

Brown Bag Seminar OHRM

Term:	Spring 2014
Speaker:	Yoann Bazin (ISTEC Paris) and Maja Korica (OHRM)
Title:	Ordering spectacle: Managing tensions between creative chaos and efficient orders in the organisation of fashion shows
Date:	Wednesday January 15 2014
Venue:	E2.02, Social Studies Boardroom, Warwick Business School
Time:	12.00 – 13.30
Abstract	<p>Although sociologic, historic and marketing aspects of fashion shows have been widely studied, important work remains to be done to understand how such unusual and complex events are organized and managed. Such work is relevant beyond the distinct context itself because, as temporally-bound moments of functional spectacle, fashion shows represent a pivotal point around which multiple organisational tensions and paradoxes meet and occasionally clash: backstage and front stage, (particular) meaning and (particular) meaninglessness, temporality and continuity, order and chaos. By gaining further insights into how such tensions come to have meaning and are negotiated and (temporarily) resolved in extreme settings where they are likely to be most acute, we can gain important insights into how these may come to find relevance in other organisational settings, particularly those relating to temporary organisations.</p> <p>In particular, we can note two distinct aspects to fashion shows as phenomena that are of notable analytical interest, providing the backdrop for our engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Organising and ordering</i>: Most fashion shows are done at the eleventh hour, from the last minute adjustments on the dresses to the necessary adaptations on the catwalk. This results in a hectic organizing, full of sound and fury (that might very much signify nothing), but that never fails to deliver a show almost on time (average delays vary from 10 to 45 minutes). How this necessity of legitimate order (for there is an expectant audience that must be impressed) is accomplished against the backdrop of last minute activity is thus here particularly intriguing to explore. • <i>Temporality and knowing</i>: Shows are executed once, and once only; they will never be performed again. Yet, from one show to another, something remains, without any tangible, concrete medium. The necessary knowing is mediated through designers, obviously, but also through the evolving teams that endure. How such knowing is enacted in those particular moments of ordering backstage, but also communicated and enacted beyond this, thus emerges as a highly relevant question to ask. <p>This paper, which is a work in progress, builds on a current ethnographic study of the back stages of Paris Fashion Week, and aims at exploring in-depth the dynamics of order and chaos, practicing and knowing, frivolities and solemnity in managing and organizing fashion shows. In particular, it examines in-depth how knowing (in order to bring forth particular orderings/orders) is accomplished relationally, via distinct yet fluid ‘bundles’ of space, interaction and objects.</p>
Contact	This seminar has been organised by the OHRM Group: oboffice@wbs.ac.uk http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/subjects/ohrm/events/seminar/