

Fashion

“How can couture be presented in the media?” This question has gained a new urgency for fashion labels in light of concerns about sustainability and in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic. While couture shows and fashion weeks were canceled around the globe in the spring of 2020, companies such as Hermès, Dior, and Prada came up with various media formats to present their products to the public in “contactless” form. Extravagantly produced fashion films, live streams of fashion shows, and social media campaigns are not new, having long been part of diverse lines of development in media history. However, the current situation poses questions of how fashion is presented in and interconnected with media in new ways.

The close ties between fashion films and the industry have often overshadowed the astonishingly diverse parallels and points of contact between fashion and film in media history. The display of fabrics in motion, for example, forms an important trope in early cinema – be it in the form of moving veils or early serpentine dance films, sumptuously colored textiles in early fashion films, or billowing curtains, flags, or sails (completely detached from the human figure). Still, film theorists articulated the idea quite early on that film (for example, by using slow motion or close-ups) could sensitize the eye to the materials themselves, to their sensual and dynamic qualities. Filmmakers have been making use of these sensual qualities for aesthetic reasons in various genres, while fashion and textile industries have used films and film stars for advertising. The close relationship of film and fashion industries can also be observed in casting shows such as *America's* or *Germany's Next Topmodel*, *Next in Fashion*, or *Shopping Queen*, which supposedly provide “backstage insights” into the production, presentation, and consumption of fashion, while at the same time trivializing their neoliberal and capitalist structures in forms of play and competition. Currently, the use of digital media leads to forms in which fashion is shifted exclusively into the realm of the moving image. For example, the Amsterdam-based fashion label The Fabricant, whose founder Kerry Murphy has worked in animation film, successfully sells virtual clothing, while high-fashion labels like Balenciaga collaborate with Fortnite in the context of gaming cultures.

With this issue, we want to look at fashion as an integral part of film and media cultures. We are interested in analyzing the close entanglements of aesthetic, social, and commercial issues, as well as iconographic motifs and strategies, phenomenological aspects, and the sensual perception of textures in the moving image beyond costume history in a narrow sense, as well as the question of fashion in times of digital couture. How are different aspects of fashion – as cloth, costume,

and moving fabric, as industry and market – presented in feature films and documentaries, television, and web formats? To what extent does fashion in media function in negotiating social issues, such as gender and class, sometimes shifting or playfully overturning existing socio-normative orders? And what concepts and theoretical approaches can we use to describe and analyze constellations of fashion and audiovisual media?

The issue aims to cover a broad range of the topic, which is why we welcome submissions dedicated to questions of aesthetics, industry, media and film history, discourses, histories of theory and concepts, as well as contributions on fashion archives, institutions, or collections. We ask for submissions in German or English with a maximum of 35,000 characters; please cite according to the author-year system. Submissions by November 15, 2022 to montage@snafu.de. For questions, please contact Evelyn Echle (evelyn.echle@hs-pforzheim.de) and Kristina Köhler (k.koehler@uni-koeln.de).