

German Masculine Fashion Illustration during National Socialism and the Postwar Era

18. Jahresmitgliederversammlung von *netzwerk mode textil* e. V.

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Letztes Jahr schloss ich meine Promotion in Kunstgeschichte an der Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Kanada mit einer Dissertation über die Darstellung von Männeridealen in westdeutschen Modeillustrationen ab. Durch eine Untersuchung der Modebilder beleuchtet mein Forschungsprojekt die bislang wenig beachtete Rolle dieser Herrenbekleidungsindustrie in ihren geschichtlichen und internationalen Kontexten, insbesondere ihre kosmopolitischen Interaktionen mit den Designkulturen Großbritanniens, Frankreichs, Italiens, der Vereinigten Staaten und Ostdeutschlands. Meine Dissertationsrecherche wurde durch ein Doktorandenstipendium des *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council* der kanadischen Regierung und ein einjähriges Forschungsstipendium des DAAD unterstützt, mit dem ich an der LMU München und in der Sammlung der Von Parish Kostümbibliothek geforscht hatte. In meinem Vortrag auf Deutsch für das Offene Forum der Jahresmitgliederversammlung von *nmt* skizzierte ich einen allgemeinen Überblick über den Inhalt meines Dissertationsprojekts anhand einer Auswahl von Bildern aus meiner Zeitschriftenforschung.



Hans Fischach, "Herbstferien im Gebirge", *Herrenjournal*, September 1956. Von Parish Kostümbibliothek.

Abstract der Dissertation:

German Masculine Fashion Culture during National Socialism and the Postwar Era: Constructing and Reconstructing the Ideal Man through Illustration

(Queen's University, Art History, September 2025)

Supervisors: Allison Morehead & Elizabeth Otto

Under the National-Socialist regime, German visual culture prescribed rigid gender roles of militaristic masculinity to parallel the nation's rearmament and complement its ideals of domesticated femininity. After twelve years of witnessing and, for most, participating in the political, personal, and racialized dimensions of such Nazi gender expectations, defeated Germans rebuilding after the so-called "Zero Hour" of 1945 faced the significant challenge of redefining and renewing masculinity for the postwar era. The images in fashion magazines are material evidence of the active shaping of new national masculine norms of the 1950s and '60s. These images exemplify the complicated racial, political, gendered, and cultural dimensions of German masculinity while also playing a direct role in ascribing new expectations of ideal male dress and behaviour. And, among the content created for these publications, fashion illustrations, due to their imaginative hand-drawn qualities and sustained mass-media cultural prevalence, powerfully visualize how artists experimented with possibilities for male appearance.

During the postwar *Wirtschaftswunder* ("Economic Miracle"), the underexamined West German menswear industry sought to cultivate international diplomatic networks and incorporate new ideals of cosmopolitanism to redefine mid-century modern German identity. This dissertation thus analyses the work of West German fashion illustrators, in conjunction with the work of fashion designers, photographers, and journalists, to investigate the enduring and insidious influence of fascist ideologies over visual representations of postwar masculinity. By exploring the historical, aesthetic, and geographic contexts within the West German fashion media's normative representation of the ideal German man, this dissertation demonstrates how the popular culture of mass-produced men's fashion illustration manifested often unspoken and powerful debates about postwar manhood.

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Peter J. Sproule für *netzwerk mode textil e. V.* (online: 27.06.2026)

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