repetition of re-collecting and recollecting.^[34]

“Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered” set at least two movements in motion: on the one hand it took the form of an exploded magazine, in which the contributions of photographers, designers and stylists coexisted, in much the same way as they do on the page; on the other it was an exhibition-document that through the selection of a number of fragments reconstructed a history of publishing, thereby underlining the need to preserve its traces. The following urgent necessity emerges with clarity from Petronio’s considerations: “I believe that we have this role to maintain the transmission of fashion culture and knowledge, especially in the day and age of today where things are immediate, disposable, and the copy becomes the norm [...]. It’s important to know where all of this comes from.”^[35] Despite this, the design of an immersive environment without special effects, but consisting of writings made up of relations between people, objects and images diminished any celebratory intent. In the same way, the avoidance of any chronological arrangement, allowing the visitor to move around in a fluid manner, nullified the idea of a retrospective exhibition. The temporal dimension undoubtedly played a decisive part: the time it took to see the exhibition might be longer or shorter and the visit was more, as already said, like the reading of a magazine, which entails speeding up and slowing down as it is quickly leafed through or read in depth. Petronio seems to perceive the archive not as a mirror held up to reality, but as a device of the imagination: “The archive has a dual linguistic structure. In as much as it is a well-ordered place, it is the manifestation of a solid reason, and yet it is also to transform it into a place of seduction where the most varied materials chase one another as in Benjaminian *passage*.”^[36]

The insertion of the materials of the magazine into the exhibition produced a sort of visionary perspective that amplified the possibilities of their use. As a deployment of traces from the archives, the exhibition seemed to be alluding to the atlas, in the sense of an enveloping place made of different materials in which the visitor could be immersed even without the mediation of captions. It offered a horizontality in which the connections and endless links that can occur on the surface were highlighted. The expository writing and the modalities of installation sparked off a series of effects and lines of reasoning through which Petronio pursued an idea of the exhibition as temporary extrapolation from the archives, something that had already been extensively practised in *Self Service* and which became testimony and paradigm of a method of working.

Footnotes

1. Suzanne Koller left the co-editorship of *Self Service* in 2014; she is currently fashion director of *M Le Magazine du Monde*.
2. In the early days, the magazine, which today is on a sound footing from a commercial viewpoint and distributed worldwide, was supported by a small group of fashion designers and print publishing enthusiasts, such as agnès b., founder of the eponymous brand and of the publishing project *Le point d'ironie*, together with Christian Boltanski and Hans Ulrich Obrist.
3. The current logo and the original logo appeared on the double cover, causing a short-circuit in time.
4. Petronio, Ezra (ed.). *Self Service 1994-2019, The Ads*. Paris and Amsterdam: Self Service and IDEA. 2019. no page.

5. Petronio was assisted by Eva Moreau Ikidbachian and Lana Petrussevyh, members of the art direction team of the Petronio Associates agency.
6. Titled “Pretty Much Everything”, it ran from 22 September until 30 December 2012.
7. One of three exhibitions collateral to “Self Service: Twenty-Five Years of Fashion, People and Ideas Reconsidered” was the exhibition “Kate”, with pictures taken by Mario Sorrenti of Kate Moss in the early 1990s, at a time when Sorrenti and Moss were a couple and the model was starting to appear on magazine covers.
8. Titled “Viva Avant Garde: A Jeremy Scott Retrospective”, it was staged from 27 January until 17 March 2019.
9. The exhibition ran from 8 April until 21 August, in coincidence with a solo exhibition by Juergen Teller.
10. See Golden, Reuel and Woodward, Richard B. (eds.). *Andy Warhol. Polaroids 1958-1987*. Cologne: Taschen. 2015.
11. Koller, Suzanne and Petronio, Ezra (eds). *Selected Works, Subjective Inventory*. Paris and Zürich: Petronio Associates and JRP Ringier. 2008. p. 7.
12. Telephone conversation with Ezra Petronio on 8 January 2021.
13. Bechtler, Cristina (ed.). *Art, Fashion, and Work for Hire: Thomas Demand, Peter Saville, Hedi Slimane, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Cristina Bechtler in Conversation*. Vienna and New York, NY: Springer. 2008. p. 16.
14. Piaggi, Anna. *Anna Piaggi's Fashion Algebra*. London: Thames and Hudson. 1998. p. 84.
15. See Clark, Judith. “Doppie Pagine: Not Spelling It Out”. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*. Vol. 10. Nos. 1-2. 2006. pp. 259-728. The article is introduced by a lively conversation between Clark and Piaggi and Stoppini.
16. Koller and Petronio, *Selected Works, Subjective Inventory*, p. 7.
17. See King, Emily. *M to M of M/M (Paris)*. London: Thames and Hudson. 2012; and M/M (Paris) (ed.). *M to M of M/M (Paris)*. Volume II. London: Thames and Hudson. 2020.
18. Pecorari, Marco. “Beyond garments: reorienting the practice and discourse of fashion curating”. In *Fashion Curating: Critical Practice in the Museum and Beyond*. Edited by Hazel Clark and Annamari Vänskä. London and New York, NY: Bloomsbury. 2018. p. 192.
19. Monti, Gabriele. *In posa. Modelle italiane dagli anni cinquanta a oggi*. Venice: Marsilio. 2016. p. 79.
20. The models and photographers mentioned belong to a generation of professionals that obtained full recognition between the end of the 1980s and the early 2000s. Magazines like *Self Service*, but also *Purple* (Paris, 1992-), *Dutch* (Amsterdam, 1998-2002) and *Visionaire* (New York, 1991-), contributed to their success. Significant, in this sense, is the figure of Joe McKenna, one of the most influential stylists in the contemporary fashion world, and founder in 1992 of the magazine *joe's*, today considered a collector's item.
21. See Aletti, Vince. *Issues: A History of Photography in Fashion Magazines*. London and New York, NY: Phaidon. 2019.
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23. Frisa, Maria Luisa. “Fashion Eyes”. In *Lo sguardo italiano. Fotografie italiane di moda dal 1951 a oggi*. Milan and Florence: Charta-Fondazione Pitti Discovery. 2005. p. 15.
24. See Jobling, Paul. *Fashion Spreads: Word and Image in Fashion Photography since 1980*. Oxford and New York, NY: Berg. 1999.
25. Rendell, Jane. “Critical Spatial Practice: Curating, Editing, Writing”. In *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*. Edited by Judith Rugg and Michèle Sedwick. Bristol and Chicago, IL: Intellect.

2007. p. 63.
26. See Monti, Gabriele. "Re-Viewing Vreeland Exhibitions". In *Diana Vreeland. After Diana Vreeland*. Edited by Judith Clark and Maria Luisa Frisa. Venice: Marsilio, 2012. In the text the author re-examines the twelve exhibitions at the Met directly linked to Vreeland: from the first, in 1973, devoted to Balenciaga, to the last, "Yves Saint Laurent", in 1987, the first retrospective to celebrate a living designer.
 27. Frisa, Maria Luisa. "After Pictures 1". In *Diana Vreeland. After Diana Vreeland*. p. 19.
 28. O'Neill, Paul (ed.). *Curating Subjects*. London: Open Editions. 2007. p. 14.
 29. This was created by borrowing the signature tune from the first few seasons of the American soap opera *Dallas*, translated and dubbed into many languages and running from the late 1970s until the 1990s. The names of the contributors to the exhibition were associated with the leading characters in the series, introduced one at a time. Available at <https://selfservicemagazine.com/exhibition> (accessed 2021-05-29).
 30. Pecorari, "Beyond garments", p. 183.
 31. Currently viewable on the magazine's YouTube channel, it is divided into sections and an interactive index allows the viewer to move freely among the audiovisual contents. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYXfiJB7Jgk&t=5s> (accessed 2021-05-29).
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