baroque at the level of its style, is definitely something else than, for example, the very "wild" and definitely baroque writing of Severo Sarduy or Lezama Lima. As a corollary (but this is a problem with many Anglo-Saxon interpretations of the modernism/postmodernism debate), the coupling of Borges and Derrida, which can be defended at a strictly theoretical level if one considers that both writers take poststructuralist stances, is seriously challenged by the stylistic and rhetorical differences between them. But these are minor flaws, compared with the major qualities of a book that sheds much new light on very old problems.

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AGAINST FASHION: CLOTHING AS ART, 1850–1930

by Radu Stern. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, U.S.A., 2004. 205 pp., illus. Trade. ISBN 0-262-19493-7.

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Near the close of the 19th century, the French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec exhibited his stained-glass window designs (produced by Tiffany and Company) in Paris at the famous L'Art Nouveau gallery, the interior of which had been designed by Belgian architect and designer Henry van de Velde. At some point, Toulouse-Lautrec was invited to visit Bloemenwerf (near Brussels), the home that van de Velde designed, both inside and out in, 1895. However, when the diminutive but proper French artist arrived, he was apparently greatly offended because Mrs. van de Velde greeted him dressed in what appeared to be her housecoat

(or dressing gown), a sign, he thought, of disrespect. As it turns out, she was wearing not a housecoat but a simple, loose-fitting garment designed by her husband, who insisted that his wife (while at home) should dress in a way that reflected the building's architectural style, a belief that was widely referred to in Europe and the U.S.A. as *Gesamtkunstwerk* (or total work of art). As this book reminds us, the person who launched this link between clothing and architecture was probably William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts Movement, as he was most likely the one who designed the loose-fitting corsetless gowns that were worn by his own wife, Jane Morris (consistent with the spirit of Red House, their innovative home). Following that example, van de Velde designed outfits for the wife of one of his patrons; Frank Lloyd Wright created dresses for his own wife and the wives of two architectural clients; Wassily Kandinsky made outfits for a woman companion; Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser designed clothing ensembles; and of course there is the well-known example of Gustav Klimt, who designed one-of-a-kind "art dresses" (called *Kunsterkleid*) in collaboration with his companion, Viennese clothing designer Emilie Floge. By the turn of the century, a German essayist could claim that the time was fast approaching when "shows of women's clothing will take their place among art exhibitions," with the result that it may be exhibited "next to paintings and sculptures."

Illustrated by more than 100 photographs and drawings (many in full-color), *Against Fashion* is an interesting history of the development of an attitude that flourished during the eight decades between 1850 and 1930. The first third is devoted to an essay on clothing as "anti-fashion," detailing contributions by the Wiener Werkstatte, Futurism, Russian Constructivism, the Omega Workshops and others. The remaining portion is an insightful anthology of 30 historical writings about clothing and art by Oscar Wilde, Hoffmann, van de Velde, Giacomo Balla, Varvara Stepanova, Sonia Delaunay and various others. Of particular interest is a pioneering essay (dated 1868) by British architect E.W. Godwin on the importance of clothing design and its relationship to architecture and archaeology. "As Architecture is the art and science of building," wrote Godwin (a friend of Wilde and

James A.M. Whistler), "so Dress is the art and science of clothing."

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THE CINEMA EFFECT

by Sean Cubitt. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, U.S.A., 2004. 464 pp., illus. Trade. ISBN: 0-262-03312-7.

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Another Cubitt. After the publication of two volumes on video that discuss aspects of medium and culture (*Timeshift* [1991] and *Videography* [1993]), Cubitt's critical preoccupation with the phenomena of flow, change and instability also drives the discussion of digital media and networked communication with regard to the organization of knowledge, power and spatial relations on a global scale in the monograph *Digital Aesthetics* (1998). There, he identifies cartography as the paradigm of realism in contrast to perspective as the paradigm of special effect (perspectival vision is synthetic) that is essentially spatial because it organizes in space. (Cubitt coins the term "spatial effect.") And finally—after publishing the comprehensive survey of simulation theories (*Simulation and Social Theory* [2001])—the masterpiece (so far) is out: A book about *The Cinema Effect* that takes in previous reflections on the instability and flow in the emergence of media, instead of identifying interruption and defining normative patterns.

Departing from still commonly held theoretical positions according to which cinema is roughly divided—that is, realism (starting with the brothers Lumière) and magic (starting with the stop-trick by Georges Méliès)—Cubitt is interested in the magic flow of effects that constitute cinema on the whole: as a visual effect of motion on the temporal raster of the "pixel;" as an effect that through the differentiation of the "cut" constructs objects in spatial and temporal relations; and as a special effect that is grounded in animation and connotes meaning, transformation and metamorphosis through the "vector," which marks the transition from the "being" of the object (cut) to becoming "synthetic." The book's argument lucidly develops from the beginning of the medium, where Cubitt describes three positions, namely Lumière, Méliès and