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AB Fear and clothing. That would be a good theme for an exhibition. In the history of fashion, there are many examples of anxiety, even terror, surrounding technology, despite the fact that fashion and technology are inextricably connected.

IVH Within our current technological revolution there is a lot of fear. Technology can be used in very wrong, and in very dangerous, ways. But every tool can be used for the good or the bad. It's what people do with them, that's the choice. But I am a positive thinker and I believe that, in the end, everything will balance out. In my own work, I do believe that technology should be as invisible as possible.

AB This idea of the invisibility of technology is a fundamental premise of the exhibition. In fashion, technology has become synonymous with "wearables," but for me technology is a creative tool—it's not a functional end product. The show focuses on "fashion in an age of technology," not fashion and technology per se. It examines materials and techniques that have had realistic—and practical—applications within fashion, such as laser cutting, which is a practice that you have used to great effect in your work.

IVH Yes, many of my pieces are embedded with laser cutting. One of my favorite pieces from my most recent collection (spring/summer 2016 prêt-à-porter) was a dress with an overlay of cotton lace hand-woven with laser-cut leather appliqué *(pages 143, 145)*. Some materials are better to cut by a laser than by hand. Leather is one of them. The patent-leather dress from my spring/summer 2015 ready-to-wear collection, called "Magnetic Motion," was entirely laser cut *(pages 140–41)*. I use a lot of leather in my fashions. I like the fact that each skin is different. Leather is so natural, so formable, that you can give it your signature. Some materials don't want to be changed that much, but leather wants to be changed. It asks for it. Going back to your question about synthetic biology, I'm sure you've heard about Modern Meadow, where leather is grown in a laboratory. At the moment, I don't think we're going to see it being used to produce garments. But it has the potential to radically change the way leather behaves. Leather won't come in small pieces anymore. You will be able to grow it by the meter, grow it to wrap around an object, and even grow it to be transparent. It can be completely seamless.

AB On the subject of "growing," you often describe the dress you made in collaboration with Jolan van der Wiel from your autumn/winter 2013–14 haute couture "Wilderness Embodied" collection as having been "grown" *(pages 174–75)*.

IVH Yes, that dress has a base made from cotton fabric. Then there is a rubber component—a soft rubber—in which we place metal powder. When you mix everything together, the rubber has a few minutes when it is still wet and soft. We pour magnets above and below, and you see the metal powder grow piece by piece—in a matter of seconds—before it sets. The coloration is exquisite because while the rubber is still wet and soft we add a very thin enamel powder that has iridescent qualities. Depending on the light, you see green, purple, yellow—it's all very subtle.

AB How beautiful. Going back to laser cutting, are there any other materials that lend themselves to the technique?

IVH Acrylic, which I use a lot in my work. The acrylic strips I used in the dress from my spring/summer 2012 haute couture collection, called "Micro" *(pages 111, 113)*, were all laser cut. The edge of every strip was printed by hand with black lines.

AB It looks like plissé.

IVH Yes, the piece does look pleated. I love using nontraditional materials to evoke traditional techniques. Basically, it's plissé but done differently. To me, plissé is about layering and using those layers to create flexibility and movement. And this dress does that exactly.

AB As well as using acrylic to evoke pleating, you've also used silicone rubber to evoke feathers?

IVH Correct—Dragon Skin® silicone. I used it for the "bird" dress *(pages 217, 219)* that I made in collaboration with Cedric Laquieze for my "Wilderness Embodied" haute couture collection. The process is very complicated. We start with pouring the silicone ourselves because we want to achieve an exact color as well as an exact thickness and flexibility. We make large sheets, which dry overnight. The balance has to be perfect. Not too thin, not too thick. And not too dry, not too sticky. When we're happy with the consistency, we start the process of laser cutting. We laser-cut strokes, and we do two strokes at the same time. But the process is extremely time-consuming.

AB Because of the density of the material?

IVH Yes, and because it also takes a lot of time to clean the silicone, which is almost black after it's been laser cut. Once the sheets have been cleaned we stitch them by hand to the fabric of the base dress.

AB How many sheets make up the dress?

IVH I'm not sure, but a lot.

AB What about the birds?

IVH They're made from the same fabric as the base dress with a small cage inside, and then attached directly to the dress. All the feathers are attached by hand. And the heads are real bird-head skeletons coated in silicone, with glass eyes and pearls. They're made by the artist Cedric Laquize here in Amsterdam.

AB How does the dress move?

IVH It moves like feathers. The nice thing about silicone is that there's some weight to it and it's sort of wobbly, so it wants to move.

AB What about the acrylic "feathers" in the dress you made in collaboration with Bart Hess from your spring/summer 2009 "Radiation Invasion" collection *(pages 221, 223)*? Were they also laser cut?

IVH They were all hand cut.

AB Incredible. Every "feather" looks so perfect—so regular and uniform. The hand/machine dichotomy often presents the hand as imperfect and the machine as perfect. The implication being that the hand is expressive and spontaneous and the machine is detached and undemonstrative.

IVH I love that dialogue because, in actual fact, garments made by machines are not perfect. There is not one 3-D-printed piece or one laser-cut piece that I've produced that doesn't contain a mistake. As with pieces made by hand, they're a little bit off. A printer, a laser cutter, the hand—each is just a tool for assembling different parts together.

AB Errors are what move fashion forward.

IVH Yes, and they have humanity—both the errors of the hand and the errors of the machine. We like to see things that we can relate to, and we all relate to mistakes.

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