

Valerie Steele has been instrumental in creating the modern field of fashion studies and in raising awareness of the cultural significance of fashion. The talk will explore the research and organization behind Steele's exhibition, 'A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk', held at The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in 2013. Steele examines high fashion as a site of subversive potential and queer renegotiation and explores the aesthetic sensibilities and often unconventional dress of LGBTQ people, especially since the 1950s. Her research juxtaposes the two fields of queer studies and fashion history. She will show how her work on cross-dressing and gender ambiguity informed and complicated what began as an exploration of gay chic and gay designers. It explores the relationship of style and gender, and how fashion is always time-sensitive, reprising pasts and shaping a future.

**Valerie Steele** (Ph.D., Yale University) is director and chief curator of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she has organized more than 25 exhibitions since 1997, including *London Fashion, Gothic: Dark Glamour*; *Daphne Guinness, Dance and Fashion*, and *Proust's Muse, the Countess Greffulhe*. She is also the author or editor of numerous books, including *Paris Fashion, Women of Fashion, Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power, The Corset*, and *Fashion Designers A-Z: The Collection of The Museum at FIT*. In addition, she is founder and editor in chief of *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* – the first peer-reviewed, scholarly journal in Fashion Studies. Described in *The Washington Post* as one of 'fashion's brainiest women' and by Suzy Menkes as 'The Freud of Fashion', she was listed as one of 'The People Shaping the Global Fashion Industry' in the *Business of Fashion 500* (2014 and 2015).

ICI Lecture Series **ERRANS, in Time** Conceptions of time and temporal experience seem more at odds now than ever. Hamlet's hunch that 'the time is out of joint' has turned into an evergreen of critical discourse. Admittedly, ideas of physical, social, revolutionary time, internal time consciousness, or historical experience are far from settled in their respective discourses and practices. Yet attempts to harmonize or correlate the understanding of time and temporal phenomena generated in different disciplines all-too quickly – and largely with violent effect – resort to normative, if not teleological ideas of progress, efficiency, narrative sense-making, or experiential plenitude. The current ICI Lecture Series **ERRANS, in Time** asks whether the heterogeneous relations between discordant conceptions of time and temporality can be understood as being 'erratically' structured, that is, as marked by inherent misapprehensions, a dissonance that defies regulation, and an unexpected variability.

# Valerie Steele

Fashion, Time,  
and Queer Identity

