

International Symposium
ESMOD, Paris

Friday December, 13th 2024

"VOGUE'S VIEW": ON EDUCATION.

DIACHRONIC AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON *VOGUE* MAGAZINE, FROM THE ARCHIVES TO THE CLASSROOM

If famed fashion magazine *Vogue* holds a unique place in (fashion and publishing) history, it also holds a special place in historiography. It has indeed been productively explored from a myriad of disciplinary viewpoints in turn, including but not limited to cultural history (Hill 2004, Kurkdjan 2014), sociology (Rocamora 2006, Moeran 2008, McDowell 2013), business history (Cox & Mowatt 2012), marketing studies (Minowa/Maclaran/Stevens 2019), art history (Johnston 2000, Söll 2009, Krause-Wahl 2009 & 2015), literary studies (Reed 2006, Pender 2007, Yamamoto 2020), linguistics (König 2006), etc. *Vogue's* content and especially its imagery have furthermore regularly been probed to deconstruct or challenge dominant historical narratives (Mahood 2002, Twigg 2010, Conekin 2012, Cheang 2013, Chan 2017, Peters 2017, Parkins 2020, Sivinski 2020, Xepoleas 2022). Following from our own previous studies of *Vogue*, from the perspective of the mediated and mediating functions of fashion photography (Van de Castele 2022 & 2023), transnational entanglements and national editions (Fröhlich, Morin & Ruchatz 2021, Assadsolimani 2023a), as well as anniversary editions and retrospective exhibitions (Morin, Van de Castele *in* Lécallier 2020, Assadsolimani 2023b), we now seek to offer a platform for scholars to meet and discuss the history of *Vogue* and its relevance today. Indeed, we contend it is now time to confront varied approaches, and that the study of *Vogue* magazine, as a multifaceted print medium, is best served when all such relevant perspectives come into a dialogue.

Our focus will lay in particular with *Vogue's* history in relation with education, and we aim to explore the ways in which educational dynamics have been at work within, around or even against the magazine, across time and national borders. We understand education in the context of *Vogue* in at least two ways: in that the magazine itself educates large and diverse audiences, and in that it is used in educational settings. We thus not only adhere to an institutional concept of education but also

embrace a broader understanding of education as the transfer of knowledge. *Vogue* furthermore has a long history of establishing conventions of style, dress, and manners, while also setting standards for layout, illustration, and fashion photography. Following Madleen Podewski, we conceptualize magazines as “little archives” that arrange, format, and popularize time-bound knowledge. We aim to shed light on such periodical production of historic meaning and iconic pasts (Podewski 2023), and how a magazine has organized the complex array of consumer goods and offered guidelines for good taste and social distinction, either authoritatively or in the manner of an advising best friend.

If we consider (women’s) magazines such as *Vogue* are placed within the framework of prescriptive literature, what can we infer from its content as to its intended and actual uses? How do we retrace and make sense of the culture(s) of reception and the “imagined communities” (as defined by Benedict Anderson) – of femininity, taste, class, and beyond – formed around the magazine at different periods and in various places? Taking into account the vast transnational network woven by national editions (most prominently British and French *Vogues*, but also from the 1970s, Italian, Brazilian, German, Spanish, Singaporean, Korean, Taiwanese, Russian, and Japanese *Vogues*, see Button 2006, as well as Garrity 1999, Bartlett 2006, Matthews-David 2006, Moeran 2006, Kopnina 2007, Mészáros 2019, Paccaud 2021), issues around the construction of national identities also crucially come to light. How have these receptions been re-mediated in popular culture (literature, movies, etc.)?

Beyond the ever elusive issues of reception, contemporary (re)activations of the vast corpus *Vogue* issues offer will be of special interest to us: from the museum walls to the classroom, *Vogue* has lent itself to multifarious educative uses, as a tool for teaching, as well as a documentary repository. Popular magazines are particularly suitable for use in teaching settings, as they provide an accessible entry point and an opportunity for exploration, while also presenting methodological and analytical complexity (Pabst 2023, Morin 2024). When using *Vogue* as a source for fashion history, it is important to consider its media-specific logic and formatting. The past does not present itself in the magazine as it was, but is rather discursively reworked.

The very formation of *Vogue* related archives is to be historicized as well, and the access granted (or not) to those should finally be questioned. The intertwining of fashion heritage with education will be especially relevant here; and so will methodological reflections of how to (re)construct the production history of glossy cultural images and texts.

We hope to see all these questions and more addressed and debated during the symposium. We strive to foster an interdisciplinary, international discussion. We therefore invite proposals for 20-minute papers, to be followed by 10-minute discussions, from colleagues working in the fields of (cultural) history, communication and media studies, fashion studies, photography history, periodicals studies and other relevant fields.

Please send a 500-words abstract and a short biographical note by **September 2nd, 2024** to Jasmin Assadsolimani (jasmin.assadsolimani@tu-dortmund.de), Alice Morin (alice.p.morin@gmail.com) and Marlène van de Castele (marlene.vandecasteele@esmod.com). Notifications of acceptance will go out by Septembre 12th, 2024.

Convenors

Jasmin Assadsolimani (Technische Universität Dortmund)

Alice Morin (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle/University of Southern California)

Marlène van de Castele (ESMOD Paris)

Venue

ESMOD Paris

12, rue de la Rochefoucauld

75009 Paris

Provisional Bibliography

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