

# Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives

Edited by Claudia Ulbrich  
Richard Wittman





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in Transcultural Settings:  
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HERAUSGEGEBEN VOM  
ORIENT-INSTITUT ISTANBUL

BAND 17

Fashioning the Self  
in Transcultural Settings:  
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Aqua Blue Silk Personal Panel with Quilted Orange Under Panel  
1995-98. Silk. 109 × 71 cm (43 1/4 × 28 inches)

© Andrea Zittel, courtesy the artist and Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York  
Photo by Christopher Burke

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## Preface

The current volume developed out of an international workshop of the German Research Foundation's Research Group 530 on "self-narratives in a transcultural perspective" [DFG-Forschergruppe 530 "Selbstzeugnisse in transkultureller Perspektive"] that was held at the Orient-Institut Istanbul from September 29 until October 2, 2009. The workshop formed part of a long-standing cooperation with the Orient-Institut Istanbul, where research on transcultural self-narratives continues beyond the term of the research group, with the project "Istanbul Memories. Personal narratives of the late Ottoman period" ([www.istanbulmemories.org](http://www.istanbulmemories.org)). The stimulating discussions at the Orient-Institut Istanbul centered around the multifaceted interplay between dress and person/personhood in written self-narratives or ego documents. By focusing on "Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives," we hoped to supplement the existing research on self-narratives with the dimension of material culture. In the workshop light was shed on the potential of dress to shape identities, to express forms of affiliation or foreignness, as well as on vestimentary practices. Were clothes simply purchased to be worn, to possess, and to give away as a gift or in barter trade? During the presentations and discussions it became clear that new insights might be gleaned if one widens the focus in self-narratives, beyond material culture to include the consideration of other sources such as trousseau inventories or account books.

The talks of the Istanbul symposium have been revised and supplemented by an introduction and the inclusion of three additional articles. Among the latter is a text on Andrea Zittel, whose artwork presents an original contemporary approach to dress. We are grateful to the artist for generously providing us with some of her pictures for inclusion in this publication. We would like to thank the Orient-Institut Istanbul for its hospitality, which rendered our intense academic exchange very pleasant, as well as for the organization of a very stimulating supporting program. The public lectures by Christoph Neumann (Munich), Esther Juhasz (Jerusalem) and Joachim Gierlichs (Doha/Berlin) provided precious stimuli for our discussions. We are grateful for the support of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII) and its (then) director, Elisabeth Özdalga, for hosting Joachim Gierlichs' talk on their beautiful historic premises. We are indebted to all those who made the symposium and this publication possible, including the museums, libraries and archives that gave us the copyright for the materials reproduced in this volume, and to Nazire Ergün, Sophie Häusner and Pia Starke for the editing and proofreading of the texts. We are most obliged to

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Istanbul, Berlin, January 2015.

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