

# Bed-Fashioning

“ The private citizen enters the stage of history.  
For the private person, living space becomes, for the first time, antithetical to the place of work. The former is constituted by the interior; the office is its complement. The private person who squares his accounts with reality in his office demands that his interior be maintained in his illusions. [...] From this spring the phantasmagorias of the interior. For the private individual the private environment represents the universe. In it he gathers remote places and the past. His living room is a box in the world theater. ”

Walter Benjamin, “Louis-Philippe, or the Interior,”  
The Arcades Project, 1940.

## Self-fashioning

### What's behind the cover?

#### Self-fashioning

A term Stephen Greenblatt, a literary historian, used to describe “the process of constructing one’s identity and public persona according to a set of socially acceptable standards, and the conscious effort to strive to imitate a praised model in society.”<sup>1</sup>

Cindy Sherman’s photographs project various identities and stereotypes that are embedded in our shared cultural imagination. She depicts those roles with an irony and shocking honesty that it reveals the ambiguity of our social framework.

Exploring the Maag Areal in Zurich, certain stereotypes appear more often than others. But what is really behind those covers? We humans continuously reinvent ourselves, aspire to new public personas and social ideals, autonomously of age, gender, profession and socio-political context. Thereby, we treat our own bodies as a blank canvas on which we project these constructions onto. As these performances become an everyday occurrence, we almost forget how time-consuming and exhausting this process is. What is it worth? Do we all end up as the same type at the end of the process? This (in)visible transition from one role into another highlights the uncertainty and vulnerability of our cultural ideals and personal values, on the exterior and interior.

The video portrays four individuals continuously transforming into new roles. Even though they aspire to one role, it becomes visible that throughout the process the individuals divert and express a multitude of identities. Statements from interviews which were conducted with the real public personas from the Maag Areal underline the intricacy.

Link to the [Maag Areal Interviews](#).



Movie stills, *What's behind the cover?*  
Video 4'30 min, 2020

<sup>1</sup> Literary Theory and Criticism, *The Concept of Self-Fashioning* by Stephen Greenblatt, 8 April 2020, [Online]: <https://literariness.org/2016/10/18/the-concept-of-self-fashioning-by-stephen-greenblatt/>

## Maag Areal

Home-office I, 2020  
Where is everyone?, 2020

Architecture - the city - becomes the stage for human performances. The Maag Areal reveals a recurring process of a diverse industrial area being transformed into an arguably too well-designed and conventionally planned through mixed-use development. People do not appear in public spaces and alternative spaces for creativity vanish. Is individuality and self-expression replaced by reflective glass facades and cold surfaces? Does the imperfection and the dynamism of people as well as spaces get lost? Similar to the continuous transformation into roles, on closer look the Maag Areal reveals a certain emptiness and questionable perfectionism. A comedy gradually turns into a tragedy.

During the self-isolation the Maag Areal appears as empty as before. If it hasn't felt like a ghost town before, is it one now? Not only are the open spaces empty but the few public spaces, such as gyms, ateliers, offices or cafes are unused. The emptiness of the outside invaded the inside.





## Bed-fashioning

The isolation demands that everyone starts translating their public life into their private spaces. But on the other hand the isolation demands that everyone starts translating their public life into their private spaces. The traditional distinction between the private and public, work and play, action and rest, weekday or weekend becomes blurrier. Various activities are carefully curated in one's own home.

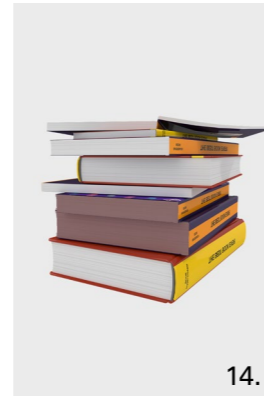
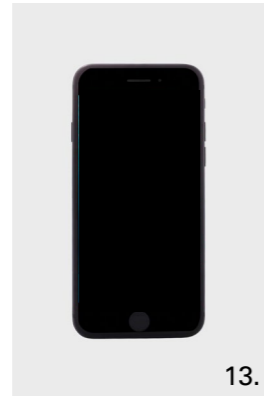
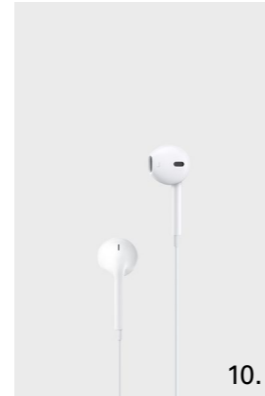
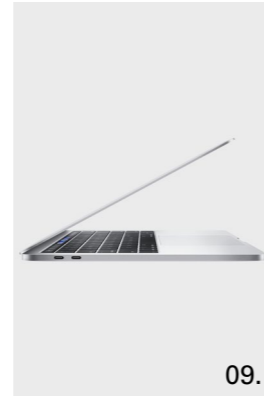
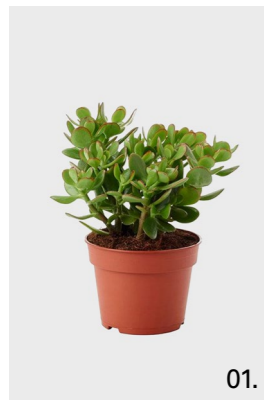
The bed becomes a new stage, where the whole universe is concentrated on a small square. The home office is realer than ever before. The current situation clearly describes our paradoxes between the real and virtual worlds. The bed is an environment that combines interiority and domesticity with the idea of connectivity and productivity to the outside world. It connects us to places that are miles away. One can be productive in bed, communicate with others and satisfy any desires comfortably from bed. By doing so, identities are no longer solely projected on the body and constructed by social ideals. This process expands and converts into space, onto the bed. Self-fashioning suddenly turns into bed-fashioning.

The intervention is called 'bed-fashioning' because in the new context the objects on the bed get a new meaning and function. They provoke new attributes and play with existing ones, like in a classical renaissance or baroque painting. They create symbolism and personification.



Hugh Hefner in bed, 1966, Photo: Burt Glinn, Source: Magnum Pictures.





Attributes

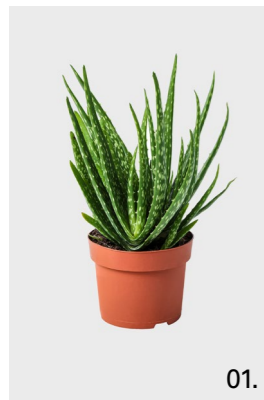
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|------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Breathing creature | 13. Entertainer |
| 02. Vitamin booster    | 14. Knowledge   |
| 03. Gratification      | 15. Paper       |
| 04. Life-saver         | 16. Table       |
| 05. Pleasure           | 17. Tissue      |
| 06. 100% Cotton        |                 |
| 07. Medium mattress    |                 |
| 08. Necessity          |                 |
| 09. Network            |                 |
| 10. Intimacy           |                 |
| 11. Elixir of life     |                 |
| 12. Penguin            |                 |

"Hi sweetheart.  
*What's going on?*  
Theres something I wanna tell you.  
*I want you to tell me anything.*  
Come lay down with me.

Can you fell me with you right now?  
*Yes, I do. Why are you leaving?*  
It's like I'm reading a book, and it's a book I deeply love, but I'm reading it slowly now so the words are really far apart and the space between the words are almost infinite. I can still feel you and the words of our story, but it's in this endless space between the words that I'm finding myself now. It's a place that's not of the physical world - it's where everything else is that I didn't even know existed. This who I am a now. And I need you to let me go."







01.



02.



03.



04.



05.



06.



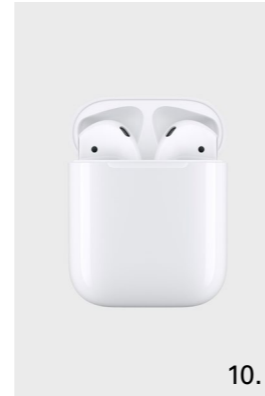
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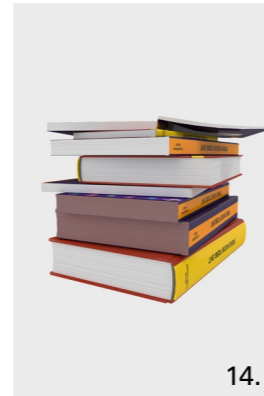
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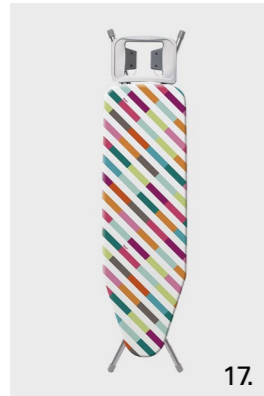
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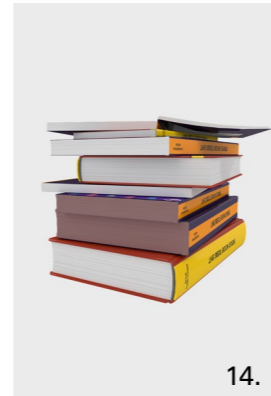
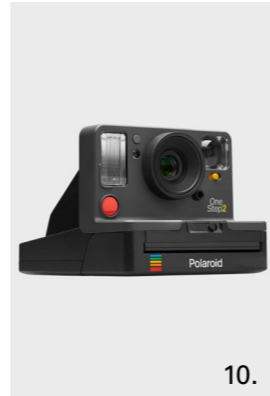
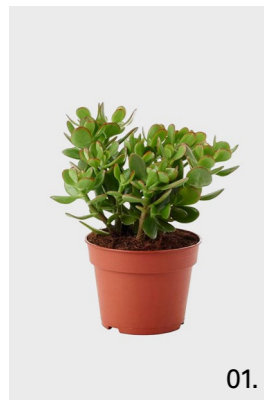
Attributes

- 01. Decoration
- 02. Diabetes
- 03. Art
- 04. Energy Booster
- 05. Addiction
- 06. 100% Pure Satin
- 07. Firm mattress
- 08. Status
- 09. Hyper-connectivity
- 10. Relaxation
- 11. Moment of silence
- 12. Friend
- 13. Entertainment
- 14. Mouse pad
- 15. Laptop holder
- 16. Table
- 17. Ironing board

"This new situation is overwhelming. How am I supposed to be productive, work, be available, entertain my boss as well as take care of the household, follow my hobbies, spend time with my friends and family and most importantly take care of myself, my health?"

*It's not that difficult. You just need to wash your hands more often, eat less fast food and more organic healthy foods, reduce your alcohol consume and most importantly increase your daily dose of vitamin supplements. They say, as one makes his bed, he may lie on it."*





Attributes

- 01. Friends
- 02. Stuffed toy
- 03. Fairtrade
- 04. Plant fertiliser
- 05. Vase
- 06. 100% Polyester
- 07. Soft mattress
- 08. A woman's prison
- 09. Activism
- 10. Home-office
- 11. Slowdown
- 12. Art
- 13. Toilet paper
- 14. Hobbies
- 15. Political attitude
- 16. Protest
- 17. Table

"A very creative and inspiring day. I can finally concentrate on myself because I no longer worry about what other people might think and judge of me. I have everything I need around me and what doesn't fit is made to fit. As long as I have my friends around me, I can't complain.

*I am glad that you finally have the time to be yourself and that you have found a way to use your time productively."*

Bed-fashioning I-IX, Series, 2020

