

Summary

Dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of fashion from an academic perspective, the quarterly journal *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* views fashion as a cultural phenomenon, offering the reader a wide range of articles by leading Western and Russian specialists, as well as classical texts on fashion theory. From the history of dress and design to body practices; from the work of the fashionable figure through the ages to fashion journalism, fashion and PR, fashion and city life, art and fashion, fashion and photography—*Fashion Theory* covers it all.

In **Dress** section we look at constructions of femininity and fashion as an agency. **Will Visconti** contributes *The Marchesa Casati as Fashion Plate and Fashion Muse*. The Marchesa Luisa Casati has become a perennial muse of fashion designers in recent decades, from haute couture to High Street brands. Collections inspired by the Marchesa link to her background and the history of the spaces that she inhabited. Casati was born in Italy but lived and traveled between France, Italy and Britain, among other countries, where the cachet of her name has been combined with that of the fashion houses citing her as an inspiration. Despite her enduring reputation as an avant-garde style icon and a singular dresser who was

just as likely to wear elaborate costumes as nothing at all, her engagement with fashion was not always as visibly eccentric as her posthumous impact suggests. Nor was it strictly within the binary of fashion and “anti-fashion”. Casati was at once a “disruptive” body and a conventionally stylish one. Popular memory has focused on the more “spectacular” and stylized elements of her esthetic. Archival evidence and artistic representation demonstrate how Casati constructed a wardrobe that melded the conventional and shocking, and how fashion played a role in the emergence of her chimerical public persona.

Emily Brayshaw offers her paper *Costume Behaving Badly: Poverty, Disease and Disgust in Early Twentieth-Century New York Vaudeville*. The early twentieth-century Broadway stages and US vaudeville circuits boasted numerous successful performers, costumiers, producers and directors who understood that their luxurious costumes were crucial to a production’s success because they supported the show’s narrative and the performer’s personal brand. Costumes were themselves “actors” that performed via an actress’s body to reflect the social, cultural and economic landscapes they inhabited, spinning tales of notoriety, extravagance and celebrity that proved potent to audiences. In some cases, however, Broadway and vaudeville costumes were unruly, behaving in unintended ways and telling audiences stories that differed from a show’s narrative and highlighting social anxieties that audiences had come to the theater to escape. Drawing on theories of agency in costume and textile semantics, this article analyses early twentieth-century accounts of costumes behaving badly to argue that those reviled as disgusting by theater critics and audiences reflected classed fears of poverty and disease.

Vera Ustiugova’s *Prisoners of Costume: The Language of Fashion in Early Silent Film in the Russian Empire* looks at the “new visibility” of women in early Russian cinema through the language of style, fashion, and the body. The social factors allowing actresses and heroines of silent film to become “visible” were linked to the dynamics of urban public space culture and the democratisation of the fashion industry. The Art Nouveau and avant-garde art popular in the early twentieth century gave an aesthetic impetus to processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. Before the revolution, actresses in sentimental melodramas had been filmed in their own modest attire. In silent film, the concept of expressive appearance developed at the crossroads, and under the influence, of a number of different fields of Modern discourse. From Turgenev heroines, women in film gradually evolved into femmes fatales, queens of the new dances, cyclists and drivers. This process was largely driven by

designers, artists, tailor shops, couturiers and avant-garde painters both male and female. Once professionally and financially independent, well-known film actresses could choose how they wanted to look, rather than simply conforming to social and gender stereotypes. Corsetless fashion, the new culture of movement catapulted into the future by modern technology, dance—tango, the style of Isadora Duncan, Apache, new Russian ballet—all these were reflected in cinema, promoting further liberation of the female body. Cinema and the new cultural environment were also shaped by female film viewers. The cinematic images of “femmes nouvelles” inspired women in capitals and provinces alike to strive for aesthetic self-realisation, prompting them to take a fresh look at themselves, and the world.

Svetlana Voloshina presents *Sans-Crinolines, the New Sans-Culottes: How Power Saw Fashion as Revolution*. In 1866, following the assassination attempt on Alexander II, the powers that be in Russia began, perhaps for the first time, to pay close attention to the attire of their subjects. Nihilist dress in women was seen as deliberate flouting of the conventions and traditions dictating the appearance of upper-class ladies. Such attire was officially proclaimed by the authorities an “impertinence deserving not only censure, but persecution”. The author traces the connection between the visual characteristics of a group of subjects (“nihilists”), and the reaction of the authorities which perceived these characteristics as signs of political opposition. Focusing solely on the political aspect of the situation, as they habitually did, authorities failed to take into account a relatively new factor of increasing importance in the democratising society. Fashion, with its rapid development and multitude of cultural, ideological and individual nuances affecting “personal façade”, greater diversity of the visual than was traditionally the case in a class society.

Jon Cockburn’s *Olivetti and the Missing Third: Fashion, Working Women and Images of the mechanical-flâneuse in the 1920s and 1930s* addresses images of the mechanical-flâneuse as the efficient modern woman at work in the 1920s and 1930s. To do so the characteristics of flânerie, traveling theory, and concepts of self-presentation are explored in relationship to the concurrent and transcultural influence on occupation and fashionable appearance of interest in Taylorism in the USA, USSR and Italy.

Connie Karol Burks contributes *Model Woman: The Creation, Dissemination and Cultural Significance of Barbara Goalen’s Model Persona in Postwar Britain*. During her relatively brief but prolific career,

spanning 1947–1954, Barbara Goalen became one of the most successful and widely-recognized fashion models in postwar Britain. Using extant material in her personal archive now housed in the Archive of Art and Design along with other image and text-based sources, this article traces the creation of Goalen’s public persona from anonymous face to renowned personality. Formed predominantly through images and text in mass media, it explores how this constructed ‘model persona’ powerfully denoted a particular aspect of the cultural zeitgeist in Britain at the time. Drawing on theories of photography, semiotics and celebrity the article discusses how Goalen represented and embodied a prescribed ‘ideal’ of society both physically, with her ‘look’, and culturally, with her persona, reflecting the dominant esthetic and cultural standards perpetuated by the fashion industry, and wider society, at the time. Following the growing body of work examining the significance of models in fashion history, this article uses Goalen as an example to demonstrate the important and active contributions that models make toward creating images and disseminating fashion culture, as well as representing a visual legacy of a moment in fashion.

Rebecca C. Tuite offers her article *Fashioning the 1950s “Vassar Girl”: Vassar Student Identity and Campus Dress, 1947–1960*. In 1957, Clifford Coffin photographed real Vassar students as models for the annual Vogue college issue. High fashion and elite education were combined and the photographs underscore the significance of the “Vassar Girl” as both a cultural and sartorial icon during this decade: a media-cultivated, almost mythical presence that permeates 1950s American media, popular culture, and fashion discourses. What these images more pressingly demonstrate is that, by the 1950s, the “Vassar Girl” was a powerful entity in American culture: seemingly both real and imagined, but lucrative all the same. Genuine Vassar students had to navigate a series of sartorial assumptions and expectations to assert and formulate their own identity, both within and without, the campus culture, providing material for a rich exploration of individual and collective identity of Vassar students at the mid-century. Following the collection and analysis of original oral testimony of hundreds of mid-century Vassar graduates and studies of iconic garments of the period, this article provides an explorative analysis of the ways in which fashion functioned in the construction of personal and collective identity at Vassar, and the construction and perpetuation of a “Vassar Girl” aesthetic and brand in American fashion and media discourses of the 1950s. Grounding the exploration in an analysis of Vassar’s revolutionary psychological and developmental study of its students

during the 1950s (the Mellon Study), this article will undercut media discourses and hyperbole to root considerations of dress and identity in the statistical and narrative proof of original college records from the pre-feminist era, which was also the last full decade of all-female education at Vassar.

Julie Blanchard-Emmerson contributes her paper *“It’s the Time You Got to Wear Whatever You Wanted”: Pre-Teen Girls Negotiating Gender, Sexuality and Age through Fashion*. Worries about the marketing of fashion to pre-teen girls and the power of fashionable clothes to sexualize these girls, have been on-going for some time. However, there is little research with this age group of girls that explicitly explores the ways in which fashionable clothes are understood and worn by the girls themselves and the impact on their sense of identity. Yet girls are increasingly considered in childhood sociology to be competent social actors able to articulate something of their own interactions and understanding of their social worlds. This study uses focus groups, participant photography and interviews with 32 predominately white, middle-class girls from the South of England, to examine pre-teen girls’ fashion practices to address this gap in knowledge. This article argues that young girls are active and thoughtful in their consumption of dress, aware of the construction of gender norms in responding to aged sexual expectations as they decide what to wear. In considering the context of their constructions of aged, gendered and (a)sexualized identity, girls code-switched between identity forms, actively constituting their subjectivity through clothing.

Lee Barron’s article *The Return of the Celebrity Fashion Muse: Brand Endorsement, Creative Inspiration and Celebrity Influenced Design Communication* examines the current prevalence of fashion designers working in association with celebrity “muses,” famous figures drawn from acting and popular music, who serve to front brand campaigns but also embody the identity of fashion houses and inspire designers. The article discusses the ancient origin of the Muse figure and explores the ways in which the muse principle was incorporated into fashion via the model, but subsequently included celebrities. In this regard, the article discusses the iconic celebrity muse precedents represented by the creative relationships between Audrey Hepburn and Hubert de Givenchy, and Jackie Kennedy and Oleg Cassini, arguing that while this dynamic has seen a significant revival in the twenty-first century, it is of a differing kind in that the muse dimension has (drawing upon the concepts of media spectacle and implosion) fused with the contemporary endorser/brand ambassador role. The article considers the key principles of celebrity brand

endorsement and explores how the position of brand ambassador has evolved into that of the fashion muse, a term used by designers such as Karl Lagerfeld, Nicolas Ghesquiere, and Olivier Rousteing in their work with celebrities such as Kristen Stewart, Alicia Vikander, Lea Seydoux, and Kim Kardashian. Therefore, the article argues that the contemporary fashion muse represents the further embeddedness of celebrity within fashion brand communication.

In **Focus** column **Maxine Bristow's** paper *Medium (Un)specificity as Material Agency—The Productive Indeterminacy of Matter/Material* considers some of the debates brought to the fore by the proliferation of recent textile focused exhibitions, namely, the tension between a continued allegiance to medium specific conventions and the richness, hybridity, and heterogeneity afforded by the post-medium condition of contemporary art. Through a new body of sculptural and installational practice, I propose a constellatory opening up of textile in which the medium specific can be (re)mapped in a fluid and fragmentary way. Drawing particular reference from Adorno's conception of the constellation and mimetic comportment, this model of practice involves a mode of behavior that actively opens up to alterity and returns authority to the affective indeterminacy of the sensuously bound experiential encounter. This is demonstrated through a range of practice strategies—"thingness," "staged (dis)contiguity," and the play between "sensuous immediacy and corporeal containment"—which mobilize a precarious relationship between processes of attachment and detachment. Acknowledging the critical currency afforded to textile through feminist and poststructuralist critique, the work moves away from "a rhetoric of negative opposition" and predetermined discursive frameworks, returning authority to the aesthetic impulse, privileging the ambiguous resonances of an abstract sculptural language over more overt strategies of representation.

In **Body** section *Ana Neto & João Ferreira* offer their article *Lasting Bonds: Understanding Wearer-Clothing Relationships through Interpersonal Love-Theory*. To tackle the high rates of textile waste in the fashion industry through design, it is imperative to understand what makes people keep and wear their clothes for longer. In this paper, we present an analysis of a survey which prompted female participants to write about one of their oldest garments still in use. Following Chapman's notion that waste is symptomatic of failed relationships, we looked into theory on interpersonal love relationships—in particular, Gottman and Gottman's

Sound Relationship House Theory—to explore if interpersonal relationships can be found in wearer-clothing relationships. Moreover, the study shows how friendship principles contribute to wearers’ willingness to overcome conflict in their relationship with clothes, as well as to the creation of meaning. Our findings suggest that designing for emotional attachment should focus on supporting the friendship system, which is foundational for emotional attachment to develop. We illustrate our findings with empirical data and discuss them with relevant literature, while also providing examples on how design can contribute to strengthening the friendship system of wearer-clothing relationships, beyond designed attributes in clothes.

In **Culture** section we look at practices of knitting. **Freddie Robins** contributes her article *Stab It, Strangle It: Media Representations of Knitters, and Subversions of the Stereotype to Reflect Inclusion and Diversity*. Subversion is at the heart of my knitting practice but how can the stereotypical image of the knitter, the kindly white-haired, white-skinned grandmother who knits out of love, be successfully subverted to change public perceptions of knitting? What will it take to challenge and ultimately change the stereotype? This article examines contemporary media representations of knitting and knitters from the UK, USA and Australia, revealing how deeprooted the stereotype is. The media representations explore issues around activism, mental health, race, gender, age and sexuality as portrayed through acts of knitting. From the environmental activists known as Knitting Nannas, to artist Jameisha Prescod’s, self-portrait, Untangling, of her knitting to manage her mental health during England’s national lockdown, and gold medalist diver and campaigner for LGBT+ rights, Tom Daley, knitting poolside during the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics in an attempt to relax and steady his nerves. It explores how the stereotypical view of knitters and knitting affects the way that it is received and valued, and challenges the supposedly “warm and friendly” nature of knitting, presenting the lack of diversity and representation that currently exists in the knitting community.

Eleanor O’Neill’s paper *Knitting: The Destructive Yarn-Bomb* explores the effect of yarn-bombing on the cultural value of knitting. While it has been suggested that such acts of craftivism may help to broaden the public view of knitting, beyond its oft perceived limitations of the domestic and the feminine, I argue the opposite. For yarn-bombing to be the effective tool of political activism it is so often intended to be, it is necessary for knitting to maintain strong associations with women and the home.

In such a way, yarn-bombing only serves to further constrain knitting within this firmly established narrative and such a narrative causes knitting to continually be undervalued as a way of making. Using discourse analysis as a method, this paper will consider two yarn-bombs and how, through their reliance on such associations, they continue to “enable, constrain, and constitute” (Storey 2018, 133) the public perception of knitting today. Exposing this narrative, to begin to challenge it, is key to changing the public’s perception of knitting and encouraging its wider use in innovate manufacturing solutions of the future.

Alyce McGovern offers her article *Risky, Subversive, and Deviant? A Criminological Analysis of Guerrilla Knitting*. Guerrilla knitting, otherwise known as yarn bombing, is a form of graffiti or street art that has grown in popularity and prevalence over the past decade. Whilst other forms of street art and graffiti have drawn interest from criminologists, much less has been written about the cultures of, and responses to, those who engage in knitting graffiti. Examining the phenomenon through the lens of cultural criminology, and drawing on empirical research with yarn bombers, this paper critically analyses the ways in which guerrilla knitting has been framed as a risky, subversive, and deviant activity. In doing so, the paper considers important questions about exceptionalism, the aesthetics of authority, and the commodification of deviance.

The articles by **Eileen Harrisson** and **Stephanie G. Anderson** explore the contexts of stitching and memory.

In *Trauma Memory in Stitch, Sound and Word: From the Troubles and Conflict to Reconciliation and Peace* **Eileen Harrisson** discusses the rhetoric of stitch with the nature of trauma time, memory and the haptic qualities of textile, addressing theories put forward by Maureen Daly Goggin and Jenny Edkins. Properties the medium brings to confronting the trauma of conflict memory are addressed through my experiences of the Troubles in stitched works, film and the poetic word along with works by Irene MacWilliam, Catherine Harper and Deborah J Stockdale. Discussion of arpilleras from the “Conflict Textiles” collection shows the power of textiles in documenting trauma memory, expressing resistance to and therapy from the trauma of conflict and offering a voice for forgiveness and peace. Theories on sound and how these relate to my researches on the properties of sound within textile are featured reflecting, too, on the ways in which words communicate. The significance of using textile from both front and back and cloth as healing agent are addressed, including using an iconic garment such as a nurse’s cape which

symbolizes comfort and healing, as form and surface on which to stitch images of conflict, healing and hope.

In her article *Stitching through Silence: Walking With Our Sisters, Honoring the Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada* **Stephanie G. Anderson** explores the complex relationship between processes of making, memory, healing, and social activism activated by *Walking With Our Sisters*, a large-scale commemorative installation intended to foster awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada.

In **Events** **Michele Majer** offers her review of two exhibitions: *La Mode retrouvée: les robes trésors de la comtesse Greffulhe* at Palais Galliera, Paris and *Proust's Muse: The Comtesse Greffulhe* at FIT, New York.

In **Books** **Bronwyn Clark-Coolee** reviews Lee Miller's biography by Becky E. Conekin (Thames and Hudson, 2013) while **Kate Strasdin** reviews *Material Lives: Women Makers and Consumer Culture in the 18th Century* by Serena Dyer (Bloomsbury, 2021).