

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 well-known designers to issues around consumption in fashion; from beauty and 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 this issue's **Dress** section, we take a look at the virtual dress phenomenon, and its massive growth during the pandemic and forced shift to online activity.

Liroy Choufan offers *Fashion You Do Not Own, Fashion You Cannot Feel: Toward a New Paradigm of Sharing Fashion in the Digital Age*. This paper explores the implications of contemporary sharing—a central cultural activity in the twenty-first century related to social media, the shared economy and ways of communication—on fashion. First, it

maps the connection between fashion, body, and personality. Later, following a theoretical model presented by John, it argues that sharing and fashion are internally connected and that sharing is the driving force behind the appearance of new consumer concepts such as rental services and digital collections. Finally, the article analyzes these services to demonstrate how they disrupt the historical relationship between subjects and fashion objects in terms of ownership, physical connection, and speed of circulation. It arises from this that in fashion, where the object used to be owned or literally attached to the body, and is part of a constructed personality, sharing is motivating a radical shift in the bond connecting subjects and clothes.

Elizabeth Bourgeois offers her paper *Virtual Life: Fashion, Expression, and Identity in the Digital World*. During social distancing, fashion and self-expression have pushed further into virtual environments. In VR spaces, identities can be curated easily, untethered from necessity. Personal styles reach a wider audience with new rules. Digital platforms leave some, but not all, “real world” clothing constraints behind. Virtual aesthetics are set by the user and the software.

Gen Z are native users, applying Instagram and Snapchat face filters, or styling outfits and skins in apps like Gacha Life, Roblox, and Fortnite. These games cultivate space for community and personal style. Loosely tied to human forms, each app has a physical aesthetic with clear vernacular dress definitions. There are ecosystems of makers, consumers, and critics. Designer-modelers create assets, brands, and luxury items. These new virtual beauty ideals impact live fashion trends.

In these times, social media and gaming communities allow expression of identity. Online dress is no longer tied to “real” bodies or clothing.

Kristina Gligorovska contributes her article *Virtual Encounter with The Picture of Dorian Gray: Who Is the Digital Me? A Virtual Nemesis, or Just a Friendly Avatar...* Continued gaze at the portrait of Dorian Gray offers a new mode for perceiving our presence in the virtual sphere. It can be argued that our digitalized bodies could be the antidote of aging, representing our inclination towards ageless beauty. The process of continual metamorphosis, merging and transcending of borders between dream and reality, natural and artificial beauty, physical and digital worlds, constitutes one of the starting points in the introspection of the virtual self and the virtually enhanced body. Taking the digital realm as a second reality, the protagonists are invited on a journey where virtual bodies can be interpreted as sites that offer a sensitive modern twist on beauty in relation to artificiality. Given that beauty has always taken pleasure in artifice, and that fashion has an eternal thirst for beauty, questions on the meaning of virtual bodies, garments, and fashion scenes as new recycled ideals naturally arise. Virtual representations, we should add, are full of signs raising the idea of transcendence, overcoming fashion’s embedded beauty criteria, suggesting an impeccable

masquerade where we can be immortal, and our bodies, posthuman. In parallel, the renaissance of digitalization in fashion brings us closer to significant progress in shaping a sustainable approach. This revival suggests notions of transformation, highlighting the relevance of sustainability, and shaping the trajectory of the fashion industry towards embracing virtual clothes, virtual environments, and virtual humans. Looking fashionable within a digital environment is as pertinent as ever, and the growing trend of digital fashion not only allows a person to change their digital persona based on their physical background, but also allows one to create a digital persona within a digital world. One may even say, it invites us to a rendezvous with our virtual selves and virtual otherness in a virtual environment.

Anna Makrzanowska's paper *Wearing Different Posthuman Costumes. From Experiences to Art-Making* consists of three parts. The first part focuses on the costume/body/space relationship in the context of historical Cricot2 Theatre, and the author's transdisciplinary performance practice. Makrzanowska looks at various devising techniques informed by the concepts of bio-object and emballage. Turning to the A Gig A Byte performance (2017), this section introduces and defines costume as a posthuman artform rooted in Rosi Braidotti's philosophy of posthuman convergence and assemblage. In the second part, the author turns to her practice of Virtullage, which, in the simplest possible way, could be defined as an artform generated by the entanglements and synergies conceived between physical and virtual spaces. Virtullage praxis is focused on intergenerational maternal stories and posthuman maternal subjectivities that include both human and other than human. The third part talks about the relationships between lived and embodied difficult experiences, and their transformation into artistic and research practice. This unit offers an insight into the development of various autoethnographic approaches. It examines the function of Enyo—the author's research persona. Enyo—'You-Not-You' could be worn as costume or clothes that protect the artist-researcher, who is dealing with some traumatic experiences. In this context Enyo as a research persona transforms unspoken difficult experiences into expressible artistic articulation.

In her paper *The Body as Object: The Phenomenology of the Corporeal and the Fashion System*, which opens the **Body** section, Ekaterina Vasilieva looks at the body as a phenomenological concept. Examining the interaction of body and fashion, she focuses on two main aspects, the phenomenology of the body as flesh, and definition of the body through its dynamic and static functions. The dichotomy of the tactile and the conceptual stems from the opposition of body and soul. What defines the quality of the body as flesh, and what makes it a living component in the system of fashion? The interaction of body and dress can allow for dynamic development, or, on the contrary, form a purely static construction. In this paper,

the author examines the main stages in the formation of the phenomenology of the corporeal, as well as possibilities for the use of these concepts within the fashion system.

Belinda Johnson offers *Bodies, Power and Fashionable Femininity in Designer Fashion Boutiques: Between the 'Panopticon' and the 'Confessional'*. Fashionable femininity is a complex discursive terrain. Multiple discourses compete to assert meanings for fashionable femininity and these discourses influence women's experiences of their bodies. This article focuses upon oppressive and celebratory discourses as two powerful forces within designer fashion boutiques. From philosopher Michel Foucault, the author considers how these discourses operate through a boutique 'panopticon' and 'confessional', with this analysis illuminating complexities of power within the pursuit of fashionable femininity in boutique settings. This inquiry draws from a study that combined autoethnographic memoir and in-depth interviews with eighteen women working in designer fashion boutiques in Melbourne, Australia. The author argues that the duality of panopticon and confessional dynamics intensifies lived tensions between oppressive and celebratory discourses beyond the boutique. With fashion part of contemporary ideals of femininity, boutiques become political sites of discursive contest, creating contradictions in how the fashionably feminized body is experienced, necessitating constant negotiation without the possibility of reconciliation.

Breda Luthar & Maruša Pušnik contribute *Clothing and Expressive Revolution: Wearing Jeans in Socialism*. This study investigates jeans use, as well as the discursive practices that framed jeans-wearing in 1960s and 1970s socialist Yugoslavia. The authors adopt a practice theory approach that goes beyond the expressive capacity of jeans, and focuses on their material and practical capacity as an epitome of cultural transformation. Practices discussed include embodied practices enabled by jeans and those that have jeans as their target, such as smuggling, dreaming, remaking, appreciation of authentic jeans and rejection of domestic substitutes, emotions about jeans, wearing jeans, and public narratives regarding jeans. The paper finds that the significance of jeans-wearing was created by difficulty of access, the practice of semi-legal smuggling, contact with the West, and the 'Italianness' of jeans. Jeans are conceptualized as a key point of connection between material and social transformation, and a new structure of feeling, including the intimate experience of the body and its public presentation. The authors argue that the study of material artifacts as integral to certain practices helps us approach the larger systemic dimensions of (socialist) subjectivity and social transformation against the backdrop of the symbolic boundaries that divided East and West.

In this issue's **Culture** section, we take a closer look at bloggers and influencers.

Marco Pedroni presents *Two Decades of Fashion Blogging and Influencing: A Critical Overview*. Influencers have monopolized media attention in recent

years, the result of a long process lasting two decades dating from the rise of blogging at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this article, Pedroni sets out the historical framework in which the social media practitioners known as fashion bloggers and influencers have emerged and developed as relevant players in the field of fashion. Pedroni proposes a reading of fashion blogging and influencing as a process articulated in four stages between 2000 and 2020. Marked by a progressive institutionalization of social media practice in the field of fashion, these two decades saw the advent of Instagram-based influencers in the second half of the 2010s, their continuing domination of fashion platforms, and TikTok's rise in relevance in the same field during the early 2020s. The author first explores the rise of fashion blogs in the early 2000s and the scholarly debate regarding its characteristics. He then frames the transition from blogging to Instagram, not just as a change of platform, but as an opportunity for the invention of a new occupation, the influencer, and the consecration of the business of influence. Lastly, Pedroni critically examines the concepts of influence and influencer.

Annamari Vänskä contributes *Social Media Influencing as Digital Work: The Case of Finnish Fashion and Life-Style Influencers*. New media technologies have been linked to changing forms of work and its organisation. Networked and social media have also created new online personalities: the blogger and the social media influencer. Much research has been devoted to investigating how, why and to what extent they connect companies and brands with consumers. Attention has been paid to social media influencing as a form of precarious 'digital labor'—to influencing as laborious activities that produce added value, but do not necessarily pay. Less attention has been given to social media influencing as paid digital work, however. Through six focus group interviews conducted with twenty one Finnish fashion and life-style influencers between November 2019 and September 2020, this article sheds light on this blind spot, and brings new insights to the discourse of influencing as representative of the new form of work in the digital era.

Joanne Entwistle and **Elizabeth Wissinger** offer *Dress like a Mum/Mom: Instagram Style Mums and the Fashionable Ideal*. Through a case study of Instagram-style mums/moms, this paper explores whether the dominant fashion aesthetic is challenged or destabilized. It considers how social media, such as Instagram, open up new spaces for bodies to perform fashionability without the mediation of the fashion system. This space is potentially more 'democratic', allowing those located outside the fashion system to exhibit fashionability through personal style, presenting alternatives to the normative fashionable body. However, conversely, Instagram is also a space that is increasingly colonized by big brands and celebrity 'influencers' whose accounts display similar aesthetics to mainstream fashion. By examining a range of mums/moms, not just celebrity or 'micro-celebrity' accounts, the paper explores the creative display of style and explorations of their maternal body—outside the dominant fashionable ideal—to discuss how these

women implicitly, sometimes explicitly, challenge the aesthetics of fashion. In articulating a 'technique of the self', this 'mum style' opens space to navigate motherhood and fashionability at the same time. The aesthetic tropes of 'mum style' are explored to unpack the contradictions and possibilities of this space.

Ekaterina Kolpinets and **Maria Kozharinova** present *Women Role Models in the Russian Instagram*. In Russia, the authors note, Instagram remains predominantly a women's social network. The wealthiest and most popular bloggers are women, and more than half of the users are female. Looking at female Russian Instagram bloggers with over a million followers, the authors examine the special visual and textual features of their accounts. The study focuses on twenty two women's Russian-language Instagram blogs with a clear theme and over a million followers. Using case studies and qualitative analysis of the content, the authors looked at how female role models are created and function on Instagram. In the first part of the paper, the authors present an overview of theoretical concepts of a 'role model'. Next, turning to twenty two blogs, they examine and analyse individual strategies for the creation of four main role model types: the ideal mother, successful businesswoman, standard/exemplary woman, and brazen woman. How are female role model types created and supported in Instagram blogs? What is the relationship between the visual and textual aspects of creating an inspiring female image? What are the particular features of Russian women's Instagram blogs with over a million followers? How do female bloggers interpret traditional family values to gain new followers, and keep existing ones? Are alternative models of femininity capable of competing with traditional images of the 'standard/exemplary woman' and the 'ideal mother'?

In the **Events** section, we offer **Olga Vainshtein's** review of an exhibition by the curators of the 9th of March project, 'Double Yellow Line. Contemporary jewelry about borders: geographical, political, cultural' at Moscow's Winzavod centre for contemporary art (19 November — 15 December 2021). **Olga Gurova** shares *Dress as the 'Infrastructure of Intimacy': A New Anthology of Finnish Fashion*, her impressions of the 'Intimacy' exhibition at the Helsinki Design Museum (8 October 2021 — 13 March 2022).